

Session Title:	The Dragon, The Thistle and The Shamrock
Speaker(s):	Niamh, Llinos, Callum
Chair:	Reena
Reporter:	Fiona

Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	Llinos Angharad Williams- HELOA Chair Wales, <i>Bangor University</i> , Calum Fraser- HELOA Chair Scotland, <i>University of Dundee</i> , & Niamh Gallagher- HELOA VC NW/NI, <i>University of Edge Hill</i> .
Overview/Aim of session:	Finding out what we already know, busting some myths, providing key information that's essential for the home nations.
Workshop Content	<p>Wales- key information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller range of school types in Wales. • Large reform of qualifications. 2025-new GCSEs introduced awarded in 2027. Grading still A* to G. • AS and A level main qualifications. • Old Welsh Bac still running awarded last time 2024 summer, new one being introduced. • WJC- proposals for individual project, get in touch with them. • Be clear to students about what value the Welsh Bac has or not for applying to your university. • Wales is an importer of students, taking more students than it gives to other nations. • Wales charges up to £9,000 tuition fees. • Grants means tested. • Repayments different. • Generous funding system. <p>Scotland- key information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major/minor system on most courses first and second year. • Younger entry to university. • Typically, 4-year degrees, though due to cost of living and study, universities are looking at introducing more 3-year options. • Main quals are Highers and Advanced Highers • Predominantly Private schools offer A levels. • Scottish Awards Finance Agency • Home fees Scottish

- Slightly lower maintenance funding for Scottish students compared to the rest of the UK.
- Language- Gaelic, Scots, English
- Myth- university is free- must apply to SAAS to pay for tuition fees full-time in Scotland.
- Can do Highers in two sittings- first sitting easiest way to apply to university.
- Huge focus on widening access- contextual policies. Extra funding from government for recruiting widening access students.
- SIMD- most important criteria. Scottish IMD. Four quintiles by postcode. Reach programme- Scottish government funded programme. Access to professions.
- Scottish qual reform.
- 30 FE colleges approx.
- HNC and HNDs accepted mixed depending on universities.
- Government provides a marketing toolkit to Scotland institutions; they provide collaborative resources to sell Scotland as a destination.

Northern Ireland- key information

- No extra year of school, start counting years earlier hence year 14.
- Churches run the board of governors. Priest/representative. There are protestant, catholic and integrated schools.
- Irish medium- means everything learnt through Irish. Sit Irish GCSE in Primary school. Irish recognised in Ireland as official language in 2022.
- Ireland still A-G grading.
- Colleges not as common as in England.
- Language different Applied A levels instead of vocational/BTEC. Language used- as frowned upon in society.
- Regional colleges.
- 2 university colleges are part of Queens university Belfast.
- Funding- tuition fees partially funded by the Department for the Economy for NI institutions, so students pay up to £4,750 tuition fees a year for most providers. However, students still pay full tuition fees elsewhere- e.g. they pay £9,250 in England.
- Maintenance grant available for means tested HHI below £41,065. May be eligible for a special support grant.
- Repayments are different, 25 years before outstanding debt wiped. Lower threshold than England to start repaying- over £22,015.

Case Studies/Examples:	n/a
Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:	What do we already know? Flipchart paper on different tables covering Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.
Questions and Answers:	n/a
SummaryKey takeaways:	<p>Wales- Generous funding system. Different repayments to England. Qualifications are different/and going through reform. More heavily recruit from other nations, rather than students leaving Wales.</p> <p>Northern Ireland- Different grading system, heavy religious focus of management of schools still. Different funding and repayment to England.</p> <p>Scotland- Different university system- major later in degree, normally 4-year degrees. Scottish students don't pay tuition fees to study in Scotland.</p>