



# Gateway Quality Review: Wales

Coleg Gwent

**Review Report**  
November 2023

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## Key findings

### QAA's judgements about Coleg Gwent

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Coleg Gwent.

- **There can be confidence that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable with standards set and achieved in other providers in the UK.**
- **There can be confidence that the quality of the student academic experience meets relevant baseline regulatory requirements.**

### Areas for development

The review team did not identify any **areas for development**.

### Specified improvements

The review team did not identify any **specified improvements**.

## About this review

The review visit took place from 22 to 23 November 2023 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Fiona Thompson
- Mark Cooper
- Matthew Kitching - Student Reviewer.

The overall aim of Gateway Quality Review: Wales is to:

- provide the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales with an expert judgement about the readiness of a provider to enter, or continue to operate within, the higher education sector.

Gateway Quality Review: Wales is designed to:

- ensure that the student interest is protected
- provide expert advice to ensure that the reputation of the UK higher education system is protected, including the protection of degree standards
- identify development areas that will help a provider to progress through a developmental period and be considered 'established'.

Each review considers a provider's arrangements against relevant aspects of the baseline regulatory requirements, and in particular:

- the reliability of degree standards and their reasonable comparability with standards set and achieved by other providers
- the quality of the student academic experience, including student outcomes where the provider has a track record of delivery of higher education.

## About Coleg Gwent

Coleg Gwent (the College) is one of the largest further education (FE) colleges in Wales, operating from five main campuses at Newport, Torfaen, Usk, Crosskeys and Ebbw Vale. The College provides a comprehensive range of general and vocational education and training programmes across all subject-sector areas - from Entry to Level 6 - to 24,000 students.

The College is fully committed to widening participation and providing higher education opportunities to those from non-traditional higher education backgrounds. In the 2022-23 academic year, 50% of students that attended the College were from the most deprived areas (decile 1-4) of the five counties of Gwent. Within higher education (HE) specific provision, 52% of HE students resided in deciles 1-4 (which reflects those students from the most deprived areas and least likely to progress to HE). 21% of Level 3 learners who completed in 2022 progressed to Coleg Gwent HE - 13% of these were from vocational routes. 17% of the 2022-23 cohorts of HE students had a disclosed disability or learning difficulty. 72% of students were 21 or over at the start of their course.

The College offers franchised programmes awarded by five partners. The main university partner is the University of South Wales, offering Foundation Degrees in Business, Sport, Childhood Studies, Education, Animal Health and Veterinary Nursing, Community Health and Wellbeing, Art, Design and Media, with some Level 6 top-up provision.

The College offers a Foundation Degree in Exercise and Wellbeing awarded by the University of Worcester, and a Foundation Degree in Equine Studies awarded by the University of Aberystwyth. It offers Foundation Degrees in Photography and Design Skills and in Complementary Health and Sport awarded by Cardiff Metropolitan University.

The College offers full and part-time Higher National Certificate and Diploma programmes awarded by Pearson in Construction, Engineering, Specialist Make-up, Business and IT.

## Judgement area: Reliability and comparability of academic standards

### ***The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)***

1 The College credit arrangements for both *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales* (CQFW) are aligned. The policies and procedures developed for these, cover both frameworks and Coleg Gwent has a full list of higher education policies on its website and intranet. Each policy title clicked on leads to the college policy, academic policy and/or the awarding partners' policies by means of a hyperlink to the associated pages on the websites of each of its partner universities, detailing the appropriate university policy and/or procedures. The College delivers all its higher education provision on a franchise basis from its awarding bodies and organisation which design the programmes. They have responsibility for alignment with the FHEQ as indicated in Responsibility Checklists. The formal agreements in place with the College's awarding partners include clear statements to the effect that, programmes offered as part of their agreement must meet the academic standards attained by students receiving their awards equivalent to those attained by students receiving comparable awards at the university and elsewhere in the UK, and align with the FHEQ.

### ***The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)***

2 The Cardiff Met Academic Handbook also has built within it, the policies and practices associated with the CQFW. For Pearson qualifications, the pathways are prevalidated and set, but the College works with its franchise partners to support students to have a smooth transition into Level 6. Credit accumulation, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL/APL) and any transfer arrangements for programmes that align with CQFW standards are the responsibility of the awarding bodies and students also have access to a useful diagrammatic representation of the CQFW framework in the HE student course handbooks in the assessment section.

### ***The Core and Common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)***

**Core practice: The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.**

3 The College requires Heads of School to submit a HE New Course Proposal Form as part of its new course proposal cycle. This form, which gets presented to the HE Steering Group, considers each proposal before submission to the College Senior Management Team (SMT) for resource ratification. The form refers the proposer completing the form to consider the CQFW and Quality Code level descriptors. The setting of academic standards is covered during the development and validation process with the awarding body. The College's Pearson qualifications currently reference the default Pearson programme specification as the overarching specification for its programmes; however, the College supplements these with contextualised programme-specific specifications that detail each programme's intended aims and learning outcomes, and how students will achieve them. University partner validation processes make clear the expectations relating to other reference points used for academic standards. For example, the BA Illustration for Industry Validation document for the panel details how they engaged and mapped the programme

against the QAA Art and Design Subject Benchmark Statement for undergraduate degrees, and the degree and classification frameworks. The College also reviewed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and applied this to the BA (Hons) Illustration for Industry as appropriate as part of this validation exercise.

4 The College follows each awarding body's requirements in relation to marking, moderation and sampling. Academic standards of the students' work are monitored and ensured in two ways: for Pearson programmes through moderation of assessment (internal quality assessment) and for university programmes by the university partner and the appointment of an external examiner for each programme. External examiners are appointed by the awarding body in accordance with the partnership agreements and memorandum of understandings to ensure that assessment practice is of an appropriate standard and satisfy each programme's requirements, and that appropriate academic standards are set and/or maintained on behalf of the relevant awarding partner. The outcomes of these are monitored in various college forums, including: Higher Education Annual Self-Assessment Report, HE Quality Committee Agendas and Terms of Reference, and specifically in the External Examiner Report Common Themes document with its associated actions.

**Core practice: The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.**

5 The College carries out Higher Education Assessment Boards for all programmes at two points during the year for modular scrutiny. Data reported from these Boards and associated analysis of trends and themes are pulled through into comprehensive course monitoring reports - the outcomes of which are appropriately actioned and monitored to completion. The College also scrutinises module survey data to look for anything that stands out for a particular module or learner that is out of the ordinary or not consistent. This analysis then forms the basis of a discussion with the external examiner and notes trends across other university partner organisations or any local influences that need considering when awarding grades. In addition, the College makes effective use of its online virtual learning platform where students are able to submit in-module feedback on any aspect of their study, the outcomes of which are then picked up and triaged and captured by the HE team at the College to identify trends and concerns, and is then disseminated accordingly for action.

6 The College has a comprehensive quality cycle to ensure academic standards can be met and provides the opportunity for students to achieve beyond threshold levels. This Higher Education Continuous Monitoring Cycle outlines the key activities and milestone quality events throughout the year, and is clearly understood and followed by staff. It includes induction, survey, module review and assessment board activity including progression boards, among other key activities. In addition, the College has an associated and detailed HE calendar that breaks down the cycle into easy-to-determine related development activities for staff. Evaluative reports are prepared and submitted to meet specified deadlines of its awarding bodies and, importantly, the College's own governing body which receives a report on the standards of awards for which it has responsibility. This report also details how procurement of resources and the quality of teaching and learning work in tandem to assure academic standards.

**Core practice: Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.**

7 The College works effectively with and delivers programmes in agreement with five partner awarding bodies/organisations, with formal partnership agreements and memorandums of understanding in place with each. These agreements require that programmes meet the appropriate level of the FHEQ and the partners' own regulatory frameworks ensure this is the case. Responsibilities in this respect are clearly outlined for each awarding body and highlight the demarcation of responsibilities in the Awarding Organisations Responsibilities Checklist. The College's own Continuous Monitoring Cycle September 2022-January 2024, is used to ensure the responsibilities delegated to the College from its awarding partners are met while also working towards its own annual reporting requirements and is made available to staff on the College's HE SharePoint.

8 The College's formal agreements with its five awarding partners require that programmes meet the appropriate level of the FHEQ and CQFW. The roles and responsibilities checklists relating to each awarding body highlight the delineation of responsibilities and are contextualised in the Awarding Organisations Responsibilities Checklist and these are understood by staff. Programme validation, course handbooks and university programme specifications provide comprehensive FHEQ-related information down to module level.

**Core practice: The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.**

9 External expertise relating to assessment and classification processes is reliable, fair and transparent. The College assures this through its arrangements and agreements with partner universities who appoint external examiners for each programme and for Pearson programmes by means of moderation of assessment (internal quality assessment). Outcomes of external examiner visits and reports are reported and monitored using the External Examiner Report Common Themes document. In addition, the College HE Course Guide 2024-25 details that the College runs courses that include learning in the workplace. This approach is designed to equip students with career-oriented skills and industry-specific experience that employers value. Placements are supported by comprehensive placement handbooks that detail the arrangements, support and logging of learning activities. For example, the Clinical Placement Handbook for FdSc Veterinary Nursing clearly states requirements for professional registration.

**Common practice: The provider reviews its Core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.**

10 Heads of School complete School HE Overview Reports following the collection and analysis of module and course-level reviews; these have well considered associated action plans. The Overview Reports cover feedback, course overview results and overview strengths and identified areas for improvement. The Faculty Directors then receive the HE School Overview Reports for their faculties. A holistic Faculty Overview Report is then written that brings the faculty's HE provision together in a single report. Following this, a cross-college HE Self-Assessment Report (SAR), including an associated action plan, is written by the Head of HE. The documents are thorough, detailed and the associated actions plans are born out of a commitment to raise achievement. For example, details relating to survey outcomes demonstrate that the college out-performed its partner university in all but two areas (learning resources and the learning community).

## The Expectations for Standards of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)

11 The College follows awarding body requirements and guidelines for delivery and assessment of programmes. All programmes delivered by the College are franchised from awarding bodies and organisations which are responsible for the design and alignment with FHEQ and CQFW. The college procedures for monitoring and oversight of programmes ensure that appropriate standards are met. The process of assessment boards and external examiner reports ensure that qualifications are awarded to students following achievement of required learning outcomes.

### Judgement

12 In order to reach the following judgement, the review team was able to explore a wide range of documentary evidence, including a self-evaluation document and a student submission; and the review team was able to meet with a wide range of staff and students. The meetings and documents allowed the review team to see robust evidence which demonstrates that the academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications frameworks (*The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*; the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales*) and the Expectations, Core and Common practices for Standards as set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education; and that the qualifications awarded are in line with sector-recognised standards.

13 The review team concludes that there can be confidence that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable with standards set and achieved in other providers in the UK.



## Judgement area: Quality of the student academic experience

### The Core and Common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)

**Core practice: The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.**

14 The approach to admissions is set out in HE College Admissions Policy, which is available on the website and also through the virtual learning environment (VLE). Course information leaflets clearly display entry criteria and serve to complement published course guides. The team heard from students that those applying externally found a wide range of relevant information to support their decision to study at the College and that any queries were responded to promptly. Those students who had applied internally, directly from Level 3 programmes, informed the team that they were supported through the process and provided with guidance on all of their progression options, including opportunities external to the institution. Students also informed the team that they benefitted from a Level 3 Progression week, trips to university partners and the Coleg Gwent HE Guide to Applicants. The team heard that, while interviews are not mandatory for internal applicants, some staff elect to use them as an opportunity to support student understanding of the programme and its requirements. Applicants may also disclose additional learning requirements as part of their application, the process for which is outlined in the policy. Staff provided a range of examples where reasonable adjustments had been put in place for students.

15 Successful applicants are issued a standardised offer letter that is in English and Welsh for students offered places on Pearson and University of South Wales courses. Cardiff Metropolitan University and University of Worcester students apply through UCAS and Aberystwyth University learners receive the offer letter directly from the awarding body. Students receive a link to the Student Contract, including their terms and conditions, with their offer letter. The terms and conditions are also available through the website. During the review visit, meetings with students and student representatives confirmed that the information provided during the application process met their expectations.

16 The College maintains a close dialogue with the awarding bodies in relation to admissions. This includes at the Partner College Operation Group (PCOG), where recruitment and admissions are monitored collaboratively. The College also makes relevant continuing professional development activity available for staff involved in admissions, including finance talks and bespoke admissions training.

**Core practice: The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.**

17 The awarding bodies are responsible for the approval of provision with the College actively involved. Internal processes are clearly defined and followed - as demonstrated in the recent validation of the BA Top-up in Illustration for Industry - and follow awarding body approval processes. Students are actively involved in the process of programme review, approval and reapproval. Proposals for new provision are developed at School level and submitted via the Faculty Director for consideration by the Higher Education Steering Committee. The College Senior Leadership Team gives final approval after consideration of resources.

18 There are five main groups focusing on the quality assurance of higher education provision: the Higher Education Quality Committee; the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Committee; the Higher Education Assessment Boards; the Higher Education

Course Progression Boards; the Higher Education Committee; and the Higher Education Steering Group. These groups provide processes by which the College is enabled to deliver high-quality programmes. In addition, the Curriculum and Quality Committee - a committee of the Board of Governors - also considers higher education matters. The Higher Education Quality Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the quality of provision. The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for overseeing the enhancement of the student experience in terms of learning and teaching. The Higher Education Assessment Boards consider student outcomes. The Higher Education Course Progression Boards confirm achievement and any further action required for each learner. The Higher Education Committee supports the College to achieve its strategic vision with regular review of provision and the Higher Education Steering Group considers and shapes the strategic and operational direction, ensuring the implementation of the HE strategy and monitoring the operational effectiveness of all HE procedures and practice. In addition, the Curriculum and Quality Committee monitors and oversees HE quality and curriculum at Board level and recommends for approval the Annual Academic Assurance Statement. The interrelationship between these committees is demonstrated through the annual review cycle that pulls together the student voice, course monitoring and the relevant committees.

**Core practice: The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.**

19 The awarding bodies approve the appointment of staff either through the validation process or through the continuous monitoring processes. For example, staff delivering provision approved by the University of South Wales are required to hold Recognised Teacher Status - a process which is criteria based and ensures all delivery staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. The College provides new employees with a detailed induction, including online courses relating to statutory responsibilities as well as a specific HE Tutor course. The College has a comprehensive performance review process for all staff which factors in pedagogic and subject-specific developments and associated continuing professional development (CPD) needs. Themes arising from these reviews feed into college-wide HE CPD opportunities.

20 Staff can apply for financial support for further study at Cardiff Metropolitan University and the University of South Wales, and a number of staff are engaged in study at master's and PhD level. In addition, staff can study for HE Fellowship. Funding is also available for staff to attend relevant conferences as well as opportunities for relevant curriculum and professional skills updating. The College provides ongoing and extensive staff development and has an online practice, research and innovation site that offers a range of information. An HE-specific staff newsletter is used to advise of training opportunities as well as providing updates more generally.

21 The College holds an annual CPD conference which includes external input and draws on themes arising through the continuous monitoring process. It has recently introduced an action research conference, showcasing research projects that had been undertaken in 2022-23, and this conference will now be an annual event highlighting staff research. The Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan sets out how the College intends to continue to improve the quality of teaching and assessment, including technology to support learning. This strategy is supported by a Teaching Success Programme which is a pathway to support staff to develop their teaching practice.

**Core practice: The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.**

22 Resources are planned on an annual basis with programme teams contributing as well

as drawing on the outcomes of the continuous monitoring process. The College has five campuses, each with HE provision, and learner accommodation was commented on favourably in the most recent Estyn report and by students. There has been a number of recent redevelopments designed to enhance the student experience. These include the Torfaen Learning Zone; Creative Arts Block; and the Veterinary Nursing Training Centre. Each campus has a dedicated HE Hub where students can access IT facilities and group working spaces. The College VLE provides a significant level of student support, operating as an online community which also provides all relevant course materials. Each campus has its own Learning Resources Centre with resources updated in consultation with academic staff. In addition, students may access the VLE of the awarding university. Students met by the team expressed overall satisfaction with learning resources both at the College and its awarding bodies, and access to industry standard resources on placements and live projects.

23 The College offers a full range of support services to HE students. Each student has a personal tutor who meets with them several times during the year to support their academic progress and identify any additional support. The College also has appointed Higher Education Academic and Personal Support Coaches to support students in their progression into HE study and Progression Coaches to support students in their transition to employment, self-employment or further study on the completion of their course. In addition, the College offers learning support, advice on student finance, counselling and welfare, plus careers support. There are also regular campaigns to support HE students who can access information through the VLE and through the HE Student Newsletter. Students met by the team were positive about comprehensive support services at the College from tutors and specialist staff, and are treated in a professional and confidential manner.

**Core practice: The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.**

24 The College employs a wide range of student feedback mechanisms across the institution. These include the operation of a formal system of elected Higher Education Learner Representatives. Representatives are provided with training to support them in their roles, by the Learner Experience Manager and training is also on offer for relevant representatives from the University of South Wales. Student representatives are members of key university meetings, including the HE Quality Committee, HE Teaching and Learning Committee and the Board of Governors, where one position is reserved for a higher education student. The institution also deploys a varied range of surveys, including the Application, Enrolment & Learner Orientation Survey, Mid-Course Questionnaire and National Student Survey. In addition, the College holds semesterly Higher Education Learner Forums, as well as Campus-based Principals' Learner Forums.

25 The team was provided with several examples where student feedback had led to demonstrable changes. This included the FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme, where changes had been made to the type of assessment used and to timetabling. Further changes have been made to library access, where students are now able to use the facility and a self-checkout service while the library is closed and where the institution had procured additional textbooks. Staff also explained that in some programme areas they sought feedback on teaching and learning in one week of delivery and then adapted practice for the following session - an approach the team considered to be highly responsive to student views. Students had also reported that they wanted more upfront advice and guidance to support their decision making, such as applying for Disabled Students' Allowance. The College therefore instigated Learner Applicant Events for students who have applied, which are delivered in a more intimate manner than open days and talking about what to expect next. Overall, the team found there was an effective and responsive culture in place aimed at responding to student feedback, which was confirmed by students met by the team.

**Core practice: The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.**

26 The College has codified policies for dealing with student complaints and academic appeals. Complaints are governed by the Higher Education Student Complaints Procedure. Students are encouraged to resolve complaints informally with relevant members of staff wherever possible. Where students remain dissatisfied, they may submit a formal complaint by using the College's feedback and complaint form that is available on the Learner Portal. Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint may then submit an appeal and also have the right to ask that their complaint is considered by the relevant awarding body at the appropriate stage of their respective processes. Ultimately, students can progress complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

27 The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure also makes it clear to students that academic appeals are considered through different procedures. Representations by learners against decisions made in examinations and assessments for Pearson courses are addressed through the Pearson Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure. Students on franchised programmes are directed to follow the appeals processes of the relevant awarding body and the College provides links to appropriate policies and procedures in the Higher Education Student Complaints Procedure as well as through induction and student handbooks. Students confirmed to the team that they understand where to access information and how to raise complaints and appeals.

**Core practice: Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.**

28 No research degrees are offered at the College; therefore, this Core practice does not apply.

**Core practice: Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.**

29 The College works with five providers. Responsibilities are clearly articulated via partnership documents and relevant quality handbooks, and understood by staff. With the universities, a link tutor is appointed at the College to work with their counterpart at the university and with Pearson, liaison is with the external examiner. The College's continuous monitoring process complements university systems and processes allowing both the discharging of responsibilities to the awarding bodies through its own annual reporting requirements, culminating in a detailed self-assessment report and quality improvement plan.

30 The College has well-established processes for the sourcing, approval, monitoring and assessment of placements to meet the requirements of specific programmes and relevant professional bodies. For some provision, work placement clinical staff are supported and trained by the College in being able to assess the student with the final outcome moderated by college staff. Placement hosts are well supported by the College in understanding and discharging their responsibilities.

**Core practice: The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.**

31 Twice-yearly, Higher Education Assessment Boards for each programme enable scrutiny of student performance. External examiners appointed by the awarding universities

attend these boards and can comment on assessment. These inform course monitoring reports - the outcomes of which are appropriately actioned and monitored. Module survey data is used to analyse individual module content and assessment. Performance data of students is also considered. This analysis is included in discussion with external examiners and considered when awarding grades and recommending progression. Achievement of learning outcomes by assessment is clearly indicated in programme specifications. Agreements between the College and its awarding bodies state that academic standards and awards achieved are equivalent to those attained by students receiving comparable awards at their own and other institutions, and align with the FHEQ. Where programmes are endorsed by professional bodies, evidence is provided that students achieve the appropriate levels of professional competence - for example, the FdSc in Veterinary Nursing which is endorsed by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

**Common practice: The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.**

32 Enhancement features in the terms of reference for the HE Quality Committee, the HE Teaching and Learning Committee, the HE Committee, and the HE Steering Group. Enhancement is driven through a process of continuous improvement monitoring which supports the annual monitoring process. The process draws on institutional data sets, and learner feedback, which feeds into module and programme review, and culminates in an HE self-assessment report and associated quality development plan. The monitoring cycle is embedded in the academic calendar with well-established procedures in place, overseen by the Head of Higher Education, ensuring engagement by staff and learners in review. There are scheduled meetings throughout the year for programme teams to review action plans and discuss learner feedback and any actions needed. This approach enables continuous quality improvement with the HE Quality Committee monitoring actions and responding to learner feedback.

33 For annual monitoring purposes, Heads of School produce School HE Overview Reports, which are used by the Faculty Director to produce a Faculty Overview Report. The School and Faculty Overview Reports are scrutinised by the HE Committee which can also identify programmes that will come under the Results Improvement Initiative, a process designed to support provision where issues have been identified. The College HE Self-Assessment Report and associated Quality Development Plan is produced by the Head of Higher Education and considered by the Board of Governors following scrutiny by the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

34 As part of continuous monitoring cycle, the Heads of School Self-Assessment Reports consider staff development needs and consideration of this drives institutional approaches to CPD. Performance review considers the career objectives of staff and includes a structured discussion with line managers about how to achieve them.

**Common practice: The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.**

35 The College manages quality effectively, drawing on a range of external expertise. While the awarding bodies have responsibility for the external examiner process, the College engages effectively with their reports, identifying any issues and responding accordingly. Validation and course approval events, managed by the awarding bodies, include external input. The College has extensive links with employers to support curriculum development, delivery and placements. It has recently established an Employer Partnership Pledge which seeks to place employers at the heart of the College's activity. This pledge is designed to be mutually beneficial and provide possible progression into employment with the offer of activities such as placements, masterclasses and live projects. Although the awarding

bodies have responsibility for the quality aspects relating to provision accredited by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, the College maintains strong relationships with the relevant bodies in order to support the development and delivery of the curriculum.

**Common practice: The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.**

36 The College actively involves students in validation, revalidation and review processes. This includes meeting validation panels, participating in informal discussions and formal contributions to module changes and module review. Students confirmed to the team that their views are listened to during these processes. In addition to the formal system of student representation, which allows students to engage in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience, the College also operates informal mechanisms for student engagement. This includes suggestion boxes on the college website, which can be submitted anonymously or by named students. This feedback is received by the Higher Education Development Manager and triaged to appropriate staff in the institution for action and resolution.

37 Staff also gather feedback from students regarding their placement experience. This is gathered both through survey data and during staff visits to students' placement locations. The Clinical Placement Handbook for FdSc Veterinary Nursing contains the key contacts for students while on placement. Students met by the team stated that they felt that their voice was heard and considered with both positive and negative outcomes explained - for example, a sustainability report included in the student submission and amendments to assessment agreed between lecturers and students. There was some involvement of students in the development of the FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme.

## **The Expectations for Quality of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)**

38 The review team was able to see robust evidence demonstrating well-designed courses - providing a high-quality academic experience; and significant support, both academic and pastoral, including support for additional learning requirements. The College is located in a region with areas of social and economic deprivation which it seeks to address through its commitment to widening participation, comprehensive support and progression to higher education opportunities. The evidence enabled the review team to see that the provision meets the Expectations, Core and Common practices for quality as set out in the Quality Code.

39 In order to reach the following judgement, the review team was able to explore a wide range of documentary evidence, including a self-evaluation document and a student submission; and the review team was able to meet and have very positive discussions with a wide range of staff and students, including the College Principal and an awarding body representative. The evidence allowed the review team to explore the provision offered to students from the point of admission through to completion.

## **Judgement**

40 The review team concludes that there can be confidence that the quality of the student academic experience meets relevant baseline regulatory requirements.

## Commentary: Welsh Language Standards

41 The College has extensive information available, publicly, on its website, detailing its commitment to promote the Welsh language including information about compliance with the standards. All college information, literature, publicity and promotional material is published in Welsh and English. This was confirmed by students met by the team who also stated that lectures, many of whom are bilingual, sometimes give instructions in Welsh to encourage use of the language. The College has developed a Welsh Medium and Bilingual Strategy and Action Plan, and there are specific roles supporting the delivery of the strategy. The policy on the use of the Welsh language at the College is detailed in its coverage. An annual report on compliance with the Standards is produced and reviewed by the Audit Committee. College performance against the Standards is monitored via the Welsh Language Steering Group. All staff are provided with clear guidance on what they must do to comply with the Standards. Staff are encouraged and supported to learn Welsh and data is collected on staff fluency.

42 Students are advised of language options at open days and through the admissions process with further information provided throughout the programme. All students have the choice to submit their assignments in Welsh and have a Welsh speaking personal tutor. Students can become Welsh Ambassadors and support the College in promoting and developing Welsh language use. The College has appointed a Bilingual Development Manager to ensure compliance with Standards and encourage engagement with the Welsh language and use within the overall college experience through workshops, staff development and enrichment activities. The Welsh Language Steering Group scrutinises procedures and ensures that the College is meeting the needs of Welsh language students.

**QAA2814 - R14591 - Feb 24**

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