



## **Create leaders who will thrive in the modern world**

In 2020, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai became one of only two Welsh members of the Collab Group.

The Collab Group is a UK wide body of FE colleges and college groups. Its member colleges are like-minded, forward-thinking peer organisations that endorse and contribute to our shared ambition.

Collab Group colleges work together to promote and further the interests of the college sector's large providers and provide solutions to the UK's skills and economic growth challenges. Collab Group supports the future of UK wide technical education through four strategic themes:

- Education and skills policy
- Sharing of practice
- Talent and leadership
- Joint commercial business

In the 2021-22 Academic Year, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai enrolled 3 Senior Managers on to their Leadership Programme which has been designed for future talent, below Vice Principal level, who have the potential to become a CEO/Principal.

Here is some feedback from some of the attendees:

### **Manager 1**

It was a valuable experience for me to familiarise myself more and more with challenges that many colleges across the UK are facing and the big changes that are on the horizon for them when planning ahead. A great amount of interesting information and ideas were shared, and although most of the people on the course were middle managers, it was nice to hear their experiences and views on the issues discussed during the year

A number of presentations were received from senior managers from different colleges on issues such as managing finances, drawing up a collegiate strategy, using EMSI information to make strategic decisions when drawing up a curriculum and much more. We also had presentations from a few chief executives of colleges, and these were fantastic!

At the end of the year we needed to present why Further Education colleges are the best sector for presenting L4 and 5 qualifications in the current climate due to the recent Augar report. This was a great opportunity to work as a team, manage expectations and prepare a presentation under challenging conditions from time to time.

Overall, I really enjoyed the experience, and looking back, it could be said that some of the presentations/ tasks are suitable for Middle Managers and at a Strategic level. However, personally I think that the content is specifically tailored for middle managers in the main.





## Manager 2

### Things that were good:

- It made me look for and read strategic documents that relate to regions of the UK other than Wales, which is good for broadening horizons and evaluating things in a different perspective
- It provided a chance to network with colleagues from FEIs and Awarding Organisations in other parts of the UK
- It made me evaluate how our policies and practices in Wales are different to those in other parts of the UK
- It provided an opportunity to work with colleagues from within GLLM in a different context to normal
- It enabled us to explain to colleagues that FEIs operate differently in the devolved nations and to provide a Welsh representation to colleagues from English FEIs.
- The programme gives you access to a mentor who is available to you for your own personal development, and you are encouraged to maintain contact after the programme has ended.
- It makes you think about how to communicate with different audiences and how to lobby and influence effectively to get a message across.
- Most of the masterclasses were excellent and their content was inspirational and insightful

### Things I learnt from the programme:

- It takes time and effort to build the right team relationships to achieve a task such as the one that was set.
- To get the most out of this programme, I think you need to be at a level within your organisation that allows you a broader view of strategic policy development and implementation. Many who were on the programme from other FEIs were at lecturer level, and it was difficult at times for them to see the 'challenge' from a more strategic perspective. Personally, I think I was at the right level to benefit.

- I did enjoy the experience of networking with colleagues from other parts of the UK. I found it interesting to compare what we do in Wales and how devolution affects what we do.
- It made me think about the way I communicate and how I get messages across.

## Manager 3

The aspect of the programme I most enjoyed was the session on labour market intelligence from EMSI. I felt it was an invaluable tool to triangulate with the RSP and employer requirements. This aspect of the course will be very beneficial during the next curriculum planning cycle.

Being immersed in a UK wide programme opened our minds to the UK priorities and how the various governmental organisations have to cooperate to make it all happen.

I also thoroughly enjoyed having to work with peers from other institutions on a common project. We worked as a team to compare and contrast the role of colleges in the Level 4 provision landscape in the UK. There were stark differences between the 4 nations. It was an eye opener. Although we did not win, the feedback was very constructive and will help us improve on our weaknesses.

