



**Annual report to the  
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and  
Higher Education Wales**

**2011-12**

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## Introduction

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has agreed a service level agreement (SLA) with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and Higher Education Wales (HEW) for the period 1 August 2009 until 31 July 2015. The SLA sets out the respective responsibilities of the three organisations and that they will work in partnership on matters of mutual interest. This report covers the period 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012 and sets out how QAA has met its responsibilities.

The SLA specifies that QAA will provide a report to HEFCW and HEW at the end of each year for the period of the agreement, which will include:

- a report on progress against the programme of services for 2011-12
- a breakdown of expenditure against the headings of the payment schedule for Wales (see Appendix A).

## Achievements in 2011-12

Activity	Completed: yes, no or partially
Undertake and deliver three Institutional Reviews, including training of review teams and briefings for institutions	Yes: see paragraphs 1-11
Carry out two Mid-review follow-ups to Institutional Reviews, at Swansea Metropolitan University and the University of Glamorgan	Yes: see paragraph 14
Provide advice and implement the QAA procedures for handling Causes for Concern	Yes: see paragraphs 28-29
Develop a review method for a developmental review of Foundation Degrees in Wales in 2012-13	Yes: see paragraphs 23-25
Provide training and support to secure the involvement of students in the Institutional Review (Wales) process	Yes: see paragraph 34
Work with HEFCW, HEW, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the higher education sector on quality assurance and enhancement issues relating specifically to Wales	Yes: see paragraphs 38-41
Support the Wales Initiative on Student Engagement (WISE) and student engagement in quality processes	Yes: see paragraph 43
Work with HEFCW and the higher education sector in relation to the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales	Yes: see paragraph 41
Undertake regular visits to each of the higher education institutions in Wales	Yes: see paragraph 61
Attend meetings of relevant committees, including the HEFCW Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) and the Welsh Academic Development and Quality Group	Yes: see paragraph 61
Liaise with other relevant bodies, including the Welsh Government, Estyn, HEA, the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare, and the National Union of Students (NUS) Wales	Yes: see paragraph 61
Assist with enquiries from the higher education sector and from others in Wales	Yes: see paragraphs 55-56
Ensure an organisational capacity to deal with Welsh-medium enquiries and meet Welsh Language Scheme requirements	Yes: see paragraphs 66-68

**Table 1: achievements against programme of services for 2011-12**

## Summary of activities 2011-12

### Review activity

- QAA conducted three Institutional Reviews, which resulted in 'confidence' judgements in all aspects of the reviews, except in one case where there was 'limited confidence' judgement in collaborative provision.
- Institutional Reviews identified 13 areas of good practice and 28 recommendations to improve the management of academic quality and standards.
- QAA conducted two Mid-review follow-ups to Institutional Reviews, which resulted in reports to institutions and HEFCW.
- Following an investigation under QAA's Concerns Scheme in 2010-11 into the management of academic standards and quality, QAA has monitored the implementation of the University of Wales' action plan.
- In 2011-12, QAA undertook a full investigation under its Concerns Scheme into the University of Wales and its collaborative partner, which resulted in a published report and six follow-up actions.
- Agored Cymru underwent a full Access Validating Agency relicensing review, including risk judgments, and a report was published in August 2012.
- Two Embedded College Reviews for Educational Oversight took place at embedded colleges centred in Wales.

### Review support activity

- QAA published a revised Institutional Review method handbook. The revised method improves both the enhancement and quality assurance aspects of Institutional Review.
- Exploratory visits or informal discussions have taken place with two institutions in relation to research degree-awarding powers.
- QAA published its handbook for the Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales method for 2012-13. This was supplemented by a briefing event for all higher education providers and further education colleges involved in the review.
- In January, QAA held a training event for 12 reviewers, three student reviewers and three institutional facilitators, for reviews in spring and summer 2012.
- QAA developed and agreed its strategic approach to quality enhancement with Welsh higher education sector groups. This will result in a more coordinated approach to quality enhancement.

### Student engagement

- The Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) continues to be the vehicle which drives forward QAA student engagement work in Wales. QAA supported the re-launch of WISE as part of a collaborative approach to student engagement in Wales.
- QAA continues to provide support for students involved in Institutional Review and Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales. This has included publishing student guides, supporting groups of students and providing one-to-one support for student representatives.

# Review activity

## Institutional Review

1 In 2011-12, QAA conducted three Institutional Reviews:

- Aberystwyth University - week beginning 30 April 2012
- Bangor University - week beginning 14 May 2012
- University of Wales: Trinity Saint David - week beginning 11 June 2012.

2 The reports of these reviews were published in October and November 2012. The judgement, recommendations and features of good practice are set out below.

### Aberystwyth University

3 **Judgement:** Confidence in the management of standards and quality, limited confidence in the management of standards in collaborative provision.

#### 4 **Features of good practice:**

- the strong links in academic departments between research, teaching and student learning
- the dissemination of good practice in learning and teaching, especially technology-enhanced learning
- the support and development available to postgraduate research students
- the integrated approach of senior academic managers to reduce inconsistencies in the student learning experience
- the commitment to recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching
- the development and support available to academic staff.

#### 5 **Recommendations:**

- review the complexity of rules, regulations and programme structures to ensure greater equity of the student experience
- ensure that programme specifications published on the web are complete and current
- provide central oversight of the impact of accumulative change on programmes
- review the approval process for distance learning provision, paying due regard to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice), Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*
- provide and implement a comprehensive procedural guide for collaborative partnership provision
- ensure that accurate information is published by both the University and its partners about collaborative provision
- develop and publish a comprehensive register of collaborative partnership activities
- make better use of management information data to monitor student performance
- ensure all learning outcomes appropriately reflect *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*
- implement regular reviews of the admissions policy.

## **Bangor University**

6 **Judgement:** Confidence in the management of standards and quality.

7 **Features of good practice:**

- the work of the Miles Dyslexia Centre, where research has enhanced support provision across the University and more widely
- the Peer Guides Scheme, which provides an excellent introduction to student life at Bangor University
- the work of Canolfan Bedwyr in enhancing Welsh language provision.

8 **Recommendations:**

- review the constitutions, accountability and operation of groups and committees, together with the nature and quality of the information provided to and from them, so as to secure Senate's oversight of the full range of academic provision
- review the academic effectiveness of revalidation events at which a large number and/or diverse range of programmes are considered
- ensure that all programmes are aligned with relevant subject benchmarks
- ensure that consistently accurate information is given in student handbooks
- secure the accuracy and currency of information for prospective students throughout the University's website
- consider how further reflection on external examiners' reports can take place at school and college levels
- expedite the adoption of the University's requirements for consistency of assessment practice
- continue to develop and disseminate criteria for the definition of scholarship, building on the recently agreed promotion pathways for teaching staff
- review arrangements for meetings of school and college committees to enhance student engagement with them
- consider introducing systematic evaluation of the University's academic support provision.

## **University of Wales: Trinity Saint David**

9 **Judgement:** Confidence in the management of standards and quality.

10 **Features of good practice:**

- the Academic Quality Handbook is comprehensive, there is extensive involvement of staff in its development and updating, and changes are communicated annually during Staff Development Week
- the University has made significant efforts to involve the student body in the development of the new institution
- there is a range of guidance documents tailored for specific student groups and they are comprehensive.

11 **Recommendations:**

- ensure that programme approval processes include the requirement to present programme specifications in a clear and consistent format

- ensure compliance with the Academic Quality Handbook regarding timely feedback on assessment and the delivery of all distance learning programmes within the agreed framework and timescales
- provide agreed and consistent sets of management information for the monitoring and review of programmes, and ensure this information is used consistently to facilitate meaningful and comparable analyses of student performance
- publish the collaborative register on the website by the start of the next academic year
- ensure that external examiner reports are readily accessible to all students within the next academic year
- ensure a consistent process for the appointment, training and support of student representatives from non-traditional backgrounds (part-time, distance learning and postgraduate students) across all campuses
- review the effectiveness of learning resources and any implications for student learning
- provide postgraduate research students with formal training prior to teaching and ensure all staff new to higher education teaching undertake an appropriate qualification.

### **Follow-up review activity in 2011-12: University of Wales**

12 Following the publication of three reports about the University of Wales in June 2011, QAA worked closely with the University on its action plan, detailing actions completed and progress made, monitored through regular meetings between the University and QAA officers.

13 QAA met with the University of Wales on the following dates:

- 29 November 2011 (Gloucester)
- 10 January 2012 (Cardiff)
- 28 March 2012 (Cardiff)
- 1 June 2012 (Cardiff)
- 3 July 2012 (Cardiff).

### **Mid-review follow-up**

14 Approximately three years after the completion of its Institutional Review, an institution must submit a mid-cycle review report to QAA commenting on the progress made since the previous review and on other relevant developments. QAA officers visit the institution to discuss matters raised in the report, and the visit also provides an opportunity to read relevant documentation on the institution's management of academic quality and standards. Following the visit, QAA provides a report for the institution and HEFCW. In 2011-12, there were Mid-review follow-ups at Swansea Metropolitan University and the University of Glamorgan. The visits took place in June 2012, with the final reports circulated to HEFCW and the institutions in September 2012.

### **Revisions to the Institutional Review process in 2011-12**

15 In November 2011, QAA received from HEFCW a specification of the changes to the Institutional Review (Wales) process, for implementations from the beginning of the academic year 2012-13.

16 The revisions were discussed and agreed at a meeting of the HEFCW Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Group (QAESG) (19 March 2012). The revised handbook



was published in June 2012 and is available at:  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/IR-Wales-handbook-2012.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/IR-Wales-handbook-2012.aspx).

### **Institutional briefing for institutions with reviews in 2012-13**

17 A briefing event has been scheduled for April 2013 for institutions undergoing Institutional Review in 2012-14. The institutions involved are: Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff University and Swansea University.

### **Degree awarding powers and university title**

18 QAA undertook an exploratory visit to Glyndŵr University in connection with a research degree-awarding powers application, which has now been put on hold pending the University's scheduled Institutional Review.

19 Informal discussions have been held about research degree-awarding powers for the University of Wales, Newport.

### **Audit of overseas provision**

#### **Transnational Education (TNE) China 2012**

20 In selecting the sample of Chinese institutions for the TNE China project, QAA tried to capture the various types of partnerships or other links with UK higher education institutions (for example, overseas campuses), and postgraduate as well as undergraduate courses. QAA has included the University of Wales, as it has one of the highest student headcounts in China. However, QAA has opted for a case study rather than a review because there are recent overseas reports for the University of Wales, as well as a fairly recent Institutional Review.

21 The TNE China project comprises four stages: information gathering, desk-based analysis, the review visit, and reporting. The first two stages are complete and preparations are underway for the review visit to China, taking place from 26 November to 7 December 2012. The review team comprises five reviewers and four QAA staff. QAA's counterpart organisation in China will be involved in some of the review visits as an observer.

22 In all, there will be visits to 13 institutions in China. As usual, QAA will be publishing individual review reports (10), case studies (five) and an overview report.

### **Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales**

23 The HEFCW circular W10/29HE, published in July 2010, announced HEFCW's intention to commission a developmental review of Foundation Degrees in order to inform the development of these qualifications and assess the quality of the funded provision in 2012-13.

24 In summer 2011, QAA started work on developing the review method based on HEFCW's requirements. The timeline for the key activities and milestones is set out below.

Activity	Date
Development of Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales (FD) Handbook	March 2011-Oct 2011
Informal consultation on FD Handbook	Nov/Dec 2011
Formal consultation on FD Handbook	February 2012
Response to consultation	April 2012
Schedule reviews and inform colleges	May 2012
Finalise FD Handbook	June 2012
Briefing event for higher education institutions and partners (eg further education colleges)	July 2012
Publish FD Handbook	Sept 2012
Request higher education data (student numbers, qualification aim, mode of attendance) to inform briefing notes	Nov/Dec 2012
First higher education institutions to be reviewed submit self-evaluation, student submission and supporting documentation for review	Nov - Feb 2013
Initial meeting takes place (at each institution) by review coordinator	March/April 2013
FD review visits	May/June 2013
FD reports completed (assuming second visit not required)	Sept/Oct 2013

**Table 2: timeline for development of the review of Foundation Degrees**

## Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight

25 Two Embedded College Reviews for Educational Oversight (ECREOs) took place at embedded colleges centred in Wales. The two centres reviewed were:

- Navitas UK Holdings Ltd, International College of Wales, Swansea (based at Swansea University): [www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/reports/pages/ECREO-ICWS-12.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/reports/pages/ECREO-ICWS-12.aspx)
- Bellerbys Educational Services (Study Group UK), Wales International Study Group (based at the University of Wales, Newport): [www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/reports/pages/ECREO-Wales-International-12.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/reports/pages/ECREO-Wales-International-12.aspx).

## Higher education in further education institutions (HE in FE)

### The review of directly-funded HE in FE

26 At the SLA progress meeting on 18 January 2012, it was agreed to put on hold any further development of a review method for HE in FE until after the Welsh Government has completed its review of further education. On 19 March 2012, QAESG commented that any future HE in FE review method should align with Institutional Review (Wales). At the SLA meeting on 10 July 2012, the matter was revisited and it was agreed to wait until after the publication of the Welsh Government's review of Further Education, due in December 2012, before taking any further action. However, it is unlikely any QAA review will take place before 2014-15.

### HE in FE Network

27 QAA officers attended meetings of the HE in FE Network, providing an update on developments, on 24 February and 7 October 2011.

## Concerns investigations

28 In 2011-12, QAA undertook a full investigation of one institution in Wales under its Concerns Scheme. The investigation into the University of Wales and its validation of courses provided by the London School of Business & Finance and Finance & Business Training Ltd resulted in a published statement:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/concerns-University-of-Wales-FBT-LSBF.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/concerns-University-of-Wales-FBT-LSBF.aspx).

29 QAA recommended that the University of Wales:

- strengthen its monitoring of collaborating organisations' student registration practices
- strengthen its monitoring of collaborating organisations' websites
- establish and enforce minimum requirements for the provision of library and other learning resources at all collaborating organisations' campuses
- ensure the continuing suitability of all collaborating organisations (with particular reference to whether they continue to meet their contractual obligations)
- approve, formally and in advance, all staff hired to teach on its programmes, and communicate its decisions clearly and in a timely fashion to the collaborating organisation concerned
- provide QAA with an action plan within six weeks of the publication of the report.

## Access to HE in Wales 2011-12

30 QAA's Access to HE *Key Statistics 2012* shows that there were 2,780 learners on Access to HE courses in Wales in 2010-11 (an increase of 280 on the previous year). Eighty-five courses were offered (four more than in 2009-10) by the 20 Access to HE providers in Wales.

31 QAA monitors Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) through annual reporting and periodic reviews. The annual self-evaluation report submitted by Agored Cymru (the one AVA in Wales) on its 2010-11 activity was approved in January 2011. Feedback on the AVA's report included three commendations and five matters for attention.

32 In April 2012, Agored Cymru underwent a full AVA relicensing review. This was the first in a new cycle of reviews which used a revised set of criteria and a revised method, with revised possible outcomes (including a risk judgement). The QAA Board makes a decision about the renewal of the AVA's licence on the basis of the risk judgement. Following consideration of the report by the Access Recognition and Licensing Committee (ARLC) and approval of the licensing decision by the Board, reports are published on the Access to HE website.

33 In 2011-12, QAA reviewed the operation of the current Access to HE Diploma specification in England and Wales, in terms of the extent and significance of variation in requirements for achievement of the qualification. QAA's research in Wales included one-to-one discussions with Agored Cymru; one of a series of round-table discussions, held in Llandrindod Wells (attended by 11 representatives from higher education, 11 from further education institutions in Wales, and five representatives from Agored Cymru); a meeting for higher education admissions staff (attended by representatives from Swansea University and Cardiff University); and surveys of students, providers and higher education admissions staff. The outcomes of this research have led to a decision by the ARLC that the current qualification specification should be revised, and development work in this area is a high priority for QAA's Access to HE work in 2012-13.

## **Review support activity**

### **Reviewer training for Institutional Review**

34 On 19 January 2012, QAA held a training event for review teams and institutional facilitators for reviews in spring and summer 2012. This included 15 reviewers (including three student reviewers) and three institutional facilitators. The event included a presentation from HEW on the higher educational policy in Wales.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of Institutional Review**

35 As part of QAA's ongoing evaluation of Institutional Review (Wales), reviewers, review secretaries and institutions are asked to complete evaluation questionnaires. In 2011-12, QAA's Research, Information and Enquiry Team produced a report based on the findings of the questionnaire from three reviews. A total of five responses were received and the overall satisfaction levels of reviewers were found to be high, with 95 per cent of review team responses being positive.

36 The issues identified are usually a comment from a single reviewer, and as such do not indicate a broader issues either within teams or across different teams. Issues raised included:

- planning and timetabling during the review visit
- role of the institutional facilitator
- internal communications between the team

37 Further consideration of the evaluation of the outcomes will occur at the spring 2013 SLA meeting between QAA, HEFCW and HEW.

## Development and enhancement activity

### Supporting enhancement in Welsh higher education

38 In September/October 2011, QAA reviewed its approach to supporting enhancement in Welsh higher education and took the resulting proposals for a more integrated and rounded approach to working with the Welsh higher education sector to HEFCW, HEA, HEW, and also to the Future Directions Steering Group and work strand leaders. These discussions with stakeholders continued to May 2012, when an agreement was reached with all the partners about how QAA's proposed approach should be taken forward.

39 QAA is developing the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to supersede the Academic Infrastructure. The revision of each Chapter is supported by advisory groups that have Welsh higher education representation, and consultation events.

40 The consultations are UK-wide events, therefore QAA aims for such geographic distribution of the events as to facilitate maximum participation and attendance from all four countries. Between August 2011 and July 2012, QAA held events concerning:

- *Chapter B5: Student engagement*
- *Chapter B11: Research degrees*
- Part C: Information about higher education provision (Cardiff 30 January 2012)
- *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* (Cardiff 21 June 2012)
- *Chapter B10: Management of collaborative arrangements* (Cardiff 2 October 2012)

### QAA support for the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)

41 In 2011-12, QAA supported the CQFW through attendance of QAA officers at:

- five countries meeting, 6-7 September 2011
- UK-Europe Coordination Group, 5 October 2011
- Credit Common Accord Forum, 8 December 2011
- interim five countries meeting, 21 June 2012.

## Student engagement

### NUS/QAA research

42 As part of QAA's partnership with the National Union of Student (NUS), a student experience research project has been taking place throughout 2011-12. This research is focused on the student learning experience. The research is UK-wide and has included an online survey and a series of focus groups. Two of these groups took place in Cardiff, with students from the University of Glamorgan and Cardiff University representing a variety of courses, as well as part-time, mature, postgraduate and international students present. Four mini reports have now been published on QAA's website:  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/partners/students/projects/pages/strand-1.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/partners/students/projects/pages/strand-1.aspx).

### Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE)

43 WISE was re-launched in early 2012. This initiative continues to be proactive across the Wales higher education sector; the initiative has now published its updated statement.

QAA has committed to student-centred Institutional Reviews, with student reviewers on each team.

### **Institutional Reviews and Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales 2012-13**

44 QAA continues to support students' unions producing student written submissions for these review methods. Full lead student representative guidance is being developed and published.

### **HEA Wales - Students as Partners strand**

45 QAA has helped students' unions to produce case studies to share good practice on students as partners. This work was launched at a joint HEA, QAA and HEFCW cross-agency national conference in April 2012. QAA is working in collaboration with the strand project group to develop a programme of work for 2012-13; this will include a Wales conference on Students as Partners.

### **Welsh Language Scheme**

46 QAA has produced a student-friendly guide which was launched with its revised Welsh Language Scheme, and is developing related podcasts.

### **Enhancement activities**

47 In May 2011, QAA introduced its strategic approach to supporting quality assurance and enhancement in Welsh higher education. The strategy is designed to help QAA support enhancement activity in Welsh higher education by:

- connecting with the sector's 'Future Directions' agenda through joined-up activity, in particular with the HEA
- integrating QAA's activities to develop and maintain the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) with developments and activities within the Welsh sector
- integrating QAA's review activities and outcomes with enhancement activities
- taking a longer-term view of interactions between Welsh sector policies and strategies and QAA's work to support quality enhancement.

48 The strategy was endorsed by QAA's Advisory Committee for Wales and is monitored through its regular SLA meetings with HEFCW and HEW.

### **Support for the Biennial Learning and Teaching Conference**

49 In January 2010, HEFCW introduced a policy on Mechanisms for Supporting the Enhancement of Learning Opportunities. As part of the mechanism, QAA worked with partners to provide support for the Biennial Learning and Teaching Conference. The Head of QAA Wales and a representative from the QAA Research, Development and Partnerships Group (RDP) attended steering group meetings in October and November 2010 and May 2011. An officer from QAA's RDP is a member in two of the three work strands (Learning in Employment; Learning for Employment) and attended meetings in March and June 2011. An officer from QAA's Public Engagement Group is a member of the Students as Partners work strand and attended a meeting in June 2011.

50 QAA is developing a project to draw on, and accompany, the case studies provided by the work strands. The Learning in Employment work strand steering group agreed with

QAA's proposal to gather and use data/information for a comparative study of institutions' measures and innovations to assure and enhance quality in learning in employment. A similar proposal will be made to the Learning for Employment work strand steering group. Results will be presented at the Biennial Learning and Teaching Conference in 2012.

## **Support activity**

### **QAA website content development**

51 QAA's website was re-launched in July 2011, with a more modern design and improved navigation. The pages relating to QAA's work in Wales were given a distinct design featuring the Welsh flag. Since the website was re-launched, the content has been reviewed for currency and accuracy, and new web content has been published about the Institutional Review (Wales) and Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales processes.

### **Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) forum**

52 PSRB forum events were held in May and November 2012 on internationalisation and data governance, respectively.

53 The following PSRBs relating to Wales were invited to attend:

- Care Council for Wales
- General Teaching Council for Wales
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- Law Society of England and Wales
- Estyn.

### **Liaison with other relevant bodies**

54 See paragraphs 44 to 49.

### **Assisting with enquiries from the higher education sector and from others in Wales**

55 During 2011-12, QAA Wales received a range of enquiries directly from the public and from staff at higher education institutions. These included student enquiries about the equivalence of qualifications, about overseas provision, and enquiries based on dissatisfaction with the provision.

56 In addition to these enquiries, the Head of QAA Wales and Method Administrative Officer fielded a range of questions as part of the routine business of liaising with institutional contacts.

## **Supporting, monitoring and reporting on QAA activity**

### **Team Wales**

57 Team Wales is an internal QAA committee, remitted to monitor, evaluate and ensure that QAA delivers on its commitments in Wales. It is chaired by the Head of QAA Wales, includes representatives from across QAA's group structure, and meets formally three times per year. In 2011-12, Team Wales met in October 2011, March 2012 and July 2012.

### **Advisory Committee for Wales**

58 The Advisory Committee for Wales met twice in 2011-12. The first meeting was held in Cardiff in December 2011 and included discussion on the Ministerial Statement and



the White Paper in England and its implications for Wales. The second meeting was held in Swansea in May 2012 and included discussion on a QAA meeting with the Welsh Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, and consideration of the HEFCE consultation paper on risk-based quality assurance.

## **Raising QAA's profile and establishing a physical presence in Wales**

59 Following a number of internal and external developments, QAA decided to revisit the idea of establishing a physical presence in Wales. Initially, this was suggested by a strategy for enhancing and strengthening QAA's engagement in Wales. The strategy's key aims included to communicate clearly and ensure understanding of QAA's roles, responsibilities, contributions and achievements, and to adopt a strategic approach to quality enhancement and student engagement in Wales.

60 As part of this strategic approach, it was proposed that QAA would establish a physical presence in Wales. The proposal was supported by QAA's Advisory Committee for Wales and agreed by QAA Board. Over the summer period, a number of options were considered and resulted in an agreement to share office space with NUS Wales in Cardiff Bay. The office opened in autumn 2012.

## **Head of QAA Wales**

61 The Head of QAA Wales has held a range of meetings with relevant bodies in Wales. These are listed below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting with...</b>
15 September 2011	HEW Learning and Teaching Committee
19 September 2011	NUS Wales
23 September 2011	HECW QAESG
5 October 2011	SLA meeting with HEFCW and HEW
7 October 2011	HE in FE Network
13 October 2011	Meeting with the University of Wales
17 October 2011	BBC Wales
21 October 2011	HEFCW Annual Public Meeting
28 October 2011	Foundation Degree Steering Group
1 November 2011	HEFCW SETQ Committee
8 November 2011	Estyn
16 November 2011	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol
12 December 2011	Estyn - Stakeholder Forum: Post-16 Sector
10 January 2012	Cardiff Metropolitan University
12 January 2012	HEFCW (Gloucester)
18 January 2012	SLA meeting with HEFCW and HEW
23 January 2012	QAA/Estyn/HEFCW meeting
24 January 2012	Welsh Government
26 January 2012	HEA enhancement themes meeting

30 January 2012	QAA Quality Code consultation event, Millennium Stadium
9 February 2012	Policy Forum Meeting, Cardiff
23 February 2012	HEFCW Part-time Study in HE Conference, Cardiff
24 February 2012	HE in FE Network meeting, Coleg Sir Gâr, Llanelli
27 February 2012	HEW
27 February 2012	Re-launch of WISE event at Senedd, Cardiff
29 February 2012	HEFCW Foundation Degree event, Treforest
8 March 2012	NUS Wales
13 March 2012	Welsh Assembly and Government, Future Inn, Cardiff
16 March 2012	University of Glamorgan
19 March 2012	QAESG, Cardiff University
22 March 2012	Chairs of Higher Education Wales (CHEW)/HEW meeting, Swansea University
28 March 2012	SLA meeting with HEFCW and HEW
26 April 2012	Future Directions Conference, Glyndŵr University
27 April 2012	Institutional Review briefing, Glyndŵr University
21 May 2012	QAA's Strategic Approach to Supporting Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Welsh Higher Education Institutions (HEW)
28 May 2012	Meeting with Wales Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning
30 May 2012	HEFCW SETQC, Cardiff
1 June 2012	University of Wales, Cardiff
8 June 2012	Mid-review follow-up visit to Swansea Metropolitan University
21 June 2012	Mid-review follow-up visit to the University of Glamorgan
20 June 2012	Future Directions Steering Group meeting, Bangor University
5 July 2012	Meeting with Welsh Government Officers
6 July 2012	Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales briefing event, Llandrindod Wells
10 July 2012	SLA meeting with HEFCW and HEW
16 July 2012	Welsh Language Commissioner
18 July 2012	HEA Wales
23 July 2012	University of Wales, Newport

**Table 3: meetings involving the Head of QAA Wales**

62 Contact details for the Head of QAA Wales can be found at:

- [www.qaa.ac.uk/contactus/pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/contactus/pages/default.aspx)
- [www.qaa.ac.uk/Wales/pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Wales/pages/default.aspx).

## Other QAA officer time in Wales

63 As well as the Head of QAA Wales, other QAA staff have been involved in delivering a range of review support and other services in Wales. These are set out in the table below.

Date	Activity
January 2012	Quality Code work - Part C: Information about higher education provision, Millennium Stadium, Cardiff
February 2012	Quality Code work - Part C: Information about higher education provision, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd
April 2012	Inaugural Future Directions Conference, Glyndŵr University
June 2012	Quality Code work - <i>Chapter B3: Learning and teaching</i> , Cardiff

**Table 4: Other QAA officer time in Wales**

## Liaison officer scheme

64 QAA operates a scheme where each higher education institution in Wales is allocated a liaison officer to provide a direct point of contact on a broad range of quality assurance matters outside of formal review processes. The liaison officer does not necessarily visit an institution, but is responsible for responding to queries raised by institutions.

## Publications (Wales only)

65 QAA developed a number of publications specific to Wales in 2011-12. These are listed in the table below.

Date	Publication
March 2012	<i>Supporting Welsh speakers through our Welsh Language Scheme</i>
March 2012	<i>Handbook for the Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales, Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales: Guidance for lead student representatives and Mini guide: a brief student guide to Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales</i>
May 2012	<i>Institutional Review (Wales Handbook) 2012</i>

**Table 5: Wales-only publications**

## Welsh Language Scheme

66 In March 2012, QAA submitted its revised Welsh Language Scheme to the Welsh Language Commission for re-approval.

67 Currently, QAA has four employees with varying degrees of Welsh language proficiency. Table 6 sets out the work of translators in 2011-12 under the terms of the Welsh Language Scheme.

Date	Type
September 2011	Swansea University: Mid-cycle follow-up report Cardiff University: Mid-cycle follow-up report University of Wales Institute, Cardiff: Mid-cycle follow-up report
October 2011	Web content: annual monitoring reports to Welsh Language Board
October 2011	University of Wales news item
October 2011	Additions to QAA online glossary of terms
October 2011	Revisions and additions to Concerns Scheme web pages
October 2011	Template for Freedom of Information request responses
October 2011	Letter to ITV Wales
November 2011	Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales (FD) correspondence and form to all higher education institutions in Wales
November 2011	<i>Annual report to HEFCW and HEW 2010-11</i>
November 2011	Correspondence to the University of Wales regarding BITEC application
November 2011	FD Handbook correspondence to NUS Wales
January 2012	Web content: QAA review methods; Cardiff Metropolitan University
February 2012	<i>Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) (Scotland) and Institutional Review (Wales): Procedure on appeals</i>
February 2012	Web content: Complaints Procedure; HEFCW
February 2012	<i>Annual report to the Welsh Language Board on the implementation of QAA's Welsh Language Scheme (2011)</i>
March 2012	Additions to QAA online glossary of terms
March 2012	Circular letter 05/12
March 2012	FD consultation materials
March 2012	<i>Welsh Language Scheme 2012-15</i>
April 2012	Revisions and additions to web content: QAA's work in Wales
April 2012	Additions to QAA online glossary of terms
May 2012	Web content: annual monitoring reports to Welsh Language Commissioner
May 2012	<i>Institutional Review (Wales): Handbook 2012</i>
May 2012	QAA/ASA logo
June 2012	Web content: Institutional Review (Wales) method
July 2012	FD briefing event materials
July 2012	Web content: FD method
July 2012	Logo Licensing Scheme correspondence, and terms and conditions

**Table 6: Welsh language publications and correspondence**

68 In addition to the above translations, 14 short pieces of text have been translated in-house by the QAA Welsh-speaking Welsh Language Officer, and a small amount of text translated by the Welsh Language Board's free translation service.

# Looking ahead to 2012-13

## Programme of services from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013

### General:

- Undertake liaison visits to each higher education institution in Wales to discuss matters relating to the assurance and enhancement of academic quality and standards.
- Maintain arrangements for liaising with further education institutions with a higher education portfolio.
- Attend meetings of relevant committees, such as HEFCW's Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee and QAESWG.
- Attend specific meetings as agreed with HEFCW and/or HEW.
- Liaise with relevant bodies, for example HEA.
- Work with HEFCW, HEW and the higher education sector on the CQFW and developments in credit-related issues throughout the UK.
- Work with PSRBs to minimise the duplication of quality assurance mechanisms to which higher education is subject.
- Assist with enquiries from the higher education sector and from others in Wales.
- Provide a report three times a year to SLA meetings with HEFCW and HEW.
- Provide an annual report in October 2013 to HEFCW and HEW.
- Ensure that QAA policies, practices, publications and reports take account of the full range of related activities, issues and policies in Wales.
- Provide a member of staff to act as the QAA Officer for Wales, who will be available for general enquiries relating to Wales and work with other QAA colleagues, as appropriate, to achieve the requirements of the SLA.
- Include the availability of the Officer for Wales in QAA publications that provide general contact details.
- Meet the requirements of its own, higher education institutions' and the HEFCW Welsh language schemes, including ensuring that QAA maintains an appropriate organisational capacity in the Welsh language.
- Have an appropriate equal opportunities policy, develop a single equality statement, and take account of the requirements of the HEFCW Equality Scheme, seeking opportunities to promote equality in line with the requirements placed on the UK funding councils.

### Institutional Review (Wales) process:

- Consider changes to the Institutional Review process if appropriate.
- Implement the revised Institutional Review process (and undertake one Institutional Review at Glyndŵr University).
- Include at least one member with knowledge and/or expertise in the higher education sector in Wales in each team for Institutional Reviews (Wales).
- Provide at least one Welsh-speaking reviewer on a team if requested by the institution.
- Plan for Mid-review follow-ups for 2013-14.
- Undertake developmental reviews of Foundation Degrees.
- Provide training for QAA reviewers on the requirements and specifications of the Institutional Review process for Wales, including the role of the University of Wales, where appropriate.
- Provide specific support to institutions preparing for Institutional Review visits, including an initial briefing event.

- Implement any changes to the Institutional Review in line with the protocols described in the handbook.
- Provide the HEFCW and HEW liaison officers, in confidence, with copies of letters from QAA to the higher education institution regarding draft and final Institutional Review outcomes, and the conclusions of the Mid-review follow-up and other follow-ups of reviews as these arise.
- Operate a scheme for investigating concerns about UK higher education.

**Student engagement:**

- Include a student reviewer as a full member of review teams.
- Work with others to provide clearer information on quality and standards for students.
- Work with higher education institutions to develop the role of students in institutional quality management.
- Support WISE and student engagement in quality processes.

**Quality enhancement:**

- Work with HEFCW, HEW and the higher education sector on quality enhancement issues relating specifically to Wales.
- Evaluate the Institutional Review arrangements on an ongoing formative basis.
- Hold an event on quality assurance and enhancement in Wales, building on the Future Directions themes.
- Continue to support and take account of the development of the quality enhancement approach for higher education in Wales.

## Appendix A: Breakdown of expenditure (2011-12)

### Analysis of actuals versus budget 2011-12

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Budget (£)</b>	<b>Actuals (£)</b>	<b>Variance (£)</b>
Review costs	71,416	73,510	2,094
Access to HE costs	1,324	1,331	7
Overseas costs	917	1,119	202
Pay for Reviews Group (Wales)	80,175	80,175	0
Wales support costs	3,055	5,641	2,586
Access to HE general costs	1,219	1,248	29
Public Engagement Group costs	53,790	50,861	- 2,929
Infrastructure pay costs	165,203	168,108	2,905
Infrastructure non-pay costs	107,836	126,241	18,405
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>484,935</b>	<b>508,234</b>	<b>23,299</b>

<b>Income</b>	<b>Budget (£)</b>	<b>Actuals (£)</b>	<b>Variance (£)</b>
Allocation of degree awarding powers	2,664	2,993	329
SLA 2011-12	223,928	223,928	0
Invoicing for Review of Foundation Degrees training and Causes for Concern	0	7,401	7,401
Other income - including subscriptions, publications and investment income	263,670	264,506	836
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>490,262</b>	<b>498,828</b>	<b>8,566</b>

	<b>Budget (£)</b>	<b>Actuals (£)</b>	<b>Variance (£)</b>
<b>Total un-funded/shortfall</b>	<b>- 5,327</b>	<b>9,406</b>	<b>14,733</b>

Table 7: analysis of actuals versus budget for QAA Wales 2011-12

**QAA 518 03/13**

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