Academy Forum 3: Wellbeing in the Curriculum

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## PSF Mapping: A1, A2, A4, K3, K4, V1, V2

This Academy Forum builds on previous events run by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit, including a Mini Conference specifically on Wellbeing in the Curriculum.

The resources from this event are available on our [webpages](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/is/it-services/elearning/networks-and-events/academy-mini-conference/-2021/#mini-conference:-march-:-embedding-well-being-in-the-curriculum) where you can access recordings and slides as well as [reflections on our blog.](https://wordpress.aber.ac.uk/e-learning/category/conference/mini-conference-2021-well-being/)

To help frame the discussion, attendees were given an overview of the following resources:

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This applies to all public bodies in Wales. The [Essentials Guide](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-the-essentials-2021.pdf) is a good place to start to get an overview.

There are 7 well-being goals to the act:

1. Prosperous
2. Resilient
3. Healthier
4. More Equal
5. Cohesive Communities
6. Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language
7. Globally Responsible

Much of the Well-being of Future Generations is within the context of sustainability and more sustainable practices.

## Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities

Produced by Universities UK, this guide aims for universities to be ‘places that promote mental health and wellbeing, enabling all students and all staff to thrive and succeed to their best potential’.

The guidance outlines 5 domains:

* Whole University Approach
* Learn
* Support
* Work
* Live

Within the Learn domain, there is specific guidance and advice around:

* Curriculum and pedagogy
* Learning communities and environments
* Sel-belief and Confidence
* Academic staff (and the role they have)
* Assessment
* Fitness to study and fitness to practice

## Wellbeing in the Curriculum: a 5-step simple guide on why and how

This [guide](https://wordpress.aber.ac.uk/e-learning/files/2021/04/Wellbeing-in-the-curriculum-factsheet.pdf) created by Aberystwyth University’s Sam Glennie explores 5 ways in which you can embed wellbeing into teaching.

The focus is on the following areas:

* Fostering positive connections
* Relating learning to the present
* Encouraging autonomy in student learning
* Considering performance pressures
* Setting clear expectations from the start

The guide justifies why we should be promoting / focusing on these five different areas.

## Discussion 1: In small groups, discuss what do you already do that could be considered as wellbeing in the curriculum

* Use of anonymous polls to encourage participation and give opportunities for students to speak without being identified
* Becoming more flexible in approaches to assessment design, with different options of assessment for all
* Reviewing the timetable and prevent assessments cluttering around a particular pressure point
* One attendee has introduced 20% of an assessment’s marks based on weekly tasks in the construction of the rest of the assignment. This is to help students with their developing and planning skills, and prevent them from becoming anxious about the assessment.
* Incorporating personal pronouns into welcome activities and presenting a safe environment was seen as key
* A discussion was had on the professional boundaries that need to be maintained and making sure channels to further support were clear
* We had a discussion around sensitive topics and how these might be managed, within the tensions between free speech and creating a safe space for all

## Discussion 2: What should be the baseline that the University offers in relation to Wellbeing in the Curriculum?

* We often assume that mechanisms and adjustments for students are adequate without being able to check for ourselves or test. This was discussed in relation to an example from students with hearing impairments and hearing loops.
* Having information included in module information on Blackboard, as well as baseline awareness for all based on dignity and respect
* Service Level Agreements and Key Performance Indicators should be applied to all University services so that students know when they can expect to have any questions resolved
* More opportunities external services are being used and questions were raised over their effectiveness and greater clarity on what was on offer
* There was a discussion as to whether there could be scope to expand MEQs to ask if student felt supported
* There needs to be more work around how information about students is handled in regard to learning difference

## Useful resources

* [Aberystwyth University’s Wellbeing Services](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/studentservices/wellbeing/)
* [Human Resources Supporting Staff](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/info-staff/supporting-staff/)