

Report on the provision of learning and training opportunities in educational institutions for the environment and heritage sectors, include the opportunities for customised courses for BEN.

The institutions in north Wales currently providing learning and training opportunities for the environment and heritage sectors are:

Coleg Llandrillo
Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor
Coleg Menai
Llysfasi College
UWB
WEA/Coleg Harlech
Welsh College of Horticulture.

Information on current provision, including course details and contact details, is tabulated in Appendix 1. The prospecti of courses, from which the summary Appendix 1 was drawn, will be passed on to BEN as supplementary information. The cost of course has not been included as in some cases concessions or grants may be available, or fee waivers may apply. Course information is difficult to keep current as new courses can become available; for this reason the appendix includes web links to check on current information. The information on Coleg Menai's provision also includes details of ESOL courses. This information does not include customised activities; how these are organised and examples are detailed later in this document.

Further Education (FE) Colleges offer learning opportunities at a variety of levels; they include what we might call leisure courses, part-time vocational courses, e.g. day-release or block –release courses, and full-time vocational courses; there is also provision for special learning needs. It is unusual for learning not to be accredited (even 'leisure' courses) as this is one of the funding mechanisms of FE colleges; exceptions generally are what are known as 'full cost recovery' courses, where the cost of the course is met through a different source of funding than the norm, or is met by participants, e.g. a morning workshop on making a hanging basket.

Although FE colleges sometimes provide learning opportunities up to degree level, usually in collaboration with a university, traditionally FE provision finishes at GCE A level or its equivalent. In FE provision, accreditation normally runs from entry level to level 3; how these levels are equated with perhaps more familiar qualifications is shown below:

Entry Level		no equivalent (pre level 1)	
Level 1	NVQ Level 1	GNVQ Foundation	GCSE Grades D - G
Level 2	NVQ Level 2	GNVQ Intermediate	GCSE Grades A – C
	First Diploma		
Level 3	NVQ Level 3	GNVQ Advanced	GCE A level
	National Award/Diploma		
Higher National Certificate		broadly equivalent to 1 st year HE	
Higher National Diploma		broadly equivalent to 2 nd year HE	

All the institutions contacted agreed in principle (subject to agreements such as cost) to the planning and delivery of appropriate courses or activities. Examples of specific activities institutions offered are detailed below.

UWB, School of Lifelong Learning (SoLL)

The 'Hysbys', a partnership between DoLL, BBC Wales and Bwrdd yr Iaith, successfully ran a treasure hunt at Plas Newydd, Anglesey (based on the TV programme Treasure Hunt). Some of the participants stayed on the Hysbys, using the internet to solve clues, while the other participants searched for the clues within Plas Newydd, the participants communicating via radio. The treasure hunt revolved around the history of Plas Newydd. This would be an activity suitable for all ages and could be replicated.

WEA/Coleg Harlech

WEA/Coleg Harlech has agreed in principle (subject to agreements such as cost) to the planning and delivery of an adaptation of the course content 'Heritage Houses', with especial reference to Penrhyn Castle, to mark in 2007 the bi-centenary of the parliamentary abolition of slavery.

Welsh College of Horticulture (WCOH)

WCOH has an all Wales remit on land-based courses, and carries out work-based learning in north east Wales, Aberystwyth, Haverfordwest, Swansea and the National Botanic Gardens. In addition to this part-time courses (e.g. Open College Network (OCN), Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)) run at venues throughout north Wales, such as Portmeirion. The college has strong links with schools and runs taster sessions (the equivalent of 'Ground Force' in an hour, for example) to introduce the idea of working in the horticulture sector, in this example, as a career to young people. WCOH has links with voluntary bodies, such as RSPB, and has the expertise to facilitate activities within their sites. WCOH has agreed in principle (subject to agreements such as cost) to the planning and delivery of agreed activities, such as the above.

The courses outlined in Appendix 1 range from leisure interest courses (usually level 1 or level 2) up to postgraduate level. The intention has been to provide information on informal and formal learning; from informal learning situations, to enhance the enjoyment of pursuits in the environment and heritage sectors, and also to demonstrate how progression can be made from these to more formal vocational or academic routes leading to careers in these sectors.

Trish Reid
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