

E-mail sent to Prof. Davies, University of Wales Bangor

Dear Professor Davies,

THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTRE

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of the Gwynedd Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). At our recent meeting, concern was expressed regarding restructuring at the University and its implications for Religious Education. Ensuring a supply of religious education teachers is essential for the future of the subject and in particular, teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh. Bangor University plays an important role in training these teachers and we would be very grateful if you could enlighten us on the future of the religious education PGCE course in Bangor and which other colleges offer initial training for RE teachers through the medium of Welsh.

Gwynedd SACRE is also concerned about the future of the University's Religious Education Centre. The Centre has a collection of important books and artefacts and we would like to know what will be the future of this valuable resource.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Rowlinson

Cllr Paul Rowlinson,

Chair of the Gwynedd Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

copy: Councillor Cemlyn Williams, Education Portfolio Holder, Gwynedd Council

.....

Response from the University of Wales Bangor

Dear Councillor Rowlinson,

Thank you for your e-mail and apologies for the delay in responding.

I agree that Bangor University plays an essential part in the work of teaching Religious Education in Wales, and in particular through the medium of Welsh. I can confirm that the recent restructuring at the university does not have a negative impact on our support in this field. The restructuring has led, in reality, to a commitment to invest substantially in the Teacher Education element of the School of Education. In addition, there is continuing and strong commitment to offer the PGCE in Religious Education, and every other subject, through the medium of Welsh. Also, you may be aware that Religious Education is a core element of the Humanities learning and experience fields and this is taught to over 250 Primary Teacher Initial Education students, and around half of them study this through the medium of Welsh.

In the College of Arts and Humanities, an appointment via Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in the School of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences has also increased the ability to teach religious studies in Welsh. The staff of the School of Philosophy and Religion have established strong and productive links with teachers who teach religion, morals and philosophy for A Levels in schools and Further Education colleges across North Wales and the West of England. Building this network in a part of a three-year project, under the guidance of Professor Lucy Huskinson and Dr Josh Andrews and it is funded by the All Saints Educational Trust. One of the project's aims is to encourage Religious Education, Welsh and English A Level students to continue with their studies of the subjects at the university.

I can also confirm that the University's Religious Education Centre, and the resources store in particular, continue to be available for use and the resources will continue to be looked after so that they can be used by our students and by local schools that wish to do so. The Centre continues to be located in the secure library on the Normal site.

You may also be aware that we normally experience recruitment difficulties in this field. We would be very eager to discuss any ways that we could collaborate that would assist with this. Jeremy Griffith, Director of CaBan, namely the centre responsible for Teacher Initial Education, will be meeting all secondary teachers in Anglesey next week to introduce our teacher initial education programme and discuss closer work connections between the Bangor University School of Education and education in Anglesey. We would be more than prepared to discuss this field further with you.

Please inform me if there is anything else I can do to be of assistance.

Regards

Andrew