# Annual report to the Welsh Language Commissioner on the implementation of QAA's Welsh Language Scheme 2013

## Contents

# Summary

This report sets out how the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has met its obligations under the terms of its Welsh Language Scheme (the Scheme) when delivering its services in Wales from January to December 2013. We are in the eleventh year of the Scheme's operation, following approval in July 2003 (and reapproval in January 2008 and October 2012).

Team Wales is the internal committee which monitors QAA's activities in Wales. The committee is chaired by the Head of QAA Wales and comprises a number of senior staff from across QAA. One of the roles of Team Wales is to monitor QAA's implementation of the Scheme.

The Welsh Language Officer has responsibility for monitoring the day-to-day implementation of the Scheme and reporting any failures of implementation to the Head of QAA Wales. For part of 2013, the Welsh Language Officer role was split between two members of staff (one of whom is a Welsh speaker). The Officers continued to maintain the monitoring of the Scheme, with regular reminders to staff about QAA's responsibilities.

QAA's review activity in Wales remains small relative to its overall review activity in the UK. There was one Institutional Review in Wales during 2013 (Glyndŵr University), one Review for Educational Oversight (Wales Evangelical School of Theology), and one Review for Specific Course Designation (Centre for Alternative Technology). The main part of our review activity in Wales were the eight Reviews of Foundation Degrees in Wales (Aberystwyth University; Bangor University; Cardiff Metropolitan University; Glyndŵr University; University of South Wales; Swansea University; University of Wales, Newport; and University of Wales Trinity St David). QAA also conducted five initial inquiries under our Concerns procedure with providers in Wales, none of which resulted in full investigations.

Communication in Welsh is actively encouraged through QAA's website and other QAA publications; however, the volume of telephone communication and written correspondence in Welsh remains low. Among the publications published bilingually in 2013 were two guides to Institutional Review in Wales aimed specifically at university students. The number of web pages provided bilingually remained broadly steady compared to 2012.

An internal online incident log was created in 2013 to formally record any lapses by staff in adhering to the Scheme. Two incidents were recorded and actioned in 2013.

# Section 1: Bilingual services for the public

## Written communication

1        QAA retains the capacity to respond bilingually to written correspondence. All correspondence received in Welsh is recorded, the correspondence is considered initially by one of QAA's Welsh Language Officers and, if appropriate, translation services are used to read and reply to the correspondence. In 2013 we received one item of correspondence in Welsh (from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office). A bilingual response was produced in line with the Scheme.

2        Unless previously agreed with the recipient, all QAA-initiated correspondence (including circulars and standard letters) which relates to QAA activities in Wales only is sent out in both languages. In 2013 a total of 14 QAA letters were translated.

3        The consistent use of bilingual headed stationery for all correspondence with individuals and organisations in Wales has become established across QAA. The Lead Administrator for QAA Wales monitors the use of the bilingual stationery and, should any lapses occur, records it in the incident log and provides guidance to colleagues.

## Telephone communication

4        QAA has an agreement with the National Union of Students (NUS) Wales whereby the NUS office in Cardiff acts as a call centre and first point of contact for anyone wishing to communicate with QAA in Welsh, but NUS Wales did not received any calls on the dedicated Welsh-language telephone line in 2013.

5        The Welsh-language telephone line is publicised on the 'QAA Wales' and 'Contact us' pages of QAA's website, which state that QAA welcomes correspondence and telephone calls in either Welsh or English.

6        All publications and promotional materials that are produced bilingually and that have QAA's contact details will in future include the Welsh-language telephone line number.

## Events for the Welsh sector

7        QAA's Annual Reception 2013 was held at the National Assembly for Wales. The focus of this event was on how we can engage students in the issues that have an impact on the quality of their education and enable them to drive improvement in universities and colleges. The Welsh Minister for Education was one of the keynote speakers. It was an opportunity for students and staff from all of the UK - and particularly the Welsh higher education sector - to meet Assembly Members. All event materials were produced bilingually, and QAA used social media to tweet live in both Welsh and English from the event.

8        In April, QAA held a workshop event for the sector in Wales on the new *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, looking specifically at how Institutional Review in Wales will encompass the Expectations contained in the Chapter. The event built on a UK-wide consultation tour the previous year, which  included an event in Cardiff, when QAA was drafting the Chapter. Invitations and all other materials for the workshop event were produced bilingually.

9        Following the completion of the Reviews of Foundation Degrees in Wales, QAA and the Higher Education Academy held a joint event entitled 'Future Directions: Learning from the Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales' at the University of South Wales in November.

It was attended by representatives from the universities that had been reviewed and their college partners, as well as students and employers. All event materials produced by QAA were produced bilingually.

## Corporate identity

10 QAA has bilingual stationery for letterheads and compliment slips. Templates relating to QAA's business in Wales (such as standard letters for Institutional Review) incorporate the bilingual letterhead and footer and are available to staff on the QAA intranet. All other publications that require the Welsh QAA logo (for example circular letters, review reports and guidance documents) tend to be published in electronic format only and are dealt with on an ad hoc basis, thereby removing the requirement for pre-printing.

11 Following the introduction in 2012 of QAA's Quality Mark for eligible subscribing institutions, a similar scheme was introduced in 2013 for private providers. This allows eligible providers to display a Review Graphic on their websites and publications. A bilingual version of the Review Graphic will be made available for providers in Wales, once any of them becomes eligible.

12 Nine universities in Wales were eligible for the Quality Mark in 2013, of which five were using it.

## Signs

13 QAA opened a new office in Cardiff in early 2013. Information signs in the office building and directions to the office available on the QAA website are in Welsh and English. A bilingual press release was issued when the office opened and bilingual letters sent to interested parties for information.

## Website

14 The QAA website includes a bilingual section about our work in Wales and bilingual web pages about reviews for institutions in Wales. The 'QAA Wales' pages have specific branding, using a dragon banner and a separate colour scheme, to make the pages relating to our work in Wales visually distinctive.

15 All new web pages and publications relating to QAA's work in Wales and to Welsh institutions were published bilingually. The suite of 'Concerns' web pages (with guidance about raising concerns about institutions or complaining about QAA) was further updated in Welsh and English during 2013.

16 The online bilingual glossary of QAA terminology (relating to higher education and particularly to quality assurance) now includes a language toggle for each term to make this a more useful resource for the sector.

17 The online Good Practice Knowledgebase, which originally included good practice identified through Institutional Review (England and Northern Ireland), was expanded in 2013 to include good practice identified in QAA reviews in Wales. A number of case studies from institutions in Wales were also included. Both the features of good practice and the case studies are published and searchable bilingually.

18 In 2013, 14 short translations were carried out for the QAA public website. The number of Welsh language pages remained broadly the same as in 2012, with a small increase in the publication and complaints sections.

19      Statistics for selected Welsh language pages of the QAA website for January to December 2013 (inclusive) are set out below and show that the online glossary had the greatest number of views. Pages about our concerns and complaints scheme saw a high increase in the volume of traffic.

| URL | Page views |
| --- | --- |
| Rhestr termau<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/rhestr/pages/default.aspx | 332 |
| ASA Cymru<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/Wales/pages/cymru.aspx | 146 |
| Amdanom Ni<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/wales/pages/amdanom-ni.aspx | 74 |
| Cwynion<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/Complaints/pages/cwynion.aspx | 80 |
| Cwynion am ASA ac apeliadau<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/pages/cwynion.aspx | 78 |
| Adolygiad Sefydliadol (Cymru)<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/adolygiad-sefydliadol-Cymru.aspx | 34 |
| Adolygiad o Raddau Sylfaen yng Nghymru<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/graddau-sylfaen-Cymru.aspx | 15 |
| Rhaglen o'r adolygiadau (2009-15)<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/programme-of-review-cymru.aspx | 23 |
| Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg 2012-15<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/cynllun-iaith-Gymraeg-2012.aspx | 31 |
| Cefnogi siaradwyr Cymraeg drwy ein Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/cefnogi-siaradwyr-Cymraeg.aspx | 12 |
| Canllawiau ar gyfer sefydliadau addysg uwch yng Nghymru ar arfer da, effeithiol mewn arholi ac asesu mewn iaith sy'n wahanol i'r iaith addysgu<br>www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/canllawiau-asesu-Cymraeg.aspx | 3 |

**Table 1: Total number of page views of selected Welsh language web pages (2013)**

## Publications and publicity

20      In 2013, QAA produced the following publications bilingually:

| Date | Publication |
|---|---|
| March 2013 | Annual report to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Higher Education Wales 2011-12 www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/annual-report-HEFCW-2011-12.aspx |
| March 2013 | Annual report to the Welsh Language Commissioner 2012 www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/annual-report-to-WLC-2012.aspx |
| March 2013 | Concerns Scheme: guidance and submission form (superseded by an update in February 2014, also published bilingually) |
| May 2013 | Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales: Bangor University (shared with the institution but not published) |
| June 2013 | Institutional Review Wales: Glyndŵr University www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Reports/Pages/inst-review-Glyndwr-13.aspx |
| July 2013 | Review for Educational Oversight: Wales Evangelical School of Theology www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Reports/Pages/REO-WEST-13.aspx |
| June 2013 | Institutional Review (Wales): Guidance for lead student representatives www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/IRW-LSR-guide-13e.aspx |
| July 2013 | Mini guide: a brief student guide to Institutional Review (Wales) www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/IRW-mini-guide-13e.aspx |
| August 2013 | Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales: University of Wales Trinity Saint David (shared with the institution but not published) |
| October 2013 | Report on the Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales, 2012-13 www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/RFDW-report.aspx |
| November 2013 | Annual report to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Higher Education Wales 2012-13 www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Annual-report-HEFCW-2012-13.aspx |

**Table 2: Publications produced bilingually (2013)**

21      One bilingual press release was published during 2013, announcing the opening of QAA's office in Wales.

22      QAA staff used corporate Twitter accounts to tweet in Welsh and English on a number of occasions, including to promote the online survey on QAA's bilingual services, a Welsh language podcast published in February, and the Annual Reception held at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay in June.

## Recruitment advertising

23      Job vacancy advertisements where Welsh language skills were particularly relevant (for example, in the Public Engagement Group) include the specification: 'Desirable: able to speak in a confident manner in Welsh/able to read and understand Welsh'.

24      No job vacancies were advertised bilingually during 2013, as there were no vacancies advertised in Wales or for which Welsh language skills were essential. In 2013

QAA did invite applications for student reviewers from across the UK and included a specific question on whether applicants had Welsh language skills and their level of competence (basic, intermediate, fluent or advanced). One student reviewer with Welsh language skills was recruited.

25      The role of Welsh Language Officer (responsible for coordinating translations and supporting the implementation of the Scheme) was for part of 2013 split between two members of staff within the Public Engagement Group, one of whom is a Welsh speaker.

# Section 2: Reviewing universities and colleges

## Institutional Review

26      One Institutional Review took place in a Welsh institution in 2013: at Glyndŵr University.

27      The institution expressed a preference for conducting the review in English. The review report was published bilingually on QAA's public website.

28      We collect feedback on institutions' experiences at the end of each review and use this feedback to evaluate and improve the provision of Welsh language services offered during reviews. Two questions are asked about the Welsh language provision:

- at the preliminary meeting, were Welsh language preferences discussed?
- where a preference to conduct business in Welsh or both languages was expressed, did QAA put effective arrangements in place?

29      Glyndŵr University confirmed that Welsh language preferences were discussed at preliminary meeting. No other comments about Welsh language were included in the evaluation.

## Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales

30      QAA conducted Reviews of Foundation Degrees in Wales in eight institutions in 2013. Each institution was asked what its language preference was for the conduct of the review and for the production of the review report (which are not made public for this review method), with two institutions, Bangor University and University of Wales Trinity St David, requesting bilingual reports. In two of the reviews some aspects of meetings with staff and students were carried out bilingually through the use of simultaneous translations. An overview report, summarising the findings from all eight reviews, was published in Welsh and English during the autumn.

## Review of colleges providing higher education courses

31      There were no reviews of colleges in Wales providing higher education courses during 2013.

## Review for Educational Oversight

32      Review for Educational Oversight is the method used for reviewing privately funded providers of higher education as part of Home Office requirements for recruiting international students. One such review was carried out at a provider in Wales in 2013 (Wales Evangelical School of Theology). The provider opted for its review to be carried out in English only, but the report was published in Welsh and English.

## Review for Specific Course Designation

33      Review for Specific Course Designation is a new method for reviewing privately funded providers of higher education that want to access student loan funding. One such review at a provider in Wales (Centre for Alternative Technology) was begun in 2013 and will complete, with the report published in Welsh and English, in early 2014. The provider opted for its review to be carried out in English only.

## Degree awarding powers and university title

34      No Welsh institutions underwent scrutiny for degree awarding powers or university title during 2013.

## Review and licensing of AVAs

35      Agored Cymru underwent an Access Validating Agency (AVA) Relicensing Review in 2012, the report of which was published bilingually in 2013. Agored Cymru expressed a preference for its review to be conducted in English.

# Section 3: Implementing and monitoring the Scheme

## The role of Team Wales

36      Team Wales is the internal committee which monitors QAA's activities in Wales. The committee is chaired by the Head of QAA Wales and comprises a number of senior staff from across QAA. One of the roles of Team Wales is to monitor QAA's implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme. Team Wales is also responsible for ensuring that consideration is given to the Welsh language in the formulation of new policies and initiatives, working in close collaboration with the Public Engagement Group.

37      Team Wales meets formally three times per year; during 2013 the committee met in March, July and November. The membership of Team Wales in 2013 was:

| Name | Responsibilities within Team Wales |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| Dr Irene Ainsworth | Head of Degree Awarding Powers and University Title |
| Mr Douglas Blackstock | Director of Resources |
| Ms Pat Cooper (Secretary) | Lead Administrator for QAA Wales |
| Miss Alicia Danks | Welsh Language Officer |
| Ms Kath Dentith | Head of Access to Higher Education |
| Ms Jenny Drayden | Welsh Language Officer |
| Ms Barbara Edwards | Assistant Director, Review of Foundation Degrees |
| Dr Julian Ellis (Chair) | Head of QAA Wales |
| Ms Jennifer Evans | Head of Business Development |
| Mrs Zoë Forbes | Public Relations Manager |
| Dr David Gale | Liaison Officer Scheme |
| Miss Sarah Halpin | Student Engagement Officer |
| Dr Stephen Jackson | Director of Reviews |
| Ms Anett Loescher | Standards, Quality and Enhancement |
| Mrs Helen Markham | Reviews operational support |
| Mr Tony Platt | Review Manager, Higher Education Review Wales |
| Ms Liz Rosser | Head of Finance |

**Table 3: Team Wales membership and responsibilities (2013)**

## The QAA Wales Committee

38      The Advisory Committee for Wales was renamed the QAA Wales Committee and its membership extended to include a representative each from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the Welsh Government. The Committee is a subcommittee of the QAA Board whose role is to provide the Board with advice on the development and provision of QAA's services in Wales in line with the joint Service Level Agreement with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and Higher Education Wales (HEW). The Committee met three times during 2013, in March, July and December 2013.

39      The membership of the QAA Wales Committee in 2013 was:

| Name | Position |
|---|---|
| Sir Rodney Brooke | Chair of QAA Board (ex officio) |
| Ms Beth Button | NUS Wales |
| Professor Antony Chapman | Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff Metropolitan University |
| Ms Judith Compton | UK Commission for Employment and Skills |
| Ms Pat Cooper | Lead Administrator for QAA Wales |
| Dr Julian Ellis | Head of QAA Wales |
| Mr David Finch | Deputy Principal (Academic), Coleg y Cymoedd |
| Professor John Grattan | HEW |
| Ms Linda Howells | Managing HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector), Adult and Teacher at Estyn |
| Dr Stephen Jackson | Director of Reviews, QAA |
| Ms Helen Jones | Welsh Government (observer) |
| Dr Helena Lim | Assistant Director, Higher Education Academy |
| Ms Stephanie Lloyd | President, NUS Wales |
| Mr Anthony McClaran | Chief Executive, QAA |
| Dr Ioan Matthews | Chief Executive, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol |
| Professor Clive Mulholland | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Student Experience), University of Glamorgan |
| Ms Lisa Newberry | Assistant Director, HEW |
| Dr Cliona O'Neill | Head of Student Experience, HEFCW |
| Mr John Tredwell | QAA Board member |

**Table 4: QAA Wales Committee membership (2013)**

## Staffing

40      In 2013, QAA had six members of staff with Welsh language skills. Of these, three are fluent Welsh speakers; two have intermediate skills; and one received external Welsh-language training, in the form of a week-long intensive intermediate course in Welsh. We believe this level of support for the Welsh language provides a secure basis to implement our Scheme and meet our ongoing commitments.

## Administrative arrangements

41      QAA has procedures in place for the translation of documents and texts. The consideration of material that needs to be translated usually happens in one of two ways. Short texts may be translated by one of QAA's bilingual staff. If the text is more substantial - as in the case of most documents - the translation will be contracted out to a translation agency. All translation agencies used by QAA are members of the Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters.

42      One of the Welsh Language Officers and the Lead Administrator for QAA Wales held a staff information talk on St David's Day in 2013 on the new Welsh Language Scheme. At the start of the information talk, staff were asked to respond on post-it notes to the following question: 'Why do we have a Welsh Language Scheme, and why is it so

important?' It was an opportunity for staff to hear more details about the Scheme, to think about its implications in their day-to-day work and where to find support, as well as to collect printed copies of the staff mini guide to the Scheme (see also paragraph 45).

43      The Lead Administrator for QAA Wales also delivered 19 introductions to the Scheme for new staff as part of their induction to QAA.

44      An incident log was created in 2013 on QAA's intranet to record any failures to adhere to the Scheme and the action taken in response. All members of staff can add entries to the log, which is monitored by the Scheme Manager, the Lead Administrator for QAA Wales and the Welsh Language Officers. Two incidents were recorded in 2013: one was the use of QAA's English logo on a bilingual report sent to an institution in Wales, and the other an instance of English-only stationery used for a letter to a recipient in Wales.

## Monitoring

45      The Welsh Language Officers have responsibility for monitoring the day-to-day implementation of the Scheme and reporting any failures of implementation to the Head of QAA Wales. In 2013 the Officers continued to maintain the monitoring of the Scheme, with regular reminders to staff about QAA's responsibilities under the Scheme.

46      Team Wales is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Scheme. The Head of QAA Wales, as the Scheme Manager, is directly responsible to the Chief Executive for its implementation. The Scheme Manager reports directly to QAA's Directorate on an annual basis and this report goes forward to QAA's Board. In addition, the Scheme Manager reports to the QAA Wales Committee on the operation of the Scheme.

47      As part of its Service Level Agreement with HEFCW and HEW, QAA commits to maintaining its organisational capacity to deal with Welsh-medium enquiries and meet other Welsh Language Scheme requirements.

48      We remain confident that our current arrangements provide a good basis for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Scheme.

## Publishing the Scheme

49      QAA has the following measures in place for making staff aware of the expectations of the Scheme.

- A mini guide is available to all staff in both hard copy and electronically. This desk instruction provides a summary of the Scheme and the expectations placed on staff.
- The mini guide and the Scheme are available to all staff on QAA's intranet and website.
- An introduction to the Scheme forms part of the induction process for newly appointed staff.
- Where failures of implementation have been identified, staff are reminded of their responsibilities under the Scheme and, where appropriate, measures are put in place to ensure similar breaches do not occur in future. Such incidents, and their outcomes, are now recorded in the incident log.

## Comments on the Scheme

50      QAA did not receive any comments or complaints about its Welsh Language Scheme during 2013. See also paragraphs 54 to 55 for details of an online survey.

## Targets

51        Specific targets to be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis (2012-15):

| Targets | Action and timescale | Status |
|---|---|---|
| Evaluation of the effectiveness of Team Wales. | Next evaluation due in 2012 | Completed July 2013 |
| Review the Scheme to ensure QAA's continuing commitment to the Welsh language. | By April 2012 | Completed |
| Facilitate and support staff to use the Welsh Language Scheme as part of their daily work, including:<br>• mini staff introduction pamphlet to be produced to supplement the existing desk guidance<br>• review and update the existing desk guidance<br>• podcast on use of the Scheme. | During 2012<br><br><br>During 2012 and ongoing<br><br>During 2012 | Completed<br><br><br>Completed<br><br>Completed |
| Conduct a survey on QAA's bilingual services. | During 2012 | Completed |
| Encourage the use of Welsh language services through marketing and promotional methods, including:<br>• maintaining and enhancing the Welsh language part of QAA's website<br>• producing reader-friendly student mini guide on the Scheme<br>• developing reciprocal arrangements with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and other relevant bodies to promote QAA's services. | Ongoing<br><br>During 2012<br><br>During 2012 and ongoing | Ongoing<br><br>Completed<br><br>Ongoing |
| Develop QAA's role within the agenda of Welsh medium and bilingual provision by:<br>• meeting on a regular basis with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol<br>• considering relevant issues through its review processes. | Annually<br><br>Ongoing | Completed<br><br>Ongoing |

**Table 5: Targets to be monitored on an annual basis**

52        The evaluation of the effectiveness of Team Wales took place during the academic year 2012-13. A survey was circulated to members in May 2013 and the outcomes discussed at the Team Wales meeting in July 2013. The survey confirmed that the members of the Committee considered that Team Wales was an effective means of monitoring QAA's Welsh Language Scheme.

53        A podcast in Welsh was published on QAA's public website in February 2013. It is a conversation between two members of QAA staff about the Scheme and the bilingual services that QAA provides for stakeholders in Wales. The podcast was recorded in Welsh only, with a bilingual transcript published alongside it.

54    The survey on QAA's bilingual services to its Welsh-speaking stakeholders was conducted between February and March 2013. It was publicised via the 'QAA Wales' web pages, QAA's monthly electronic newsletter, Twitter, the Welsh language podcast, and direct emails to stakeholders in Wales. The survey consisted of a number of questions to which respondents were asked to rate a service, as well as space for free-text responses. There were 16 responses received, 11 of which were submitted in Welsh.

55    Overall, respondents were broadly satisfied with the services provided. Several expressed a wish for more documentation to be available in Welsh, although it was also recognised that this might be impractical or too costly. As a result of these comments we have added fuller explanations about our publications policy to our website pages where documents are available in English only. We have also started looking at the possibility of creating bilingual versions of certain key documents in future, even where they are not covered by the Scheme, and we will keep this under review.

56    The bilingual sections of the QAA website were extended to include complaints and concerns, including a complaints submission form in Welsh and plans for a 'wizard' tool to guide potential complainants through the process. This tool should be operational in early 2014.

**QAA705 - Apr 14**