Membership 2021-22 in Wales

Working with our members to safeguard academic standards, enhance the student learning experience and secure the global reputation of UK higher education
Our UK Membership offer

QAA Membership provides vision, expertise and guidance through a strong partnership with UK higher education. Working with you and for you, QAA Membership:

- Secures UK higher education’s global reputation for excellence
- Safeguards academic standards and champions academic integrity
- Enhances the student learning experience wherever students are studying

We work right across the UK to secure academic standards and assure quality. In partnership with providers in each nation – and informed by our strong international links and horizon scanning – we devise and deliver imaginative, timely and responsive enhancement activities designed to ensure you and your students are well equipped to face the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing higher education environment.
In 2021-22, our Membership offer spans five interconnected themes:

1. **Beyond COVID-19 - The Future of Digital and Blended Delivery**
   - Exploring good practice and creating practical resources.
     - Digital and blended pedagogy, including the future role of the campus.
     - Assessment in digital and blended delivery.
     - Embedding work to align learning outcomes with assessment.
     - Assessing skills and competencies.

2. **Evaluation and Data-Based Decision-Making**
   - Enhancing practice and evidencing impact.
     - Evidence-based decision-making.
     - Moving beyond the metrics to evaluate what really counts in higher education.
     - Exploring effective approaches in evaluation and review.
     - Influencing, advising and informing governments, sector bodies and providers.
Global Engagement and TNE

Supporting internationalisation across topics and regions.

- Engaging with governments, international agency partners and policy forums.
- Maintaining strong partnerships across Europe, providing a voice for UK higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- Support for international students (in the UK and overseas).
- Enhancing quality and managing risk in transnational education (TNE) and international partnerships.
- Supporting members working with overseas partners through our country programme.

Creating Inclusive Learning Communities
- Flexible Pathways and Pedagogies

An imaginative enhancement offer embracing a variety of activity.

- Successful student transitions into higher education, postgraduate study and employment.
- Flexible pathways and modular qualifications.
- Inclusion and accessibility in the curriculum and student experience.
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Work-based learning, apprenticeships, links with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).
- Student mental health and wellbeing.
- Embedding Education for Sustainable Development.
- Promotion and ongoing development of the Access to HE Diploma.
Securing academic standards and assuring quality through UK-wide reference points.

- Academic integrity including creating and sharing practical guidance and support for staff and students.
- Degree algorithms and degree classifications including exploring the impact of changes in assessment.
- Subject Benchmark Statements including progressing a review and refresh of Statements to ensure they are inclusive and valuable for subject communities.
- Characteristic Statements including developing new Statements for areas such as micro-credentials.
- Qualifications and credit frameworks including devising supporting resources to embed the Credit Framework for England in programme design. Also, as key members of the ‘five nations group’, working with qualification regulators, funders and related bodies across the UK and Ireland to ensure approaches to qualifications frameworks and credit continue to be clearly understood.
Membership for your whole organisation

All staff and students at QAA Member institutions can benefit from support and constructive challenge.

**Practical resources**
Ensure you have the right information and tools at your fingertips, in a range of imaginative and accessible formats.

**Events and workshops**
Provide opportunities to develop and exchange ideas on the latest policy and practice.

**Insights and influence**
Keep you informed and offer opportunities to shape strategy, policy and practice at sector, institutional and subject level.

**Professional development**
Builds capacity, supports continuous professional development and extends knowledge and skills.

**Networking and engagement**
Leading debate and facilitating discussion.
Our specific work in Wales

As a QAA Member in Wales, we will continue to work with you across a full range of activities specific to Wales, working collaboratively to support your commitment to enhance and enrich the learning experience of students.

Quality Enhancement Review

We will continue to provide external quality assurance that is valued and respected, providing assurance to your governing body, to institutional partners, to staff, students and graduates, as well as to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the wider public. Our approach will remain enhancement-led and responsive to the context of each institution. After discussion with HEFCW and institutions, we have amended the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) process for the remainder of the review cycle to focus on the Quality Assurance Framework in Wales and HEFCW’s statutory requirements.

We will continue to maintain an expert pool of reviewers specifically selected and trained for QER, including an appropriate number of Welsh speakers.

We will work with you on the ongoing evaluation of the operation of QER and its continued development to deliver maximum benefits for your institution from engagement in external review.

Responding and reporting to Wales

Our review work in Wales is commissioned under the Framework Agreement for External Quality Assurance with higher education providers. We will report on our work through Universities Wales and individual providers to you, our members. This will cover events, liaison and other work, as well as review activity.

Through the thematic and analytical reporting of QERs, we will seek to identify shared challenges and strengths, providing insight into best practice and the challenges facing the Welsh sector. In the forthcoming year, we will share findings from the first stage of thematic reporting of QERs and use this to inform our end of cycle reporting.
Enhancement activity

Building on the insight and knowledge gained from our wider involvement in Wales, we are working to design and deliver programmes of activity to support step change in practice in priority areas chosen by you. Throughout 2020–21, QAA has been in discussion with providers about how an enhancement approach can be developed and taken forward for the benefit of the sector. QAA has invited colleagues to suggest areas of interest where we can facilitate projects, ideas and sharing of best practice. Initial discussions about the approach have been very positive and providers welcome the opportunity to collaborate on areas of interest for the benefit of students.

We will be supporting a number of Collaborative Enhancement Projects across Wales, providing each project with some financial support to help them get started. These projects will be led by the sector, have student interest at their heart, and will result in tangible resources, events and knowledge sharing for providers in Wales.

We have recently started a series of projects to further our engagement, knowledge and future approaches:

- Developing a series of good practice case studies identified in the QER and other channels.
- Completion of a study of the ‘landscape of enhancement’/‘enhancement culture’ in Wales featuring an analysis of institutions’ enhancement strategies, priorities and mechanisms.
- Publication of a student guide to reviews.

Wales Quality Network

The Wales Quality Network has further established itself as a valuable forum for discussion. We will continue to facilitate this Network for staff involved in quality assurance and enhancement as the key place to consider quality–related matters.

The Network is an opportunity to share practice, including QER commendations, and discuss new ideas, challenges and practices. In 2020–21, the Network began dedicated, shorter member-led discussion sessions in between formal meetings to be responsive and provide a supportive space for members to navigate current challenges.
Supporting collaborative engagement and sector-wide discussion

As part of membership, QAA will:

- use our expertise to contribute to the interests of higher education in Wales, and to the development and implementation of relevant government initiatives and priorities:
  - most prominently around the reform of the post-compulsory sector
  - continue to respond to relevant consultations in the best interests of our members
- continue to support the active participation of students as partners in our work and in quality enhancement in Wales, seeking further ways to deepen and strengthen student involvement, meaningful engagement and partnership, for example, through the publication of new guidance for students for engaging with QAA reviews in Wales
- actively contribute to, and work with, Universities Wales committees including the Learning and Teaching Network
- promote the voice and interests of Wales equally with all the UK’s home nations.

QAA’s further work in Wales

Importantly, we will continue to work closely with HEFCW, Universities Wales, Estyn, Colleges Wales, Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, NUS Wales and Advance HE in Wales. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with Qualifications Wales, and engage actively in the ‘five nations group’. We have engaged actively in the PCET Reform agenda to influence future quality arrangements. We will also conduct Gateway Reviews and undertake Unsatisfactory Quality and Standards Investigations when commissioned to do so.

Find out more

For more information on QAA Membership, visit our web pages which provide additional details on the full range of our work with, and for, our members.

www.qaa.ac.uk/membership