

Annual Report to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Universities Wales

2013-14

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Introduction

1 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 Universities Wales (formerly Higher Education Wales) 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 2013 to 31 July 2014 and sets out how QAA has met its responsibilities.

2 The SLA specifies that QAA will provide a report to HEFCW and Universities Wales at the end of each year for the period of the agreement. This report includes:

- a report on progress against the programme of services for 2013-14
- a breakdown of expenditure against the headings of the payment schedule for Wales 2013-14 (see Appendix A)
- a summary of review outcomes covering the period of the SLA (2009-15) (see Appendix B).

Achievements in 2013-14

Table 1: achievements against programme of services for 2013-14

Activity	Completed: yes, no or partially
Conduct three institutional reviews, including training of review teams and briefings for institutions	Yes: see paragraphs 3-14, 32 and 47
Provide training and support to secure the involvement of students in the Institutional Review (Wales) process; and support the Wales Initiative on Student Engagement (Wise Wales) and student engagement in quality assurance processes	Yes: see paragraphs 57-64
Work with HEFCW, Universities Wales, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the higher education sector on quality assurance and enhancement issues relating specifically to Wales	Yes: see paragraphs 49-55
Work with HEFCW and the higher education sector in relation to the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales	Yes: see paragraph 69
Attend meetings of relevant committees, including the HEFCW Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC) and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement subgroup (QAESG)	Yes: see paragraph 77
Liaise with other relevant bodies, including the Welsh Government, Estyn, HEA, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Union of Students (NUS) Wales	Yes: see paragraph 77
Ensure an organisational capacity to deal with Welsh-medium enquiries and meet Welsh Language Scheme requirements	Yes: see paragraphs 81-82

Summary of activities 2013-14

Review activity

QAA conducted:

- three Institutional Reviews (Wales)
- one annual monitoring visit to the University of Wales
- three educational oversight reviews in Wales in December 2013, April and May 2014.

Review support activity

QAA provided:

- support and technical expertise on the HEFCW consultation on revisions to the Institutional Review (Wales) process for 2014-15
- the introduction of a revised review process to replace Institutional Review (Wales); from 2014-15 the review process in Wales will be called Higher Education Review: Wales (HER: Wales)
- a briefing for providers with reviews in 2014-15
- a training event for institutional staff with reviews in 2014-15: 15 reviewers, three institutional facilitators and three lead student representatives.

Development and enhancement activities

QAA held and/or supported the following:

- six meetings on the development of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- one meeting on the use of *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others* of the Quality Code
- three Future Directions steering group meetings
- three Wise Wales steering group meetings
- two HE in FE Forum meetings.

Other support activity

- **QAA Wales Committee:** During 2013-14 meetings were held in December, March and July.
- **Office in Cardiff:** Following the establishment of a QAA office presence in Cardiff at the end of 2012, it has been agreed to extend the current sharing arrangement with NUS Wales.
- **Meetings in Wales:** QAA officers attended 44 meetings.

Review activity

Institutional review (Wales)

Cardiff University

3 In April 2014, QAA conducted an Institutional Review (Wales) at Cardiff University. The report was published in July 2014. The review type, judgements, recommendations and features of good practice are set out below.

Review type

Type of review	Standard Institutional Review
Number of review days	5
Number of reviewers	4

Judgements

4 The QAA review team made the following judgements.

- Academic standards at the University meet UK expectations for threshold standards.
- The quality of student learning opportunities at the University meets UK expectations.
- Information about learning opportunities produced by the University meets UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities at the University meets UK expectations.

Features of good practice

5 The QAA review team identified the following areas of good practice.

- The appropriate, widespread and responsive staff development opportunities in learning and teaching, including those extended to postgraduate students.
- The University's work in supporting and embedding the positive contributions of students in developing a culture of enhancement for the quality of learning opportunities.
- The comprehensive implementation of management information to support quality and standards at all levels, including aspects of enhancement.
- The practice of monitoring regularly at University executive level the progress of key university-wide strategies for the enhancement of learning opportunities.

Recommendations

6 The QAA review team made the following recommendations.

From the start of the academic year 2014-15:

- keep under review the potential for unintended consequences for student performance and degree classification of plans to insert modules at levels 5, 6 and 7 into years of study that normally correspond to academic levels 4, 5 and 6
- keep under close scrutiny the production of final year results for medical students until satisfied that the new system for recording and reporting results is error free.

By commencement of the academic year 2015-16:

- move swiftly to ensure comprehensive implementation of the Assessment Matters framework across all provision.

Swansea University

7 In May 2014, QAA conducted an Institutional Review (Wales) at Swansea University. The report was published in September 2014. The review type, judgements, recommendations and features of good practice are set out below.

Review type

Type of review	Standard Institutional Review
Number of review days	5
Number of reviewers	4

Judgements

8 The QAA review team made the following judgements.

- Academic standards of the institution's awards meet UK expectations for threshold standards.
- The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities is commended.
- The institution's public information about academic standards and quality meets UK expectations.

Features of good practice

9 The QAA review team identified the following features of good practice.

- The contribution made by the Academic Careers Pathway to sustaining and enhancing the students' learning experience.
- The role of the Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching in evaluating and developing policy and practice in learning and teaching, together with the well planned and well attended programme of staff development.
- The strong support provided by subject specialist library staff and their close liaison with the colleges.
- The coordinated use of a wide range of student feedback, including NSS, to enhance the student experience.
- The University's coordinated approach to developing student employability through a wide range of initiatives.
- The contribution of mobility and internationalisation initiatives to students' personal and career development.
- The role of the Swansea Employability Academy, the Swansea Inclusivity and Learner Support Academy and the Academi Hywel Teifi Academy in the development, evaluation and dissemination of projects which enhance students' wider learning experience.
- The involvement of undergraduate students as partners in the development of enhancement initiatives.

Recommendations

10 The QAA review team made the following recommendations.

- The University should clearly articulate at module and programme level the models of moderation in operation, by the start of the 2014-15 session.

- The University should develop a system to enable it to have oversight of student achievement on its postgraduate research programmes, by the start of the 2015-16 session.

Affirmations

- The action being taken by the University to ensure learning outcomes are expressed in a manner consistent with the expectations of the FHEQ.
- The steps taken to monitor and improve the accuracy and completeness of definitive programme information.

Cardiff Metropolitan University

11 In May 2014, QAA conducted an Institutional Review (Wales) at Cardiff Metropolitan University. The report was published in August 2014. The review type, judgements, recommendations and features of good practice are set out below.

Review type

Type of review	Hybrid Institutional Review
Number of review days	5
Number of reviewers	5

Judgements

12 The QAA review team made the following judgements.

- Academic standards of the institution's awards meet UK expectations for threshold standards.
- The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations.
- Information about learning opportunities produced by the University meets UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations.

Features of good practice

13 The QAA review team identified the following features of good practice.

- The work of the Learning and Teaching Development Unit in providing a comprehensive range of opportunities and resources for enhancement of learning and teaching.
- The Students' Union's engagement with students in collaborative partnerships to enhance the quality of representation.
- The Your Career online learning object, which supplies careers advice and a flexible learning instrument for careers development modules.

Recommendations

14 The QAA review team made the following recommendations.

By January 2015:

- ensure that policies and guidance for formative assessment feedback include equitable treatment of draft coursework assignments in all taught provision
- review and clarify complaints procedures for collaborative provision and ensure that these are consistently and accurately communicated to students.

By March 2015:

- apply a consistent University-wide approach to the training, support and monitoring of postgraduate research students engaged in teaching and assessment.

Ongoing:

- ensure that all collaborative and articulation arrangements are covered by completed, signed and current inter-institutional agreements
- ensure the clarity of its formal documentation with regard to articulation arrangements.

Educational oversight reviews

Wales Evangelical School of Theology

15 In April 2014, QAA conducted a Review for Educational Oversight monitoring visit at Wales Evangelical School of Theology. The report was published in July 2014.

Type of review	Review for Educational Oversight monitoring visit
Number of review days	1
Number of reviewers	2

16 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concluded that the Wales Evangelical School of Theology has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the April 2013 Review for Educational Oversight.

Navitas UK Holdings Ltd

17 In May 2014, QAA conducted an Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight monitoring visit at Navitas UK Holdings Ltd, International College Wales Swansea. The report was published in August 2014.

Type of review	Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight monitoring visit
Number of review days	1
Number of reviewers	2

18 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit the review team concluded that International College Wales Swansea (ICWS) has made commendable progress with monitoring, reviewing and enhancing provision since the April 2013 monitoring visit.

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)

19 In December 2013 QAA conducted a Review for Specific Course Designation at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT). The report was published in March 2014. The review type, judgements, recommendations and features of good practice are set out below.

Type of review	Review for Specific Course Designation
Number of review days	2
Number of reviewers	4

Judgements

20 The QAA review team made the following judgements:

- confidence in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programmes it offers on behalf of the University of East London
- confidence in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of this awarding body
- reliance can be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Features of good practice

21 The QAA review team identified the following features of good practice:

- detailed collaborative review of each module by tutors and students which offers regular critical engagement on all aspects of the modules
- the work of the student support officers liaising with programme staff to support students and identify common issues
- up-to-date handbooks for each of the programmes are available to download by prospective students and other audiences
- the publication on the virtual learning environment of the complete review and enhancement process reports for the MSc Renewable Energy and the Built Environment.

Recommendations

22 The QAA review team made the following recommendations:

- expedite the appointment of a Head of Education in order to achieve effective oversight of the provision
- re-establish regular and formal management meetings to oversee quality and standards; engage fully with the appropriate chapters of the Quality Code
- articulate a teaching and learning strategy to provide a framework for the systematic review and enhancement of programmes
- review its resourcing and strategic oversight of staff development
- take a systematic and consistent approach to induction, appraisal and peer observations of teaching.

Annual monitoring visit to the University of Wales

23 In light of the University's decision to close its validation activities, HEFCW indicated at its Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub Group (QAESG) meeting on 13 May 2013 that it would no longer be appropriate to conduct full institutional reviews at the University. Instead it should be replaced by an annual monitoring visit by QAA in order to provide assurance to HEFCW on the continuing effectiveness of the University's exit arrangements.

24 The purpose of the annual monitoring visit is to provide assurance to HEFCW and QAA that the University is meeting its responsibilities as a degree-awarding body for effectively maintaining quality and standards during the period of operation of the exit arrangements.

25 The monitoring visit consists of a report from the University (including any supporting documentation), a one-day visit by two members of QAA staff and an unpublished report for the University and HEFCW.

26 The annual monitoring visit took place on 17 June 2014 and the report was sent to the University and HEFCW on 15 September 2014.

Mid-review follow-up

27 There were no mid-review follow-up visits in 2013-14. This was because the University of Wales was subject to an annual monitoring visit (see above) and the University of Wales, Newport has subsequently merged with the University of Glamorgan to become the University of South Wales. The University of South Wales will be subject to a HER: Wales in 2014-15.

28 From 2014-15 the mid-review follow-up will be enhanced to include greater student involvement (see paragraph 31).

Revisions to the Institutional Review (Wales) process in 2013-14 (to come into effect from 2014-15) and the introduction of Higher Education Review: Wales

29 Higher Education Review: Wales (HER: Wales) is an evidence-based process carried out through peer review and balances the need for publicly credible, independent and rigorous scrutiny of institutions with the recognition that the institutions themselves are responsible for the academic standards of their awards, the quality and enhancement of their educational provision and their published information.

30 HER: Wales encourages institutions to be self-evaluative, thereby promoting continuous improvement in the management of standards and quality. At the centre of the process is an emphasis on students and their learning opportunities.

31 The principal differences from Institutional Review (Wales) are:

- a stronger emphasis on reflective self-analysis
- a stronger emphasis on enhancement
- inclusion of a comment on the UK Professional Standards Framework
- a stronger emphasis on internationalisation
- introduction of international reviewers (subject to the evaluation of a QAA pilot scheme)
- increased focus on the student-provider partnership
- greater student involvement in the review process, including meetings with QAA officers (including in the annual visit), preparation for the review, development of action plans and an enhanced mid-process review with a student-focused engagement three years after each review.

Institutional briefing for institutions with reviews in 2014-15

32 A briefing event took place in April 2014 for institutions undergoing HER: Wales in 2014-15. The institutions involved are University of Wales Trinity Saint David and the University of South Wales.

Degree-awarding powers and university title

33 There has been liaison with one Welsh institution in relation to degree-awarding powers/university title in 2013-14.

Audit of overseas provision

Transnational education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

34 QAA conducted a Review of Transnational Education in the United Arab Emirates in 2013-14, but this did not include any higher education providers from Wales. It focused on the Dubai free-zones. Cardiff University offers a range of education services through an arrangement with the British University in Dubai but does not offer qualifications. The reports have since been published and can be found at:

www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/TNE-Review-UAE-2014.aspx.

Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales 2013-14

35 The principal aims of the Review, which took place in 2012-13, were:

- to provide information about how foundation degrees (FDs) are being developed, and inform their future development.
- to assess how the quality of provision is being managed and enhanced
- to further involve awarding bodies and their partner college, employers and students in the quality assurance process
- eight partnerships, comprising the lead institutions and selected partner colleges, were reviewed.

36 The review method considered the following areas: 'Academic standards'; 'Quality of learning opportunities'; 'Information'; and 'Enhancement', and also the five characteristics of the FD qualification under 'Design and development'. The review was intended to be developmental, leading to conclusions of 'met' or 'not met' under each of the five areas, and an unpublished report identifying the good practice and making recommendations. The review process included visits to the lead institutions, the partner colleges and, for the first time as part of a QAA review, to sites of work-based learning.

37 An event was held in November 2013 to launch the overview report and disseminate the good practice identified in the Review, with the aim of enhancing foundation degree provision in Wales. Staff and students from the providers attended the event, as well as representatives from HEFCW, CollegesWales, employers and the QAA review teams.

Higher education in further education institutions (HE in FE)

Review of directly funded HE in FE

38 In its consultation on Institutional Review (Wales) (W13/13HE and W13/36HE), HEFCW has set out its expectation that all further education colleges (FECs) with directly funded HE provision must become QAA subscribers from 2014-15 and subject to Higher Education Review: Wales. In May 2014, QAA sent out notification letters to the four directly funded FECs (Bridgend College, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Gower College Swansea and Neath Port Talbot College) and invoices were sent out in July 2014. The first reviews of FECs with directly funded HE provision are planned for 2016-17. A meeting with colleges on 16 July 2014 discussed the implications for FECs.

HE in FE Network

39 The following activities took place:

- 4 October 2013: a QAA officer gave a presentation on the Review of Foundation Degrees at a HE in FE Network meeting

- 13 December 2013: a QAA officer visited Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai to discuss subscription arrangements from 2014-15
- 6 June 2014: an officer attended a meeting at Colegau Cymru to discuss the Higher Education (Wales) Bill; higher apprenticeships; the Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales (the Diamond Review); QAA subscribership; and collective membership of the Higher Education Academy for colleges.

Concerns investigations

40 In 2013-14, QAA received three submissions which initiated two initial inquiries with regard to institutions in Wales, out of a total number of 79 applications received to the Concerns Scheme. The two concerns did not progress to full investigations.

Access to HE in Wales

41 In 2013-14, QAA published data about Access to HE in 2012-13, which showed that the number of QAA-recognised Access to HE courses in Wales increased by seven (to 95), while the number of Access to HE students decreased by 45 (to 2,275).

42 QAA's Access Recognition and Licensing Committee (ARLC) oversees all of QAA's Access to HE responsibilities and reports to the Board. Following Professor Noel Lloyd's retirement and the end of his term of service on QAA's Board and as Chair of the ARLC, we were pleased to welcome Professor John Grattan (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience and International, Aberystwyth University) as a new QAA Board representative on the ARLC. A new member from Wales has also been appointed to our Access Data Development Group.

43 Agored Cymru (the one Access Validating Agency in Wales) submitted its 2012-13 annual self-evaluation report to QAA in December 2013, as required. QAA's feedback on the report included one indication of good practice, one required action and two recommended actions. The AVA's response to the required action was considered in May 2014 and the annual self-evaluation report was approved by the ARLC. The AVA's risk status remains 'low'.

44 In 2013-14, QAA held information events for further and higher education institutions to explain the changes to the Access to HE Diploma specification in England and Wales. An event was held in Newport in January 2014, which was attended by 43 individuals, representing 11 higher education institutions, nine further education institutions and the funding council.

45 We have also embarked on the development of a subject descriptor for Access to HE Diplomas providing progression to nursing programmes in higher education. This is the first of a planned series of descriptors, which will play a similar role in relation to Access to HE Diplomas as QAA's subject benchmark statements for higher education qualifications. Working group membership includes a representative from the All Wales Nursing Admissions Tutor Group (of universities). Cyngor (the Council of Deans of Health) was also invited to comment on the draft descriptor.

46 In October 2013, QAA held its first Access to HE higher education admissions fair in London. Universities from Wales were among those exhibiting at the event attended by over 1,000 Access to HE students.

Review support activity

Reviewer training for Institutional Review

47 In January 2014, QAA held a training event at its headquarters in Gloucester for review teams and institutional facilitators for the reviews at Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University and Swansea University. This involved 15 reviewers (including three student reviewers) and three institutional facilitators and lead student representatives. Universities Wales presented an overview of Universities Wales, including the Diamond Review and the policy statement on higher education. Dr Cliona O'Neill, Head of Student Experience at HEFCW, observed the briefing event.

Evaluation of reviews

48 As part of QAA's ongoing evaluation of institutional review in Wales, reviewers, review secretaries and institutions (including lead student representatives) are asked to complete evaluation questionnaires following review visits. Three reviews were carried out in 2013-14. A total of 19 responses were received. Overall satisfaction levels were found to be high with 99 per cent of responses being positive.

Development and enhancement activity

Supporting enhancement in Welsh higher education

49 QAA continues to contribute to the programme of work and activities within the framework of the biennial Future Directions Learning and Teaching Conference. QAA's membership of all three Future Directions work strands and the Future Directions steering group is ongoing.

50 As a member of the HEA Future Directions steering group, QAA continued to be active during the biennial conference held at Aberystwyth University in April 2014. QAA was represented at the conference through data collection to inform research into higher education in further education colleges. Four colleges in Wales contributed to the research collation. A copy of the report, *Engaging with the UK Quality Code for higher education: A further education and sixth form college perspective*, has been forwarded to Colegau Cymru for dissemination to its members.¹

51 The QAA advisory group for a guide being developed for further education college providers of higher education has included active membership from Coleg Sir Gâr and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai. A call for case studies has been circulated and it is hoped there will be opportunities to showcase these within the guide.

52 QAA has continued to review subject benchmark statements and have significant active Welsh representation on the majority of subjects and across all the universities in Wales. This has been particularly beneficial to the review teams due to the Welsh employer agenda which acknowledges the skills required by employers in relation to the higher education curriculum and noted during the validation process. Since the introduction of the Skills and Employability Framework Action Plan for Wales in 2013, Wales' higher education has been notably more employer-focused and this is now being captured through the subject benchmark statement reviews, where appropriate.

¹ *Engaging with the UK Quality Code for higher education: A further education and sixth form college perspective*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=2803.

53 Students and employers are consulted on the drafts during subject benchmark statement reviews and we have had a particularly high level of student reader applications from south Wales who we have appointed when they have met the criteria.

54 In December 2013 the QAA publication *Recognising achievement beyond the curriculum: A toolkit for enhancing strategy and practice* was published and feedback from the sector in Wales suggests that it has found this particularly beneficial when completing higher education achievement reports.² The publication details how higher education providers may choose to recognise some of the activities that students undertake outside their academic programme through an additional award. It is designed as a practical toolkit that higher education providers can use to reflect on what they do to recognise student achievement beyond the curriculum.

55 During June 2014, QAA held public consultation events in Birmingham for the review of the UK frameworks for higher education qualifications,³ with a supporting online consultation. QAA is proposing to update both frameworks and to produce a single document to include common text to explain the two frameworks, a single table showing the two frameworks and their levels side-by-side, and a single set of qualification descriptors incorporating the frameworks' variations where these exist at undergraduate levels. Responses are now being analysed and the advisory group will meet in September to discuss the final revised document. The Head of Sector Qualifications Policy for the Welsh Government will be attending as an observer and the Head of European Alignment & Credit Framework is a member of the group.

Student engagement

56 Over the past six months, the QAA Engagement Team has been tasked with building QAA's activity in engaging with employers, using the effective cross-agency approach used for student engagement.

Key student-focused activity

2013-14 Institutional Review (Wales) and Higher Education Review: Wales

57 The Engagement Team attended sector briefings for Institutional Review (Wales). The team has also provided bespoke support for students' unions engaging with QAA's processes. The Engagement Team has also been working with the internal QAA development group which has been finalising the new Higher Education Review: Wales (HER Wales) method. The *Higher Education Review: Wales: Survival guide for lead student representatives* is due to be published in the autumn term 2014.

Wise Wales

58 QAA has committed to continue to support student engagement work in Wales and is funding Wise Wales on a programme of work over the next two years (2014-16). The funding amounts to £40,000, which will support a varied programme of work specifically for Wales.

59 The Engagement Team recently presented a session at the Partnership for Wales conference, organised by Wise Wales.

² *Recognising achievement beyond the curriculum: A toolkit for enhancing strategy and practice*, available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2719.

³ *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS).

Developing Student Engagement and Partnership Conference

60 The target audience for this event was students' union and provider staff working in student engagement. The event took place on 15 May 2014 in Manchester, jointly run with HEA and The Student Engagement Partnership, hosted by NUS. Feedback from the event was very positive with over 200 delegates, seven per cent of whom came from Wales and Scotland. Eighty-eight per cent agreed that the event will have or has had a positive impact on their work.

61 The Engagement Team will deliver the Quality Matters 2014 conference scheduled to take place on 8 October at the studio, Birmingham. The target audience will be elected students' union officers (full and part-time), students' union staff members and invited institutional staff from across the UK.

Student Engagement Advisers

62 QAA launched its Student Engagement Adviser scheme for trial during March-July. The scheme is designed to help providers with the student engagement elements within Higher Education Review: Wales.

63 Four advisers have been recruited from Welsh universities but will be allocated to English providers. The scheme has provisional funding and approval to continue next year and expand to include support for Welsh universities going through Higher Education Review: Wales.

Research and development

64 QAA has grant-funded two projects involving students across the UK which are due to conclude in September 2014.

NUS UK: Developing SU staff - aiming to develop students' unions' staff knowledge on quality processes. One of the direct outputs from this project is an online course aimed at new staff to induct them to student engagement in quality assurance processes. This course has four modules and is available at: www.qse-training.co.uk/login/index.php.

NUS UK: Annual Quality Reports - working on encouraging students' unions to submit an annual student submission to their university or college, in preparation for reviews and to encourage constant enhancement. The guidance documents are available at: www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/highereducation/student-engagement/annualqualityreports.

Key employer-focused activity

65 QAA aims to build understanding and collaboration between the higher education sector and employers, and its Engagement Team has been working on a number of areas.

Guidance

66 QAA is working with external expert authors to produce guidance materials in the following areas:

- Guide to QAA for employers - due to be published in September
- What QAA has learned about employer engagement - due to be published in September.

Research

67 QAA has commissioned an evaluation of measures and activities that UK higher education providers offer their students to facilitate and enhance graduate employability. In

June, the Engagement Team awarded a grant to a team at the University of Warwick. The evaluation will focus on the perceived or, where possible, evidenced success and impact of such measures and activities on graduates' ability and success in securing graduate employment. The outputs of this evaluation will be made publicly available in April 2015 and will be used to inform QAA's work and to contribute to the debate of policy and practice in the higher education sector.

Events

68 The team recently ran a successful employers forum at QAA's office in Gloucester. It was attended by Richard Graham, MP for Gloucester. The next event will be a larger, national event in London in September 2014, designed to bring the views of employers and representative groups to help shape our work assuring the quality and standards of UK higher education.

Other support activity

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

69 The Credit Common Accord Forum (CCAF) came to an end in 2012-13.

QAA website content development

70 Key areas of activity on the QAA website have included:

- a bilingual Concerns wizard, helps users to identify whether QAA can help with an issue through our Concerns scheme
- Wales landing page moved to the 'About us' section and given greater prominence in the left-hand navigation
- further development of the glossary in Welsh, defining many of the terms frequently used in our work and publications.

Liaison with other relevant bodies

71 See paragraphs 77 and 79.

Liaison Officer Scheme

72 Following consultation and feedback from providers across the higher education sector, we have implemented a number of programmes to improve communication and engagement. These include:

- streamlining the enquiries process, with a dedicated team to deal with all incoming telephone and email enquiries, improving response rates and access to relevant expertise
- further development of the Quality Enhancement Network: events and forums to address key issues raised by providers, facilitate networking and the sharing of good practice
- development of a database of more complex, less frequently asked, questions due to be launched late 2014
- a major revision of the QAA website.

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

73 There were a total of 14 enquiries relating to QAA activity in Wales requesting information on the Quality Code; student engagement; Access to HE courses delivered by Welsh providers.

Supporting, monitoring and reporting on QAA activity

Team Wales

74 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. The first meeting was held in October 2013 and included discussion on Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales; Institutional Review (Wales) and the Welsh Language Scheme and Commissioner. The second meeting was held in March 2014 and included discussion on Qualifications Wales Bill; enhancement activities in Wales; and the Welsh Language Scheme and Commissioner. The final meeting of the year was held in July 2014 and included discussion on The Higher Education (Wales) Bill; Qualifications Wales; and preparing for the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards.

Wales Committee

75 The Wales Committee met three times in Cardiff in 2013-14. The first meeting was held in December 2013 with reports on the Welsh Government Statement on Higher Education; The Higher Education (Wales) Bill: Technical consultation; and the HEFCW Consultation on changes to Institutional Review in Wales. The second meeting was held in March 2013, with reports on the progress on higher education legislation; QAA's Welsh Language Scheme; the Welsh Language Commissioner; and the outcomes of the consultation on the draft Higher Education Review: Wales handbook. The final meeting of the year was held in July 2014 and included discussion of The Higher Education (Wales) Bill, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skill's consultation on further education and the outcomes of the consultation on TNE.

QAA's office in Cardiff

76 Following the establishment of a QAA office presence in Cardiff at the end of 2012, it has been agreed to extend the current office sharing arrangement with NUS Wales. The office is proving a valuable enhancement to QAA's profile in Wales and for meetings with stakeholders, including the Welsh Government, HEFCW and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Head of QAA Wales

77 The Head of QAA Wales has held a number of meetings with relevant bodies and has attended a range of events. These are listed below.

Table 2: Meetings Involving the Head of QAA Wales

Date	Meeting with and/or attendance at:
6 September 2013	University of Wales Registry
19 September 2013	Aberystwyth University, launch of new Future Directions Themes

20 September 2013	HEFCW - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub Group (QAESG)
25 September 2013	Future Directions Steering Group meeting, Cardiff
14 October 2013	Universities Wales
23 October 2013	HEFCW Student Experience Teaching and Quality Committee (SETQC)
24 October 2013	QAA's Team Wales meeting
4 November 2013	Universities Wales and HEFCW about revised Institutional Review (Wales) process
5 November 2013	Coleg Llandrillo, Llandudno
6 November 2013	Liaison meeting Glyndŵr University
6 November 2013	Liaison meeting Bangor University
8 November 2013	HEFCW Annual Public meeting
8 November 2013	NUS Wales, Gair Cymraeg
18 November 2013	HEFCW and Estyn Memorandum of Understanding meeting
18 November 2013	Minister for Education and Skills speech, Cardiff University
19 November 2013	Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales Operations Subgroup meeting, Gloucester (QAA internal)
29 November 2013	Institutional Operations meetings, Gloucester (QAA internal)
27 November 2013	Future Directions: Learning from the Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales, University of South Wales
3 December 2013	Welsh Government/QAA telephone conference
13 December 2013	Meeting at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
18 December 2013	QAA Wales Committee, Cardiff
23 January 2014	Institutional Review (Wales) briefing event, Gloucester
29 January 2014	HEFCW SETQC
30 January 2014	HEA FDSG meeting, Aberystwyth
13 February 2014	Meeting with Academic Affairs Consultant, Embassy of Saudi Arabia Cultural Bureau about merger of University of Glamorgan, University of Wales Newport and University of Wales
21 February 2014	HEFCW, QAESG meeting, Cardiff
27 March 2014	QAA Wales Committee, Cardiff
27 March 2014	Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, Cardiff
28 March 2014	Open University event on Open Learning, Cardiff
1 April 2014	Future Directions Conference, Aberystwyth
11 April 2014	University of South Wales and University of Wales Trinity St David briefing event for HER: Wales

14 May 2014	HEFCW SETQC, Cardiff
4 June 2014	Future Directions Steering Group meeting, Cardiff Metropolitan University
6 June 2014	CollegesWales Higher Education Network, Cardiff
10 June 2014	Estyn
13 June 2014	Welsh Language Commissioner briefing, London
8 July 2014	Qualifications Wales
23 July 2014	QAA Wales Committee, Cardiff

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

www.qaa.ac.uk/contact-us
www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/wales.

Other QAA officer time in Wales

79 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.

Table 3: Other QAA officer time in Wales

Date	Activity
4 October 2013	HE in FE Forum, Coleg Llandrillo
29 October 2013	OIA Good Practice Steering Group meeting, Cardiff
28 November 2013	Launch of NUS Wales Partnership Statement
29 November 2014	HEFCW seminar on 'Welsh studies' (the future of...)
18 December 2013	QAA Wales Committee
9 January 2014	HEFCW/QAA Chief Executive Officer's meeting
21 January 2014	Seminar at Cardiff Business School as part of a joint CMI/ABS/QAA project on '21st Century Leaders'
27 March 2014	QAA Wales Committee
2 June 2014	Partnership for Wales Conference
23 July 2014	QAA Wales Committee

Publications (Wales only)

80 QAA developed a number of publications specific to Wales in 2013-14. These are listed in the table below.

Table 4: Wales-only QAA publications

Date	Publication
August 2013	<i>Mini guide: a brief student guide to Institutional Review (Wales)</i> www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=119
August 2013	<i>Institutional Review (Wales): Guidance for lead student representatives</i> www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=120
November 2013	<i>Report on the Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales, 2012-13</i> www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=2820
January 2014	Annual report to Welsh Language Commissioner 2012 www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2745 www.qaa.ac.uk/cy/Publications/Pages/Information-And-Guidance-Details.aspx?PubID=2745
January 2014	Annual report to HEFCW and HEW 2012-13 www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Information-And-Guidance-Details.aspx?PubID=506
January 2014	<i>Higher Education Review: Wales - A handbook for providers</i> (draft for consultation)
March 2014	<i>Higher Education Review: Wales - A handbook for providers</i> www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=13

Welsh Language Scheme

81 QAA submits an annual monitoring report on the Welsh Language Scheme to the Welsh Language Commissioner, and in 2013 reported the following:

- QAA's Annual Reception held at the National Assembly for Wales
- recruitment advertising for student reviewers
- QAA's review activity in Wales
- renaming of The Advisory Committee for Wales to QAA Wales Committee and its membership extended to include a representative from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the Welsh Government
- in 2013, QAA had five staff with Welsh language skills: two fluent Welsh speakers, two having intermediate skills, and one member of staff received Welsh language training.

82 QAA published 12 bilingual publications during 2013-14; 23 shorter translations were commissioned (such as web pages, event invitation and correspondence); 32 smaller items were translated in-house.

Table 5: Bilingual texts and correspondence

Date	Text or correspondence
5 July 2013	Future Directions event date marker letter
11 July 2013	Aberystwyth University Quality Mark eligibility letter
11 July 2013	Aberystwyth University Quality Mark agreement letter
11 July 2013	Aberystwyth University Institutional Review judgement change text for website
10 July 2013	REO judgement text for web page
22 July 2013	Huw Lewis AM letter
26 July 2013	Aberystwyth University judgement change report page
2 August 2013	Review of Foundation Degrees in Wales: Future Directions event web copy
14 August 2013	Quality Code glossary definition for website
24 September 2013	Schedule of reviews for Wales in 2009-15 for website
24 September 2013	Letter to the Welsh Language Commissioner with requested further information about QAA's monitoring report 2012
8 January 2014	Update to Appeals procedure wording on website
25 March 2014	HER: Wales web content
24 March 2014	Quality Code poster
2 May 2014	Event list for new further education college subscribers in Wales
2 May 2014	Letter to new further education college subscribers in Wales
21 May 2014	Letter to Aberystwyth University about review dates 2015-16
28 May 2014	Sign-off statement on University of Wales for website
6 June 2014	Copy for template letters to be sent to providers in Wales about mid-process student-focused engagement
9 June 2014	Hover box text and Concerns explanations to go on review report web pages

Appendix A: Draft breakdown of expenditure (2013-14)

Wales			
Analysis of Budget v Actuals 2013-14			
	2013-14 Budget £	2013-14 Actuals £	Variance £
Review costs	81,434	85,124	(3,690)
Access costs	3,177	2,894	283
Overseas	4,368	3,401	967
Reviews Group pay	93,467	90,933	2,534
Additional Wales costs	4,200	5,448	(1,248)
Access general	2,463	1,792	671
Public Engagement Group costs	81,194	70,608	10,586
Quality Development Group costs	64,553	60,876	3,677
Infrastructure pay costs	119,811	121,087	(1,276)
Infrastructure non-pay costs	93,322	104,449	(11,127)
Total costs	547,989	546,610	1,379
Income			
Other income - including subscription and investment income	(260,004)	(265,052)	5,048
Allocation of DAP deficit	(2,817)	(3,244)	427
SLA 2013-14	(285,167)	(285,167)	0
Total income	(547,988)	(553,463)	5,475
Total unfunded/shortfall	1	6,853	6,854

Appendix B: Summary of QAA review outcomes (2009-15)

Review method	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Institutional Review/Higher Education Review: Wales from 2014-15		University of Wales, Newport	Aberystwyth University	Glyndŵr University	Cardiff Metropolitan University	University of South Wales
		University of Wales	Bangor University		Cardiff University	University of Wales Trinity Saint David
			University of Wales Trinity Saint David		Swansea University	
Overseas (TNE)	University of Wales (Malaysia)	University of Wales (Singapore)				
Concerns (full investigations)		University of Wales (Turning Point Business School, Singapore; Accademia Italiana, Bangkok; and Fazley International College, Kuala Lumpur)	University of Wales (and London School of Business & Finance; Finance and Business Training Ltd)			
Review of Foundation Degrees				Aberystwyth University		
				Bangor University		
				Cardiff Metropolitan University		
				Glamorgan University		
				Glyndŵr University		
				Swansea University		
				University of Wales, Newport		
				University of Wales Trinity Saint David		

Access to HE				Agored Cymru		
Review for Educational Oversight and Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight			Bellerbys: Wales International Study Centre	Wales Evangelical School of Theology	Wales Evangelical School of Theology	
			Navitas: International College of Wales, Swansea		Navitas: International College of Wales, Swansea	
					The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT)	

Key

	Confidence judgement/meeting UK expectations/meeting responsibilities with no serious risk to academic quality and standards identified. May include recommendations to address areas for improvement.
	Some aspects of provision found to have limited confidence/or required improvement/or concerns identified. Follow-up action completed.
	Some aspects of provision found to have limited confidence/or required improvement/or concerns identified. Follow-up action ongoing (includes the provision of action plans to address weaknesses).
	No confidence/does not meet expectations

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