



# Review of UK transnational education in the Republic of Ireland: University of Wales Trinity Saint David and IBAT College

October 2017

## Executive summary

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (the University) established a partnership with IBAT College Dublin (the College) in 2013. The College, a private provider formerly known as the Institute of Business and Technology, was established in 2004; it occupies two campus locations in Dublin. In 2016 the College became part of Global University Systems. The partnership, which is defined as a programme partnership, was initially set up for the delivery of the University's MBA under a franchise arrangement. Currently, there are 185 students studying on the programme in both full and part-time modes. The student body is comprised of local, EU and international students. Subsequently, in 2016, three undergraduate programmes were approved to run as validated provision; at the time of the transnational education review these programmes had yet to commence delivery, although the College was hoping to recruit sufficient students for a February 2018 start date. Students on the undergraduate programmes will study on a part-time basis.

The University's policies and procedures in relation to collaborative partnerships are comprehensive and accessible, with additional guidance being made available to the College. The responsibilities of the University and the College in relation to delivery of the MBA are clearly set out in a Memorandum of Agreement. The University retains responsibility for the standards of its awards no matter where delivered; in relation to delivery of the MBA programme and in accordance with its framework for partnerships, the University also retains responsibility for assessment and award boards, and the appointment of external examiners and academic appeals. The College, operating within the University's academic framework, is responsible for recruitment and admissions, student induction, student support including resources, student engagement, complaints and producing annual monitoring reports. The University is aware of the local context and has worked with the College to ensure it meets Republic of Ireland requirements for non-Irish providers.

Effective oversight of the partnership is exercised at a number of levels within the University, including through its committee structure and key role holders; the Partnership Team Leader role in particular ensures regular and effective communication between the University and the College. Students spoke positively about their experience of the programme.

Ongoing financial and contextual changes from 2016 onwards led to a full due diligence review of the College and partnership; at the time of the transnational education review, the University indicated that the situation was being monitored.

## Introduction

1 The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD, the University) was formed in November 2010 through the merger of the University of Wales Lampeter and Trinity University College Carmarthen, under Lampeter's Royal Charter of 1828. In August 2013, Swansea Metropolitan University became part of UWTSD. The UWTSD Group also includes Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion as part of a dual sector group structure. The UWTSD Group has over 25,000 learners across a number of rural and city locations. The University's main campuses are located in Carmarthen, Lampeter and Swansea; in addition, it has two smaller campuses, the Wales International Academy of Voice located in Cardiff, and its London campus offering a range of predominantly business courses. The process of merging the University of Wales with the University is ongoing. The University's strategy for collaborative provision was previously summarised in its Strategic Plan 2013-17 and supporting International Strategy. The University published a new strategic plan in September 2017 and is currently developing the associated supporting strategies. The Strategic Plan 2017-22 notes that one of the University's values is 'collaboration through strategic relationships, working with others to provide educational and commercial opportunities and to ensure that Wales is connected to the wider world'. In meetings with the review team the University confirmed that its strategy in relation to partnerships is to develop just a small number in different countries so as to guarantee that they are properly managed.

2 Details of the University's partnerships are set out in its Register of Collaborative Partnerships, published on its website and updated regularly through the Academic Office. The University operates two types of partnership: structural partnerships within which there is a formal, structural relationship; and programme partnerships, where the focus of the engagement is the management and delivery of academic programmes. Within this typology five modes of provision are possible: dual award, validation, franchise, off-campus and articulation links. The University's international partnerships typically involve franchise or validated provision or are articulation links.

3 The University's programme partnership with IBAT College Dublin (the College) commenced in 2013, initially for the delivery of the University's MBA operating under a franchise arrangement. The College, established in 2004, is a private provider and was formerly known as the Institute of Business and Technology. In 2011 the College established a campus in Dublin city centre and changed its name to IBAT College Dublin to better reflect its mission. In December 2016, the College expanded its physical footprint and leased further accommodation in Dublin. In October 2016, the College became part of Global University Systems. The College offers programmes in business, information technology, marketing, management, sport, tourism and English language. The College is currently listed on the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) website as a provider offering programmes leading to qualifications included in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), but at the time of the Transnational education review all of the College's QQI-validated programmes were in 'teach out'.

4 The first interim review of the partnership took place at the College in May 2016, and in light of the positive outcome three new undergraduate programmes were approved in June and August 2016. In October 2016, following confirmation of its change of ownership, the University requested the College to provide updated financial information, which was received in March 2017. The resulting report, which noted that the College's financial position had weakened significantly since the initial due diligence exercise and recommended a full financial review, was considered by the Due Diligence Standing Group (a sub group of the University's International Affairs and Collaborative Partnerships Committee) in April 2017; recent changes to key staff at the College and concerns raised in a QQI report were also noted. The Due Diligence Standing Group agreed that a full due diligence exercise should be undertaken, and the review team noted that significant

additional financial, legal and academic information was requested from the College; this was received in May 2017. Following consideration of this information by the Due Diligence Standing Group in June 2017, and as there were no concerns in relation to the quality and standards of delivery of the MBA, the University decided that the College could continue to deliver the MBA and commence delivery of the three new undergraduate programmes with an initial intake of students from September 2017. At the time of the transnational education review these programmes had yet to commence delivery due to recruitment targets set by the University not having been met. The planned validation of an additional undergraduate programme was put on hold and has yet to be progressed.

5 In relation to the University's concerns, the review team learned that QQI had undertaken a review of the College's business programmes at NFQ levels 6, 7 and 8 in January 2017, under Section 46 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, which led to withdrawal of QQI's validation for these awards. In addition, the team noted that QQI has previously refused validation of several programme proposals from the College. At the time of the transnational education review, the College was instigating re-engagement with QQI through the approval of its quality assurance procedures; staff from the College confirmed that it was important to have validation from both QQI and the University. The University informed the review team that the partnership will be subject to further review and that this will be informed by the College's re-engagement with QQI.

6 The University is aware of local requirements and expects the College to update it on any developments. The University has recently worked with the College to ensure that Irish Government requirements for the continuation of the provision are met, and as a result the MBA is currently included on the Interim List of Eligible Programmes for Student Immigration Permission, which allows the College to recruit full-time international (non-EU/EEA) students onto the programme; the ineligible pre-master's programmes have been removed from the Memorandum of Agreement. The University has also worked with the College to ensure compliance in relation to Protection for Enrolled Learners, consistent with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012. The target student population for the three new undergraduate programmes mentioned above has also been revised to meet new Irish immigration requirements, which now exclude the recruitment of full-time international (non-EU/EEA) students to courses offered by non-Irish providers. The College is recruiting local students studying on a part-time basis to these programmes, with an expected February 2018 start date.

7 There are three intakes per year to the MBA programme at the College and approximately 185 students are currently studying on the programme, based at the College's city centre campus. Students may study the MBA in either full or part-time mode; part-time students are primarily Irish residents, working during the day; full-time students are comprised of Republic of Ireland, EU and international students.

## **Developing, agreeing and managing arrangements for setting up and operating the link**

8 The University's committee structure and terms of reference are set out in its comprehensive Academic Quality Handbook (AQH), which is readily accessible on its website. Executive responsibility for oversight of the International Strategy rests with members of the senior management team; academic oversight rests with Senate, supported by the International Affairs and Collaborative Partnerships Committee (IACPC). The senior management team approves the initial business case for partnerships and Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) is responsible for managing the approval and review of partnerships and programmes, and for the monitoring and evaluation of their standards and

quality. In carrying out these responsibilities, the senior management team and AQSC work closely with IACPC, which has a supporting role in the monitoring and review of partnerships. At faculty level, faculty boards have responsibility for the monitoring of partnerships; in relation to the College, this responsibility is discharged by the Faculty of Business and Management's faculty board together with the faculty partnership working group, reporting to the faculty board, the latter being established due to the large number of partnerships within the Faculty. Extracts from minutes of the meetings of AQSC, IACPC and the Faculty of Business and Management's faculty board demonstrate that appropriate and effective oversight of the University's partnership with the College is being exercised by these committees and in accordance with their terms of reference.

9 The University's collaborative arrangements are developed and managed in accordance with its Procedural Framework for Collaborative Provision, set out in the AQH, and supporting appendices, which meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Useful guidance for partners is also provided in the University's Collaborative Partner Operations Manual, which was welcomed by the College. The AQH includes the University's academic regulations and information about its quality assurance processes, including programme approval, monitoring and review, the recognition of prior learning, external examining and student engagement. The clearly defined policies, procedures and associated guidance for partners, which provide an effective framework for the development and maintenance of partnership arrangements, is a **positive feature**.

10 The University's process for setting up a collaborative partnership involves several stages starting with initial consideration, which include investigation, risk assessment and due diligence, partnership approval and programme approval. The initiation of the partnership with the College was atypical. As a former collaborative centre of the University of Wales the College began delivering a University of Wales MBA in 2011. Following the University of Wales' decision to withdraw from its collaborative provision in 2012, a number of its centres were invited to apply to become partners of the University through a process agreed in light of the proposed merger of the University of Wales and the University. From an initial 24 applications, four, including the College's, resulted in the establishment of a collaborative partnership with the University. Thereafter, approval of the partnership followed the University's standard procedures.

11 A partner approval visit took place in February 2013; the University separates the processes of partnership approval and programme approval, and will not approve programmes for delivery at a partner until partnership approval is completed. The panel, which included an external member, had access to a range of documentary evidence including the 2012 report of the Higher Education and Training Awards Council Institutional Review of the College, which overall had a positive outcome. The visit explored a wide range of topics with the College and its students, including the academic standing of the institution, its higher education experience and other partnerships, the learning environment and resources, quality assurance and enhancement, the student experience, qualifications and experience of staff, documentation and record-keeping, and published information. The panel recommended to Senate that the College be approved as a collaborative partner of the University subject to satisfactory completion of the due diligence process.

12 Following the approval of the College as partner, a validation event to approve the franchise of the University's MBA for delivery at the College took place in August 2013. The University has in place an appropriate process for programme approval, which is set out in its AQH. The process has two stages: for programme partnerships stage one operates at Faculty level and stage two is undertaken by a validation panel. The second-stage validation event for delivery of the MBA and pre-master's programmes took place in August 2013 at the College; the panel for the event included an external subject specialist; a Pre-Master's Certificate in Management and Pre-Master's Diploma in Management were validated at the

same event but have never been offered to students. The panel explored a range of issues including programme delivery, student market, English language support, the role of the Partnership Team Leader, regulations, module options and facilities, and made several commendations and recommendations. The panel agreed to recommend to the Senate that the programme be approved for delivery at the College; the report of the event was approved through the University's committee structure.

13 A Memorandum of Agreement was signed in autumn 2013 and delivery of the MBA began in March 2014. Responsibilities of the University and the College in relation to delivery of the programme are clearly set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. The agreement is initially valid for five years and may be renewed for a further period; the conditions under which it may be terminated are also set out in the Agreement. Addendums may be added if changes are required in the meantime and this was the case in September 2015, when changes were made to add part-time fees and remove the pre-master's programmes, and again in July 2016 to meet new Higher Education Funding Council for Wales requirements in relation to collaborative partnerships delivered via a franchise model. At the time of the transnational education review, further amendments were being made to the Memorandum of Agreement to accommodate delivery of the three new undergraduate programmes.

14 Following the positive outcome of the interim review, three new undergraduate programmes were validated (at two events held in June and August 2016) for delivery by the College: International Business Studies, Sports Management and Development; and International Tourism Management. The undergraduate programmes are validated provision; the University confirmed that it had moved to validated provision to contextualise the programmes to the local, Republic of Ireland market and to introduce new titles into its current range of programmes. Development of the programmes was undertaken by College staff liaising with academic staff within the Faculty. Programme documentation submitted for the approval process included programme specifications, which refer to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*; Subject Benchmark Statements; and qualifications frameworks. Panels for both approval events included external subject specialists, and reports from events made a number of commendations as well as recommendations. The report of the stage two International Business Studies approval event also noted that the Faculty first stage process had yet to be completed and approval would not be formally completed until this happened. The University confirmed that this was unusual but that sometimes it occurred due to timing of the events. The review team **recommends** that the University ensure that the first stage approval process is completed prior to stage two taking place.

15 Overall responsibility for the academic management of the MBA rests with the relevant University programme director, reporting to the Head of the Business School; the programme director is supported by a designated Partnership Team Leader, who ensures that the programme operates in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement and provides guidance on matters relating to quality and standards. At strategic level, a designated University Partnership Coordinator, appointed by the Senate, oversees each partnership. These roles are clearly set out in the AQH and the Collaborative Partnership Operations Manual. The Partnership Team Leader is expected to visit the partner at least twice a year; the Partnership Team Leader for the College visits more frequently. The Partnership Team Leader formally reports on the partnership twice a year and these reports are considered at both faculty board and IACPC. The review team consistently heard that the role of Partnership Team Leader is effective and enables wide-ranging support to be offered to the College, as well as assuring the University that the partnership is operating in line with its expectations. The support and oversight provided through the role of Partnership Team Leader is a **positive feature**. The role of the Partnership Coordinator has been reviewed within the University and was put in abeyance during 2015-16 and redefined for

2016-17 onwards. The first Partnership Coordinator for the College reported to the Senate for 2014-15; this report was thorough and covered a wide-ranging set of issues. A new Partnership Coordinator for the College was appointed for 2016-17 and visited for the first time in March 2017.

16 Within the College, a designated programme manager, who provides the main point of contact for students on the programme, and the academic operations manager, support the management and delivery of the programme. The College's programme board oversees the programme.

17 The evidence provided for the review team demonstrated that the University has well established and effective processes and structures for the development and management of its collaborative partnerships, and their effectiveness was also confirmed in the 2015 QAA Higher Education Review report. Processes meet the requirements of the Quality Code. The procedural guidance provided for both staff of the University and the partner is comprehensive and helpful, and the roles of University staff overseeing the partnership are clearly articulated.

## **Quality assurance**

### **Academic standards**

18 The University retains responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name. The University's MBA is franchised to the College; all modules except for two offered solely at the College have been previously approved; local contextualisation is permitted through the use of case studies, local examples and reference to relevant legislation. The ongoing maintenance of standards is achieved through a number of mechanisms, including monitoring and review and external examining procedures.

19 The University's procedure for annual programme monitoring is clearly set out in the AQH and details are also provided for partners in the Collaborative Partnerships Operation Manual. The University considers programme monitoring to be a continuous process that culminates in a formal annual review of each programme, enabling programme teams to reflect upon the effectiveness of provision over the year and the University to assure itself that quality and standards are being maintained. The University's annual programme monitoring process is thorough and comprises a number of stages, including the preparation of annual programme review (APR) reports and their consideration at school level; submission of school and partner overview reports; confirmation by the relevant faculty that the process has been completed in accordance with University requirements; consideration of the school, faculty and partner overview reports by AQSC, together with sampling of APRs; and preparation of an annual review report by relevant professional services. In addition, the Academic Office prepares a summary of matters raised in APRs for collaborative programmes, and partner overview reports for consideration by IACPC and AQSC. Partners are invited to attend a meeting at the University to discuss APR reports and their associated action plans.

20 APR reports for collaborative provision are produced by collaborative programme staff on the same template utilised by on-campus staff. APR reports cover a number of areas, including an evaluation of the academic health of the provision; confirmation that the APR process has been completed in accordance with University requirements; analysis of statistics, including those relating to student admissions, retention, progression and achievement; confirmation of student engagement and responses to student feedback; interaction with the University; reflection on whether actions arising from the previous year's review have been completed satisfactorily; and the development of an action plan. While the APR report for 2014-15 was not specific to the College, but covered the MBA (including its

delivery at the College), the APR report for 2015/16 was written by the College and the College also writes a partner overview report. The College also produces its own annual monitoring report, which builds on and extends that provided to the University, and is considered through its own committee structure, including the programme board.

21 The overall arrangements for each collaborative partnership are reviewed by the University at least once every five years. For new partners delivering a programme with the University for the first time, an interim review takes place, normally immediately after the first cohort of students has completed the programme. Partnership review then takes place after three or four years, and then every five years thereafter. Arrangements for interim and partnership review are set out in the AQH. The first interim review of the University's partnership with the College took place at the College in May 2016; the panel, comprising staff internal to the University, was appointed by the Chair of IACPC. The review took the form of discussions with the College's management, teaching and support staff, and students. Panel members also undertook a tour of facilities and scrutinised a wide range of documentation. The review highlighted several areas of good practice together with several challenges, and confirmed that arrangements were operating satisfactorily and that both institutions were committed to the continuing development of the partnership.

22 In addition to the arrangements described above, and as previously noted, regular reports are also provided by the Partnership Team Leader and Partnership Coordinator. The thorough approach to the ongoing monitoring and review of the partnership, which makes an effective contribution to the maintenance of standards and to assuring the quality of the provision, is a **positive feature**.

## Assessment

23 The respective responsibilities of the University and the College in relation to assessment, are set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. Assignments are developed by the University, except for the two modules that are delivered only at the College; the assignments for these modules are written by staff at the College and are approved by the Partnership Team Leader and the external examiner. Student work is marked by College staff and moderated by the University, with feedback provided to the College via the Partnership Team Leader; future plans for enhancement include cross-moderation between College and University staff, where each partner will moderate each other's work. Students are made aware of the University's assessment regulations and policies, including those relating to unfair practice and plagiarism through their student handbook, and students confirmed that they were clear about what was expected of them. A dissertation handbook sets out requirements for assessment of the dissertation module; students are allocated dissertation supervisors based on subject area/interest and meet their supervisors on a regular basis. Students submit their assignments electronically; feedback on assessed work is expected to be returned to students in accordance with the University's requirement of 20 term time days turnaround. Students expressed satisfaction with the timeliness and utility of the assessment feedback they received.

24 External examiners are appointed by the University with input from the College. The University's preferred practice is to appoint the same external examiners to cover both home and collaborative provision. Until 2016, a cohort of external examiners covered modules across the University's MBA programme wherever delivered. From 2016-17, and in recognition of the complexities of the multi-entry points and multi-location delivery of the MBA, and the need to maintain the required level of scrutiny, AQSC agreed that individual external examiners would be appointed for specific locations, supported by an additional review process to compare and ensure comparability of standards. External examiners' reports are shared with partners and responses to these reports are also included in APR reports; external examiners' reports are considered at the College's

programme board meetings, to which student representatives are invited, although students who met the review team were not aware of external examiner reports. External examiners visit the College and meet staff. External examiners' reports for 2014-15 and 2015-16 relating to the MBA are generally positive.

25 All examination boards are managed by the University; these include mid-sessional, resit, and progression and award boards. The external examiner attends all boards, as do staff from the College, who attend in person or through video conferencing. The University confirmed that progression and award statistics since the inception of the programme are in line with those achieved by MBA students studying at the University.

26 The University's arrangements for the oversight of assessment of the MBA provision are appropriate and consistently applied.

## **Quality of learning opportunities**

27 The College is responsible for the recruitment and admission of students in accordance with the entry requirements agreed through the programme approval process. Students confirmed that they had applied through the College and were attracted by the location, cost and UK award; some students had attended the College's MBA taster session, which they had found useful. The admissions process is monitored by the Partnership Team Leader, who samples applications. Applicants for the MBA whose first language is not English are required to provide evidence of having achieved IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent), which is the standard requirement for postgraduate taught programmes at the University.

28 In accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement the College is responsible for student induction, at which students receive a range of information about the programme; library resources; learning support; the use of plagiarism-detection software; and future career options. A welcome email is sent by the University, with information about services they can access. Students confirmed that they had found the induction useful. Students also confirmed that they receive a programme-specific student handbook, together with individual module handbooks.

29 The primary source of student support for students on the MBA comes from the College, which includes learning support, and careers support and advice. Students can also access advice from the University's Student Services and Students' Union. The main contact for students in relation to both academic and pastoral support is the programme manager, although students commented positively on the approachability and responsiveness of all teaching staff. Students also confirmed that they had met the University's Partnership Team Leader and feedback from students is included in the Partnership Team Leader's reports.

30 Since 2015-16, the University has required programme validation documentation from faculties and partner institutions, to be accompanied by a resources document providing details of the resources that will be available, including teaching staff; resources are monitored through the annual monitoring process. All students on the MBA programme have access to information literacy, academic writing and research skills support to assist them in their studies, which students found useful. Students can also access, free of charge, the College's English language support. The primary source of library provision is from the College's library services. Additionally, students have electronic access to those University library resources available to collaborative partnership students. The College has its own virtual learning environment and students expressed satisfaction with its use. The College provides IT resources and support for staff and students. Students who met the review team expressed satisfaction with the available resources, although the team noted that a number of issues relating to IT resources were raised in the class representative meeting of November 2016.



31 Staff teaching on the University's programmes are approved at validation. Where new staff are appointed after validation, University approval is required. A list of staff teaching on the programme that the University is aware of is sent to partners to check for accuracy; the Partnership Team Leader also confirms that new staff (appointed after validation) have been approved. Guest lecturers provide input into the MBA programme, which was valued by students. Staff development is provided both by the College and through the University; the Partnership Team Leader undertakes both general and specific sessions, and the College commented positively on the wide range of sessions offered, which contributes to enhancement of the programme delivery. In addition to staff development provided by the Partnership Team Leader, partner institutions participate in a range of University activities relating to quality assurance and enhancement. For example, since 2014, an annual partnerships conference has taken place in Cardiff, at which the College has always been represented. In May 2016, the University held its first conference for collaborative partner librarians, at which the (then) newly appointed College librarian was present. The University is also exploring mechanisms for facilitating applications for Higher Education Academy fellowship from staff in its partner institutions. The wide range of staff development offered to the College by the University is a **positive feature**.

32 The University's expectations in relation to student engagement and representation are set out in its Collaborative Partner Operations Manual; an essential component of its approach is the requirement for obtaining student feedback. Training for student representatives is provided by the College; students who met the review team were aware of the student representative system and some had acted as representatives. Meetings are held with class representatives and students are invited to the College's Programme Board and Academic Council; students also meet the Partnership Team Leader. However, the review team noted that there is no mention of the student representation system in the MBA student handbook. The review team **recommends** that the University ensure that the MBA student handbook informs students of the University's expectations in relation to student engagement. Students also provide feedback, including on their modules and lecturers, and were satisfied that their voice is heard, and that action is taken as a result of their feedback. Issues raised by students are also captured in the APR report.

33 The University carries full responsibility for appeals against assessment board decisions, and students studying through the College appeal directly to the University. Complaints are considered by the College in the first instance, but students may seek recourse to the University once College procedures are exhausted. Complaints are expected to be reported by the College to the University although to date no complaints have been received. Since the inception of the partnership, the University has received a total of nine appeals from students studying through the College; of these, one appeal was remedied and eight were disallowed. Two of the eight students subsequently took their cases to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, which found them to be 'not justified'. One of the eight students remain eligible to apply for review by the Office. Students are advised of complaints and academic appeals procedures through the student handbook.

34 Overall, students were satisfied with their experience at the College and were positive about the support received from induction through to completion of their studies.

## **Information on higher education provision**

35 The University's requirements for publicity and other materials produced by its partner institutions in relation to its programmes are clearly stipulated in the Collaborative Partner Operations Manual. The University requires the College to seek approval for any publicity materials relating to its provision from the University's marketing department prior to use. Module handbooks for the MBA are produced by the University, apart from the two College-specific modules, which are developed by the College and approved by the

Partnership Team Leader. The student handbook is produced by the College to a University template and approved by the University. The Partnership Team Leader also gathers examples of promotional materials and student handbooks during formal visits to the College and submits these to the Academic Office. The process of checking these materials for accuracy is overseen by the Head of Collaborative Partnerships. Samples of promotional materials and student handbooks are collected at least annually. Students confirmed the accuracy of the information they had received both pre-and post-enrolment.

36 The University retains sole responsibility for awarding certificates and transcripts for collaborative programmes; these are issued by the University using a standard template. Both the certificate and the transcript for this partnership clearly state that the student studied the MBA through the College.

37 The University's processes for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of information produced by its partners in respect of its programmes are well documented and effectively operated, and meet the requirements of the Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision. These processes and procedures were well understood by College staff.

## **Conclusion**

From its consideration of the evidence provided by the University, and from discussions with managers, staff and students of the University and College, the review team formed the view that the University's arrangements for oversight of this partnership were secure and that the University has responded appropriately to a number of issues as they have arisen. While the collaboration has developed over time the University is currently reviewing its partnership with the College due to ongoing financial and contextual changes. Students spoke positively about their experience at the College. Two recommendations are made by the review team; in one case this relates to a procedural issue, and in the second case concerns the information provided to students regarding the University's expectations in relation to student engagement.

## **Positive features**

The following positive features are identified:

- the clearly defined policies, procedures and associated guidance for partners, which provide an effective framework for the development and maintenance of partnership arrangements (paragraph 9)
- the support and oversight provided through the role of Partnership Team Leader (paragraph 15)
- the thorough approach to the ongoing monitoring and review of the partnership, which makes an effective contribution to the maintenance of standards and to assuring the quality of the provision (paragraph 22)
- the wide range of staff development offered to the College by the University (paragraph 31).

## **Recommendations**

The University of Wales, Trinity St David is recommended to take the following action:

- ensure that the first stage approval process is completed prior to stage two taking place (paragraph 14)
- ensure that the MBA student handbook informs students of the University's expectations in relation to student engagement (paragraph 32).

**The University of Wales Trinity Saint David's response to the review report**

The University welcomes QAA's report on its partnership with IBAT College Dublin and in particular the review team's confirmation that the partnership is securely managed within an appropriate quality assurance framework for collaborative provision. We note and will be addressing the two recommendations.

QAA2022 - Dec 17

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