

Campaign for Science and Engineering Questions

Plaid Cymru

1. How will your party ensure that high quality science, technology, engineering and maths education and training is sustainably funded, for purpose, and open to all?

Plaid Cymru has developed a skills strategy which consists of raising general education levels by bringing school standards, teaching and attainment up to world-class levels. This means working with employers to expand apprenticeships and create high quality vocational education at all levels. We believe in providing financial support for students resident in Wales who wish to study science, engineering and technology at universities in Wales. We believe this will encourage more students to study these subjects and reduce the skills shortage in Wales. We also believe in supporting women in STEM fields by creating mentorships to improve engagement in these fields by women.

2. How will your party ensure the UK has a migration system that supports science and engineering mobility for excellence, skills, education and collaboration?

Even before considering future migration to Wales, Plaid Cymru strongly believes in protecting the rights of the 1,360 non-UK academic staff in Welsh universities to uphold the quality of our research institutions.

Plaid Cymru disagree with the unworkable and illogical immigration policies that the UK Tory Government is proposing. We will create a Welsh Migration Advisory Service that suits Wales's needs. We believe Welsh-specific visas are necessary to plug skills gaps and to protect our health service from staff shortages. We want a logical immigration policy that works for Wales, where students and job creators can come, but wages aren't undercut and communities are protected.

We also believe in protecting the status of all international students by removing them from the net migration targets. Plaid Cymru has a strong record in the issue, most notably with the grassroots campaign led by Hywel Williams, candidate for Arfon, which saw a Bangor University engineering student stopped from being unfairly deported.

3. How will your party maintain and build on the UK's leadership and collaboration in research and innovation internationally?

Plaid Cymru's industrial strategy includes creating clusters of more specialised high-tech and innovative companies, extending the UK's southern 'arc of innovation' and 'northern powerhouse' westwards. This includes the development of indigenous spin-out and start-up firms plus the targeted attraction of international innovative companies, creating high-skill jobs in high-tech firms with high-growth potential.

4. How will your party invest at a level and in such a way as to enhance the UK's research and innovation environment?

Plaid Cymru will build a global reputation for Wales as a centre for research and innovation. We will establish a National Innovation Body, working in partnership with the private sector, to fund a national network of sector-led Research and Technology Centres. This would be based on the

Fraunhofer or Catapult model, where research efforts are geared entirely to people's needs: health, security, communication, energy and environment.

5. How will your party uphold and champion the use of evidence and science advice in all Government decisions, documents and messaging?

Plaid Cymru is committed to evidence-based policy-making, subjecting all new policies to randomised trials, wherever possible, and discontinuing those that fail faster than at present. We believe in the importance of having the greatest possible public engagement with the policy-making process. This not only means better communication from Government, but also a Welsh media that represents the people and policy-making of Wales.

6. How will your party ensure the regulatory environment facilitates trade and access to markets, and promotes innovation?

Plaid Cymru will fight to get the best possible Brexit deal for Wales – including our universities, businesses and communities. A debilitating trade deal with the EU where Wales's interests are last on the agenda risk businesses and jobs moving from Wales. Wales must have an equal say when decisions are made which have major implications for our country. All future free trade deals, for instance, must be endorsed by the National Assembly for Wales.

We will also seek to develop a real international policy for Wales, so that we can restore our position as a great trading nation. This will include introducing a Welsh Development Agency for the 21st century, tasked with boosting Welsh trade. Through representation in embassies across the world, Plaid Cymru will ensure Wales's economic and cultural links are maintained and promoted at home and abroad.

Plaid Cymru Policy Team