



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

The work of the further education institution link inspector

Guidance for further education institutions

February 2014

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities;
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community learning;
- ▲ youth and community work training;
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ Welsh for adults;
- ▲ work-based learning; and
- ▲ learning in the justice sector.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the Welsh Government and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Background and overview of the further education institution link inspector (FEILI) role

Further education institutions (FEIs) are key regional organisations that deliver a range of education and training for different groups of learners. They have important links to a range of strategic bodies including local service boards, 14-19 networks, employer bodies and voluntary sector organisations.

There are 14 further education institutions and two designated further education institutions in Wales. In recognition of the important role that these institutions play in Wales, Estyn considers it a priority area of work to keep abreast of developments in the sector and monitor the progress and performance of each institution. Estyn has redefined the role of the further education institution link inspector in order to address this priority area of work.

We have created a further education institution link inspector team (See Annex 1), comprising of eight inspectors. Further education institution link inspectors (FEILI) are allocated to FEIs in pairs. One inspector will be designated as the lead inspector and the second as the support inspector. In general they bring different expertise and experience to the role and can share the work and support each other. The number of FEIs that a FEILI is linked to will vary.

Each FEI should expect, at least, two visits in an academic year. One of the visits will be between two and three days long and form the basis for producing an annual review of performance (ARP) for the respective FEI. We will publish an annual letter to each FEI, based on the outcomes of the annual review of performance.

Other visits will focus on the outcomes of the ARP or on other aspects of work such as themes identified for the sector, or remit information. Further education institution link inspectors will visit different sites within individual institutions in order to gain an overview of standards, provision, leadership and management on each site.

Overview of roles

FEILIs provide a detailed analysis and overview of the performance of FEIs in Wales. They are responsible for producing an annual review of performance on the institution in the form of a published letter to the institution. This letter will contain recommendations for the institution to improve. The institution will provide a short action plan to Estyn, based on these recommendations, which the FEILI will monitor.

All FEILI work is part of the inspection process and should be treated as such. The institution should be aware of the inspectorial function of the link inspector's work

FEILIs also build an on-going relationship between the FEI and Estyn. The link inspector will also have a key role in inspection and follow-up work and is a conduit for information to the RI of a FEI inspection.

The further education institution lead inspector role

The further education institution lead inspector role includes:

- monitoring and evaluating the standards, provision and the quality of leadership and management at their respective FEIs;
- monitoring how well an FEI is managing its range of education provision;
- producing, for publication, an annual letter on the overall performance of a FEI with recommendations;
- monitoring the resulting action plan produced by the FEI;
- working with the FEI and Estyn's own data team to analyse, understand and interpret the institution's data, both verified and unverified;
- analysing and interpreting LMI for the institution's area;
- monitoring and challenging the FEI over outcomes of its inspections and monitoring progress on inspection recommendations;
- meeting with stakeholders such as employer organisations and local authorities to gain a wider perspective on how well the FEI responds to LMI;
- providing an analysis of the institution's Learner Voice outcomes;
- keeping Estyn up-to-date on developments with the FEI;
- contributing to a risk assessment of FEIs in a sector;
- involvement in sharing intelligence to inspections and follow-up;
- responding to Welsh Government; and
- collecting data and information to contribute to remit work and discuss how FEIs are addressing any relevant recommendations from Estyn's remit reports.

Involvement in further education institution inspections and follow-up

FEILs will:

- be involved in core and follow-up inspections as a team member; and
- liaise with DfES to ensure that the Estyn inspection recommendations are included in the QDP plan, and monitor the progress of the FEI in addressing the recommendations during link visits.

The annual review of performance (ARP)

(See Annex 2)

FEILs will work with the senior managers at the FEI and their staff to review performance, identify strengths and areas for improvement and make recommendations for improvement. The annual review will be for between two and three days, and include information from preparatory work and other information available to the two FEILs. The annual review will result in the annual review of performance letter (See Annex 3).

FEILs will prepare prior to the visit by pulling together and analysing the range of performance information available including:

- performance data;
- inspection outcomes;

- outcomes of any monitoring visits or remit visit;
- Learner Voice; and
- the FEI's annual self-assessment report.

The ARP will focus on:

- outcomes of the most recent inspection, including recommendations made for legacy organisations;
- current standards, supported by an analysis of performance data;
- skills;
- quality of teaching and learning (including any initiatives to improve teaching within the institution);
- quality of leadership and management;
- impact of mergers; (see aide memoire in the annex)
- use made by the institution of the outcomes of the Learner Voice survey and other learner feedback processes deployed by the FEI;
- how well the governing body holds leaders and managers to account by meeting the governing body and evaluating the quality of the documents presented to governors;
- any issues arising from quality of reports provided to Estyn before inspections; and
- any specific issues that the FEILI has become aware of through information from colleagues or from complaints from outside Estyn.

The ARP will include an evaluation of the FEIs own processes for improving teaching and assessment and how it tackles underperformance or discrepancies in teacher performance. Over the year, FEILIs may undertake a limited number of lesson observations if teaching is a line of inquiry, a recommendation in the previous inspection report or to identify excellent practice. .

The FEILI will use the performance report in Annex 2 to record the outcomes of the annual review of performance visit and prepare the published letter discussed in Annex 3.

The FEI will be required to produce an action plan based on the recommendations for improvement resulting from the annual review of performance, which must be approved by the FEILI.

Essential skills

FEILIs should evaluate how well the FEI supports learners to improve their skills. FEILIs should be familiar with the supplementary inspection guidance for inspecting literacy and numeracy at [inspecting literacy and numeracy](#). FEILIs will conduct the skills survey in Annex 5.

Further FEILI visits

FEILIs will make further visits of a shorter duration to monitor progress against the recommendations from the annual review of performance, and other work such as visits to different sites, evaluating themes, or work that contributes to remits.

Theme for 2014

Link meetings during this year will focus primarily on the impact of the mergers and how that impact is evaluated in the FEI's current self-assessment report.

Guidance regarding visits to FEIs

Link Inspectors visit FEIs to meet a range of staff: senior leaders, managers, other staff, and learners in order to monitor and evaluate the progress the FEI is making.

It is the FEI's responsibility to know how well it is doing, its strengths and weaknesses. Leaders should be able to account and explain these to their link inspectors.

Arranging meetings

FEILIs will be allocated time in advance for visits and will inform the FEI of dates when they become available. The lead FEILI should agree an agenda with senior leaders. Information from visits will inform the end of year report letter to the FEI.

FEILIs will send questions they want to explore to the FEIs in advance of the visit and ask leaders to self-assess against the questions. During the visit, they will highlight specific strengths and areas for improvement identified by the FEI.

FEILIs will wish to visit more than one institution site during the year. Inspectors will talk to a range of staff and learners as appropriate

Using the FEI s self-assessment process

FEILIs will use the FEIs own self-assessment report as the basis for their work. By this we mean the usual self-assessment FEIs carry out as part of their annual business improvement cycle and report to their governing body and to the Welsh Government. The report will be a starting point for the discussion between the link inspectors and leaders.

FEILIs will also be interested in how managers use self-assessment reports and developmental plans to keep the governing body informed and enable the governing body to monitor and improve performance and the standards of education in their organisation.

Annex 1: FEI Link inspectors – February 2014

College	Lead HMI	Support HMI
Coleg Sir Gar	Mark Evans	Alun Connick
Gower College Swansea	Mark Evans	Bernie Hayward
Bridgend College	Mark Evans	Bernie Hayward
Merthyr College	Bernie Hayward	Mark Evans
Pembrokeshire College	Liam Kealy	Sandra Barnard
Cardiff & Vale College	Steve Bell	Mark Evans
Coleg y Cymoedd (Morgannwg & Ystrad Mynach)	Mark Evans	Alun Connick
Coleg Gwent	Liam Kealy	Steve Bell
Coleg Ceredigion	Gill Sims	Liam Kealy
Coleg Cambria (Deeside & Yale)	Gill Sims	Liam Kealy
Grŵp NPT (NPT & Coleg Powys)	Steve Bell	Gill Sims
Grŵp Llandrillo Menai	Gill Sims	Liam Kealy

WEA Cymru	Rachael Bubalo/Alun Connick	
YMCA Community College	Alun Connick/Rachael Bubalo	
St David's Sixth Form College	Rachael Bubalo	
University of South Wales	Rachael Bubalo	

1 Outcomes and standards

Summary of performance report

With regards to data inspectors will always review the last three years of published WG (LOR) data. Inspectors will use Estyn's own criteria for analysing data for making judgements. Although inspectors will review the FEI's current un-verified data, the verified data will take priority in making judgements about performance. For the annual evaluation letter, link inspectors will be given a performance report specifically for the institution that has been prepared by Estyn's FEI performance team.

Please use the tables below to identify:

- how well the FEI is performing relative to the sector;
- the programme areas that are performing well;
- areas which are underperforming; and
- comparisons across each of the institutions sites.

<i>How well is the FEI performing relative to the sector</i>		
<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Areas for Improvement</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
<i>Programme / learning areas that are performing well</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage of total number of learners</i>
<i>Programme / learning areas that are underperforming</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage of total number of learners</i>
<i>Comparisons across sites</i>		
<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Areas for improvement</i>	<i>Commentary</i>

Guidance	Evaluation
<p><i>Evaluations should also be made of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Levels (in the context of the area the institution serves, if it is a tertiary institution or provides a 're-sit' or independent A Level programme);</i> • <i>the Welsh Baccalaureate, in terms of levels, number of learners undertaking programme and standards; and</i> • <i>the impact of literacy and numeracy strategies.</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

2 Summary of essential skills

In this section please review how well the FEI plans and provides for the learners' skills development, including literacy and numeracy. N.B. please use the outcomes of the skills survey in appendix 5 to inform this section.

Guidance	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How many learners have identified support needs from initial assessment?</i> • <i>How many learners receive appropriate support?</i> • <i>What range of support measures are in place?</i> • <i>What systems and procedures are in place to support learners?</i> • <i>How effectively does the FEI monitor the impact of support measures on helping learners achieve their learning goals?</i> • <i>How effectively does the FEI monitor the cost effectiveness of support measures?</i> • <i>How is the distance travelled by learners measured and recorded?</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

3 Quality of teaching and assessment

Guidance	Evaluation
<i>Evaluate the effectiveness of the FEI's arrangements for improving teaching and assessment (T&A) including the outcomes of annual observations of teaching and assessment, initiatives to improve T&A and the performance management of teachers/tutors/trainers.</i>	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

4 Curriculum

Guidance	Evaluation
<p><i>Evaluate how well the curriculum offered across all of the FEI's sites matches:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>LMI;</i> • <i>local priorities;</i> • <i>national priorities; and</i> • <i>employers' needs.</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

5 Leadership and management

In this section please review the strategic direction and management arrangements.

Guidance	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How effective are management structures?</i> • <i>How well do leaders and managers communicate with and engage all staff?</i> • <i>How well do leaders and managers keep the governing body informed?</i> • <i>How well does the governing body hold leaders and managers to account?</i> • <i>How well do leaders and managers record and monitor the progress of learners?</i> • <i>How well do leaders and managers make use of LMI when reviewing</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

<p><i>courses?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is the institution offering new courses?</i> • <i>How well do leaders and managers work to meet local and national priorities? What are the local priorities?</i> 	
Key messages:	

6 Leadership and management (quality assurance)

<i>Guidance</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evaluate the FEI's quality assurance procedures and practices.</i> • <i>How well do leaders and managers use and report on data on retention, attainment and achievement?</i> • <i>Evaluate the effectiveness of the FEI's self-assessment arrangements.</i> • <i>Who has overall responsibility for quality assurance arrangements?</i> • <i>Evaluate the effectiveness of the FEI's procedures to identify and address underperformance and plan improvement (e.g. use of targets, tutor performance).</i> • <i>How well is good practice identified and shared?</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

7 Summary of outcomes from inspection and review of recommendations from last inspection

N.B. Please use tables in appendix to address these areas.

Guidance	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide an overview of outcomes from last inspection.</i> • <i>Evaluate how well the FEI has addressed recommendations from previous inspections, including the recommendations made to legacy institutions.</i> • <i>What are the common themes?</i> • <i>How has the FEI prioritised recommendations?</i> • <i>What plans are in place to address recommendations?</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

8 14-19 networks and views from other stakeholders

In this section please review the FEI's activities in 14-19 networks. You should meet with the network co-ordinator to assess the impact of the FEI's contribution to the network.

Guidance	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What collaborative courses does the FEI offer via the 14-19 network?</i> • <i>What role does the FEI play on the network?</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

Views from other stakeholders

Guidance	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How well does the FEI influence the vision of the Local Service Board and contribute to its priority areas of work?</i> • <i>How well does the FEI link to employer bodies and address their priorities?</i> 	<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:	

9 Other

Key theme 2013-2014; summary of the impact of mergers

(See the form in appendix 6 for guidance on evaluating the impact of mergers. However, please summarise here.)

Evaluation
<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:

The use made of Learner Voice and its impact on improving provision for learners

(See separate guidance for analysing and interpreting the outcomes of Learner Voice (Annex 4). FEILs may also consider the FEI's own processes for capturing and acting upon the learner voice. Please summarise here.)

Evaluation
<p>Good features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Key messages:

Welsh language provision

<i>Evaluation</i>
Good features: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Key messages:

Early progress on introduction of learning area programmes

<i>Evaluation</i>
Good features: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Key messages:

Other issues identified by the FEILI

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Report edited by (Name and signature of editor)	
Report approved by Assistant Director – Name and signature of AD	
Date that the approved report was uploaded onto SharePoint	

Report seen by Strategic Director - Signature of SD and date	
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Report to be sent to AD, copied to sector lead inspector, by close of play, **22 July 2014**

Annex 3: Template for letter to FEIs

Principal
XXXXX Institution
Address

Date

Dear

Estyn annual review of performance report on xxxxxx Institution

Following the annual review of performance visit to your institution on [date/s], this letter forms an annual report based on the outcomes of that visit. This letter is published on the Estyn website.

[Insert name] HMI evaluated the current performance of the institution and reviewed the progress made against the recommendations arising from earlier inspections. This has led to further areas for improvement being identified, which are set out at the end of the letter.

[Insert name] HMI held discussions with the principal and senior managers, tutors, learners and members of the governing body. [He/She] scrutinised documentation, including evidence on the progress made against each of the previous inspection recommendations. [They] also considered the quality of teaching and learning through a sample of lesson observations and scrutiny of learners' work.

At the end of each link inspector visit, [Insert name] HMI reported [his/her] findings to the principal of the institution and other members of the senior leadership team.

Outcome of the link inspector visits

Since the inspection of [insert names of the institution or the constituent institutions in the case of a merged institution] in [insert date], the pace of improvement within the institution, as well as the progress against the recommendations left by the inspection team, has been [descriptor].

1 Outcomes and standards

In [insert date / year of verified outcome data], performance levels xxxxx [use the data analysis section prepared for you by the FE data team. If you are presented with data by the institution that does not correspond to the data set from the Welsh Government, then discuss this with the FE data team. Unverified data may be commented upon but this should not contribute to the overall evaluation of the institution's performance].

2 Essential skills

In this paragraph you should use the evaluation you have made regarding the FEIs plans to support learners essential skills developments.

3 Teaching and assessment

In this paragraph you should provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the FEIs arrangements for improving teaching and assessment.

4 Curriculum

In this paragraph you should provide an evaluation of how well the curriculum matches LMI intelligence, national and local priorities and employers needs.

5 Leadership and management

This paragraph/section must evaluate the effectiveness of leadership and management at the FEI, including the level of awareness of the principal, senior leadership team, including institution governors, staff and the student body representatives of the areas for improvement and challenges within the institution's performance and delivery of education and training for its learners. Evaluate how well they know and understand what needs to be done to overcome the barriers to progress.

This paragraph/section should evaluate how effectively the governing body challenges and holds the senior leadership team to account. Evidence for this evaluation should include discussion with the chair or other members of the governing body, discussion with the NUS chair, handling of complaints and views of a sample of learners about the quality of education they are receiving.

If the institution structure has resulted from a recent merger, then this paragraph/section must contain an evaluation of how successful the merger has been on the outcomes for learners. This will require a view to be taken on the impact of the merger on the curriculum including use of LMI across the institution, teaching, quality assurance processes, including performance management of staff, use of resources including rationalisation of building stock, facilities and staff and the quality of work with partners including schools, higher education and local businesses/industry.

6 Leadership and management (quality assurance)

This paragraph should evaluate the honesty, rigour and breadth of the institution's arrangements for self-evaluation. An evaluation must be made about how well embedded self-evaluation is in the business and improvement planning cycle of the institution, including how well the self-evaluation takes account of the views of staff and learners.

7 Summary on progress on the recommendations outlined in the report of [insert date]

(In this section you should use the summary on progress against recommendations from the last inspection including those from legacy institutions.)

8 Other

This section should provide a brief evaluation of how well the FEI:

- has managed the impact of mergers;
- uses Learner Voice to improve provision for learners;
- plans and promotes Welsh language provision;
- is making early progress on introducing learning area programmes;
- contributes to the 14-19 network; and
- takes account of the views of stakeholders.

The FEILI can also use this section to report on any other issues that have been discussed during the year and the outcome of these discussions.

Next steps

As a result of these evaluations, and the [insert descriptor] progress against recommendations, the institution will now have 30 days to prepare an action plan. This action plan needs to outline the steps the institution will take to implement the necessary improvements.

The plan needs to clearly identify who will take responsibility for tasks, contain milestones, identify relevant resources and how success will be evidenced.

In addition to the recommendations noted below, the institution should respond to all the issues noted in this letter.

Your Estyn link inspectors, [insert names] HMI will continue to monitor overall progress and the action plan through their link role with the institution.

Recommendations

In order to bring about the necessary improvements in a timely manner, the institution should:

- R1
- R2
- R3
- R4

I am copying this letter to the Chair of Governing Body and to the Welsh Government for information.

Yours sincerely

Lin Howells
Assistant Director

Annex 4: Guidance on use of Learner Voice

How Estyn will use Learner Voice results for inspection of post-16 providers

- 1 We will use the learner voice results for all inspection work for:
 - further education institutions;
 - work-based learning consortia;
 - adult community learning; and
 - Welsh for adults.
- 2 Link inspectors will be responsible for analysing and evaluating Learner Voice results at provider level and make sure that this information is available to inspection teams when appropriate. The post-16 link inspector will produce a commentary on an annual basis and identify lines of inquiry.
- 3 The link inspector will discuss their evaluation and lines of inquiry with the provider annually. They will include a report of this in their annual performance report and to inspection teams as appropriate.
- 4 Inspection reports to September 2014 will feature an evaluative commentary comparing provider LV results to national results based on the data provided by the sector infographs, and an evaluative commentary of the verbatim results.
- 5 Inspection reports from September 2014 will provide the same evaluative commentary but using the provider's learner satisfaction summary reports produce by DfES.

Annex 5: SKILLS survey for FEILIs

Please complete tables below:

LITERACY					
YEAR	Number of learners on courses of five hours or more	Number of learners who have had an initial assessment (in English)	Number of learners Entry 1 to Entry 3	Number of learners at Level 1	Number of learners at L2 or higher

LITERACY					
YEAR	Number of learners on courses of five hours or more	Number of learners who have had an initial assessment (in Welsh)	Number of learners Entry 1 to Entry 3	Number of learners at Level 1	Number of learners at L2 or higher

NUMERACY					
YEAR	Number of learners on courses of five hours or more	Number of learners who have had an initial assessment (in English)	Number of learners Entry 1 to Entry 3	Number of learners at Level 1	Number of learners at L2 or higher

NUMERACY					
YEAR	Number of learners on courses of five hours or more	Number of learners who have had an initial assessment (in Welsh)	Number of learners Entry 1 to Entry 3	Number of learners at Level 1	Number of learners at L2 or higher

	Literacy	Numeracy
Number of learners identified for specific out-of-class support with learning support specialists		
Number of learners taking up specific out-of-class support with learning support specialists		

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS:

- How are literacy and numeracy targets set for learners?
- How is distance travelled by learners in literacy and numeracy measured and recorded at both course and whole institution level?
- How are teachers and managers held to account for improvement in standards in literacy and numeracy?
- How well is the institution doing in improving literacy and numeracy skills of all learners? How do they know?

Annex 6: The impact of merger in FEIs

Standards

What has been the impact on outcomes for the two years following merger?

Identify specific courses that were offered by both institutions, e.g. motor vehicle. What were the outcomes for each individual college and what are the outcomes for the combined college. Have outcomes improved, declined or remained constant?

What has been the impact on learner progression to higher levels of courses?

Has the merger allowed learners to move more easily to higher level courses? Are higher levels of courses offered at every site or do learners have to relocate to other sites for progression? Identify specific course/courses and track the progression rates before merger and after. Are more or fewer learners progressing to higher level courses or are numbers remaining constant?

What has been the impact of merging two different course 'entry' qualification standards?

For example, what has been the initial impact on outcomes and courses where one institution has had lower course entry requirements? What has been the impact on learners when learners on the same course may have considerably different learning abilities and prior attainment?

How have student support services been merged?

Do students at all sites have equal access to qualified support staff? What were the learner support numbers of each individual institution? What are the numbers across the combined college? Are specifically qualified staff (for example signers for the deaf) employed across all sites? What are implications of providing this support if staff have to travel? Has this affected the support learners receive?

Wellbeing

What changes have been made to ensure all learners at all sites have an equal experience of wellbeing?

Are different sites offering different experiences? For example – childcare facilities, coffee shop/refectory choices, common room facilities, extra curricula options.

What has been the impact on specific student groups?

What student groups were offered at each individual institution? Have these been replicated across all sites or have some groups been lost in the merger? For example – LGBT groups, Christian society, Muslim prayer groups etc.

Provision

What has been the impact of merger on teaching standards?

What were the observation profiles before merger and what is the profile post-merger? What areas for improvement has the institution identified to ensure teaching standards are consistent across all sites? What has been the impact on CPD?

How have ILS departments been affected by merger?

Are ILS departments continuing as they were before merger or have they been merged / rationalised to one site? What was the curriculum offers for these learners pre-merger and post-merger?

What has been the impact of merger on foundation course learners? (those learners who do not have the qualification profile to join main stream courses)

There has been a considerable variance between the choices colleges offer for these learners from discrete classes to pre-voc courses. How has merger impacted on the curriculum for these learners? Consider the options pre and post-merger and compare the outcomes and progression data between the pre and post institutions.

What changes have been made to venues and sites as a result of merger?

How many resources have been refurbished? Has the merger resulted in new builds?

How has the merger impacted on provision through the medium of Welsh and bilingually?

How has the requirement for Welsh language courses and support been taken into account within the new institutions? Has the number and choice of courses increased? Have the Welsh courses been rationalised to a specific site? If not – are specialist Welsh language teachers travelling between sites?

Leadership and management

What has been the impact on managers?

Have managers been asked to take on extra responsibilities? Has their work been streamlined to more narrow specific duties across all sites? Have they taken on wider responsibilities but within one site? Has there been an increase or a decrease in the numbers of managers at each level? Has there been a significant impact on the financial costs?

What has been the impact on college teachers?

How many teachers applied for voluntary redundancy? How many of these were accepted? How many staff moved to new positions? How many staff moved to new sites? How has the dispersal of staff across sites impacted on costs (travel etc.)?

What has been the impact on 'backroom' services?

Have exams offices been combined on one site or have qualifications been divided between exams offices on separate sites? Are exams held at one site or across sites? Does this involve more travel for learners?

What factors have influenced the siting of courses where there is duplication?

What has been the impact of this on learners? What has been the impact on finance where learners have to travel a greater distance?

What are the significant changes to the curriculum offer?

Are there more choices for the learners? Are learners struggling to combine course choices where these may be on different sites? How has the revised curriculum impacted on learners numbers (check learner numbers pre and post-merger)? Have significant courses (in terms of numbers) been moved to alternative sites? What consideration has the institution given to labour market factors in different communities when placing courses?

How is quality managed across the sites?

Including the arrangements for IV and EV where subjects are offered on more than one site. What is the structure for ensuring standards are consistent across all sites and all learning areas? Has the quest for a standardised quality meant teachers moving to other sites? How has the impacted on the dynamics of departments?

How has the institution managed benchmarks, comparators and targets between institutions?

For example, has the college combined the pre-merger data for previous years to form a new benchmark and set targets? How has this impacted on targets? Does this mean a previously high performing learning area now has reduced or maintained targets to allow lower performing areas to catch up? Follow impact through by looking at learning area targets pre and post-merger.