

UCAS

Welsh Language Scheme 2025 - 2028

**Prepared under the
Welsh Language Act 1993**

PREFACE

This is the Welsh Language Scheme (“the scheme”) presented by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and its associated admissions systems, and prepared in accordance with section 14 (i) of the Welsh Language Act 1993. This scheme, which was approved on **04 June 2025**, amends and replaces the 2010 - 2013 scheme.

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UCAS has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the Welsh and English languages on a basis of equality. This scheme sets out how UCAS will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales and communicating with Welsh speakers.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. UCAS is an independent charity that exists to fulfil its charitable purpose, which is acting as the national shared admissions service for students, universities and colleges. As a charity, UCAS' work must be for the "public benefit" and is non-profit.

To support its work as a charity, UCAS has a trading subsidiary, UCAS Media Limited (UCAS Media) which generates income through working with commercial partners to offer a range of products and services which are provided to both student customers and universities and colleges, as well as businesses and employers. UCAS Media only works with companies which meet commercial activity criteria approved by UCAS.

UCAS does not receive any direct financial support from the government so commercial activities help to deliver UCAS' charitable objectives and keep costs down for students and education providers.

UCAS is governed by its Board of Trustees. The UCAS Board is made up of a balance of Trustees from higher and further education backgrounds, including three heads of providers of higher education and independent Trustees.

- 1.2. The organisation looks after undergraduate applications to UK universities and colleges and PGCE applications to Welsh universities, together with applications made to conservatoires across the UK through the UCAS Conservatoire scheme. Over 300 HE providers use UCAS admissions services. UCAS employs over 600 staff and is based in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.
- 1.3. UCAS seeks to develop and improve the services and products it offers in Welsh. This is done with a view of strengthening the relationship with the HE providers in Wales that are UCAS customers, adding value to the products and services offered to stakeholders and ensuring the company remains attuned to its business environment. Corporate governance and engagement forums (which meet quarterly) ensure representation of these providers.
- 1.4. UCAS engagement forums also ensure further dialogue with wider sector stakeholders which shape UCAS policy positions and strategic work.

- 1.5. UCAS' strategy has two core aims: to support the sector in increasing participation and promoting student success and to deliver increasing value as the UK's shared admissions service. As a part of UCAS' double helix, the organisation will focus on supporting participation and enhancing value for higher education providers in Wales. The following strategic objectives and values support the development of UCAS' strategy.

Strategic objective 1: Frictionless and flexible shared admissions services

Strategic objective 2: Personalised pathways to level the playing field

Strategic objective 3: Equipping supporters to enable dreams

Strategic objective 4: Raw data to real insights

UCAS values

- Beneficiary and Customer Centricity
- Accountability, Trust, Expertise

- 1.6. UCAS and its admissions services are financed through the application fee charged to applicants for submission of an application, the capitation fee charged to HE providers as determined by the number of applicants placed at each provider and income generated by UCAS' wholly owned commercial subsidiary, UCAS Media, which gift aids its profits to the charity.
- 1.7. The scheme as detailed below sets out the steps which will be taken to provide collateral and services in Welsh to those whose preferred language is Welsh and who wish to conduct their business with UCAS in that language. It details the way in which the scheme will be implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

2. SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

- 2.1. UCAS acknowledges its responsibilities in respect of the introduction of new policies and initiatives. In planning for these, there will be an assessment of their linguistic implications, and a commitment that such policies and initiatives should align with the principles of this scheme.
- 2.2. This will assist UCAS in promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh wherever possible and move the organisation closer to implementing the principle of equality across all its services and ensure that there is consistency with the scheme. In so doing, UCAS commits to consultation with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office in advance regarding proposals which will affect the scheme or will affect the Welsh language standards of Welsh HE providers. Material changes to the scheme will only be made with Executive agreement and Welsh Language Commissioner's approval.
- 2.3. Through regular contact with HE provider representatives based in Wales as part of the UCAS corporate governance and engagement forum frameworks and to support its commitment to support Welsh speakers, UCAS will seek feedback on the language needs of its main customers in Wales. The findings will be used to determine appropriate future actions in respect of provision of service. This will ensure that the UCAS scheme maintains an informed dialogue with an expert community in Wales and that it remains in alignment with developments in the schemes advanced by HE providers in Wales.
- 2.4. UCAS commits to continue to use a qualified translator to undertake translations of written content including, but not limited to, emails to applicants and information, advice and guidance published on ucas.com.
- 2.5. UCAS is committed to delivering a high-quality service in Welsh and English. This will mean that measures of timeliness and service level will be comparable irrespective of whether UCAS customers live in England or Wales. This will be communicated through operational planning documentation.

3. UCAS' PUBLIC FACE

The internet

- 3.1. In collaboration with the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education, UCAS has created a small bilingual site which can be accessed from the UCAS homepage. The mini site includes information for Welsh users on the following topics:

Opportunities when you study in Welsh and what's available

This section highlights the benefits of studying a HE qualification through the medium of the Welsh language. This also includes direct links which navigate users back to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol website which promotes Welsh medium courses.

How to apply in Welsh and track your application

An overview of applying in Welsh to HE providers and how to track the progress of an application and view operational letters in Welsh.

UCAS will endeavour to increase the amount of applicant facing content contained in this mini site. The provision of content in Welsh will also be considered for UCAS HE provider and adviser customers.

- 3.2. The digital UCAS Hub allows a Welsh language preference to be selected by registered applicants which then supports display of on-screen help and field labels in Welsh within an application. In cases where an applicant is applying solely to Welsh HE providers, they can complete all free text fields in Welsh, including their personal statement.

If this preference has been selected, application event triggered emails (such as the welcome email and confirmation of a place) will be sent by UCAS in Welsh. Chosen HE providers have visibility of the preference, so they will be able to communicate to the applicant in Welsh.

Applicants may choose to complete their application in English and then contact UCAS to update their correspondence preference to Welsh post-submission. This will enable any chosen Welsh HE providers to update their direct communications with the applicant to be in Welsh.

- 3.3. The information displayed via the UCAS course search is supplied by HE providers to inform applicants of course (including entry requirements) details. The aim is to offer the ability for providers to input this information in both English and Welsh in the future. This would enable Welsh HE providers to promote their course data in Welsh for the key services which consume course data, for example, the UCAS search tool and digital application.

- 3.4. Bilingual advertisements will be displayed on the Welsh language landing page of ucas.com.

Communication channels

- 3.5. UCAS welcomes correspondence written in Welsh from all its customers and will ensure that a reply is sent in Welsh. This applies to both hard copy letters and email correspondence. UCAS response times for letters is the same whether correspondence is in English or Welsh. If a full reply is not possible within five working days, a holding reply will be sent in the language of the originating letter.
- 3.6. UCAS has established a call-back option to support telephone contact in Welsh by utilisation of a current bilingual member of staff.

Public meetings

- 3.7. UCAS does not currently hold any public meetings in Wales. However, should this position change in the future, the invitations, agenda and supporting papers for those would be provided bilingually.

Corporate identity

- 3.8. As the acronym 'UCAS' is used so widely, this identity will be retained even within a bilingual context. Therefore, the standard format for usage of our title in any communication with the public in Wales will be 'UCAS'.

Signs

- 3.9. Any signs created and displayed by UCAS for public events in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English text being treated equally regarding size, legibility and prominence.
- 3.10. Arrangements for the provision of bilingual signs will be made before organising any public events in Wales and a process will be created to ensure this is consistently delivered.

Press notices

- 3.11. Any press releases issued only in Wales will be provided bilingually.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME

Communication preferences (HE providers)

- 4.1. The UCAS Customer Relationship Management database includes a tick box to easily identify those HE provider contacts who wish to deal with UCAS in Welsh. This insight will be used to support written / verbal communication with the contact in Welsh where possible.

Staffing

Staff recruitment advertising

- 4.2. UCAS is based in Cheltenham, and it is not easy to recruit Welsh speakers. However, in order to ensure that 10% of customer services vacancies are advertised to Welsh speakers, these will be advertised in local newspapers, and UCAS will utilise online Welsh jobs vacancy websites such as safleswyddi.co.uk.
- 4.3. When preparing and publishing advertisements for staff recruitment where Welsh speaking is desirable, UCAS will ensure that:
- recruitment advertising for posts for which fluency in Welsh is desirable in Welsh language publications, is written in Welsh only
 - in English language publications circulating in Wales, the advertisement will be written in Welsh only, with a short explanatory note in English.
- 4.4. UCAS is committed to embedding these principles in the company's human resources practice and procedures.
- 4.5. UCAS will assess the Welsh language requirements of the services UCAS provides and identify those roles where the ability to speak Welsh is desirable. To ensure that UCAS can aim to deliver its services both effectively and efficiently in Welsh to a high standard, it will also undertake an annual audit of its staff to establish the number, ability level and identity of staff who can speak, read and write Welsh (including staff who are learning Welsh). It will respond to any shortages through deploying staff, recruitment and training activities, as far as is reasonably possible within current staffing constraints.

Learning Welsh

- 4.6. The ability to communicate in Welsh according to various degrees of capability and in various service situations is essential to the success of this scheme. UCAS also recognises that the ability to understand and use the Welsh language in the workplace on a daily basis is a very valuable skill which can assist its staff in providing a comprehensive service for the Welsh speaking public.
- 4.7. UCAS will implement this scheme by identifying and supporting members of staff who wish to learn Welsh or to improve their ability to speak Welsh.
- 4.8. UCAS places particular emphasis on encouraging customer service staff who are likely to have frequent interaction with the Welsh-speaking public to learn Welsh.

Vocational training

- 4.9. UCAS is committed to developing the ability of its staff to operate through the medium of Welsh so that they may become accustomed to dealing with their professional areas of activity with the public in Welsh.
- 4.10. In order to realise this commitment, UCAS will assess the need for vocational training through the medium of Welsh before providing such training to facilitate the implementation of the scheme.

Administrative arrangements

- 4.11. UCAS confirms that the Welsh Language Scheme and all the measures in it have been approved by its Executive and carry the full commitment of the organisation as they are implemented. UCAS' Chief Executive will have the ultimate responsibility for the scheme. Managers have responsibility for implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their own departments/teams.
- 4.12. UCAS will ensure that all its staff will receive guidance on the scheme and advice on what is expected of them in the context of their role. A key element of this will be clear instructions on how colleagues should respond to written and phone contact from a Welsh speaker.
- 4.13. All translators used by UCAS will be approved, suitably qualified and able to provide a high-quality service.

Services delivered on behalf of UCAS by other parties and by UCAS in partnership with other bodies

- 4.14. UCAS will ensure that any agreements or arrangements made with third parties which relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales are consistent with the terms of this language scheme. This includes any new or existing services which are contracted out.
- 4.15. When UCAS joins a third-party partnership in which another body is leading activities which relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales, UCAS' input to the partnership will comply with the Welsh language scheme.

Monitoring

- 4.16. The Executive will receive an annual compliance report that will enable them to answer the two following basic questions:
- Is UCAS complying with the scheme?
 - How well is it achieving this?
- 4.17. The views of Welsh speakers will also be sought periodically about the range and quality of services provided by the organisation through corporate governance and stakeholder engagement forums.
- 4.18. Monitoring of the scheme will be structured and if the report finds any weaknesses, UCAS will prepare an action plan that will remedy the situation.
- 4.19. A copy of the above-mentioned report will then be sent to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office.
- 4.20. In the third year of this scheme's implementation, UCAS will prepare a comprehensive evaluation report which will evaluate performance in implementing the scheme over its three-year life span. To review and update its Welsh Language Scheme and receive approval for further periods of implementation, this report will:

- provide an overview and thematic analysis of performance and compliance with the scheme over the three years, both in terms of service delivery and scheme management
- outline UCAS' priorities for the following three years, along with a revised implementation plan for measures in scope of the scheme.

As part of this evaluation, UCAS will conduct a targeted satisfaction survey with Welsh speaking stakeholders to ascertain their views on the scope and quality of its bilingual services.

- 4.21. The annual report, provided by UCAS to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office, will be in a form approved by the Office, which describes progress in implementing the measures of the scheme against the approved timetable and standards; it will also analyse the number and nature of any complaints and suggestions for improvements received from the public.

Key targets

- 4.22. The key targets for implementation of the scheme are detailed in Annex A below. The various strands of reporting, assessment and evaluation will cover the monitoring of achievement of the targets, and this will be a particular focus within the annual report to the Executive.

Publishing information

- 4.23. UCAS will report progress in respect of the scheme through its corporate governance and stakeholder engagement forums. As indicated above, these will include a comparison of performance with standards and targets set out in the scheme.
- 4.24. The annual report will be made available through the usual channels and will be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioners Office in January each year.
- 4.25. If necessary, an explanation of the reasons for non-achievement of targets will also be supplied.

Publicity

- 4.26. UCAS will publish its scheme on its website and will take every opportunity to promote its existence including through its corporate governance and stakeholder engagement forums. This will give full information on the extent to which the public can deal with UCAS in Welsh, and the services available.

Complaints

- 4.27. UCAS has a well-established complaints procedure which will deal as a matter of course with any grievances relating to the provision of UCAS' Welsh language service. All complaints should be addressed to:

Complaints Team

UCAS

Rosehill

New Barn Lane

Cheltenham

Gloucestershire

GL52 3LZ

Email: complaints@ucas.ac.uk

ANNEX A – ACTION PLAN

The scheme will be implemented over a three-year period commencing June 2025. For context, the technical development planning model adopted by UCAS since 2022 requires teams to commit to delivery of changes three months in advance as part of quarterly planning exercises. Target dates will be provided as and when the associated work has been committed to.

Point in the scheme	Description	Responsibility of	Target date
3.1	First set of additional applicant content to be translated into Welsh, including within the current bilingual mini site, with applicable extension of this to be undertaken during the term of the scheme	Website team/ADT	01/06/25
3.1	Apprenticeships in Wales content to be available in Welsh	Website team/ADT	31/05/25 tbc
3.2	The onscreen guidance relating to the selection of Welsh language preference to be updated to ensure that it is accurate. This guidance will be displayed bilingually	Tech team/ADT	30/06/25 tbc
3.2	Build on developments arising out of the Reference Data Service project, to assess feasibility of collecting/displaying qualification titles in Welsh into the application	Tech team	31/12/27 tbc
3.3	Build on developments arising out of the Opportunity Data Restructure project to scope out enabling HE providers to provide course data (including entry requirements and course profiles) in both English and Welsh and also to flag courses that are 'taught in Welsh'	Tech team	31/12/27 tbc
3.3	Build on the feedback from applicant and stakeholder feedback; develop further web-based Welsh information	Tech team	31/12/27 tbc
3.4	Secure bilingual advertisement on the Welsh language landing page within the UCAS website	Media team	31/01/26
4.12	Promote Welsh Language Scheme to all UCAS employees when it has been approved. This action will ensure that all colleagues understand their roles	Head of Operations	1/06/25

	and responsibilities in delivering the scheme, including how to respond to written or verbal communication from a Welsh speaker, work with third parties / partners and host public meetings		
4.16 – 4.21	Monitor development and effectiveness of the UCAS application service, publications and UCAS website, through surveys to applicants and key stakeholders	Insights and UX teams	31/01/26
4.5	Annual audit of UCAS services, products, and staff, to identify the need for further Welsh service support	Inclusion Officer	31/01/26