Glyndŵr University

Institutional Review
by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

March 2013

Contents

About this review

This is a report of an Institutional Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Glyndŵr University. The review took place on 18-22 March 2013 and was conducted by a team of five reviewers, as follows:

- Professor John Baldock
- Professor Stephen Denyer
- Professor Ian Robinson
- Ms Briony Williams (student reviewer)
- Mr Tony Platt (review secretary).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Glyndŵr University and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. In this report the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - threshold academic standards[1]
  - the quality of learning opportunities
  - the information provided about learning opportunities
  - the enhancement of learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the institution is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the key findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[2] A dedicated page of the website explains the method for Institutional Review of higher education institutions in Wales[3] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents.

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[1] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/pages/default.aspx
[3] www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/institutional-review.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Glyndŵr University

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Glyndŵr University (the University).

- 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**.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following **features of good practice** at Glyndŵr University.

- The University makes good use of its strong and extensive expertise in the development and delivery of e-learning methods (paragraph 2.12.3).
- The University's Disability Assessment Centre provides comprehensive support for students with disabilities at the Wrexham campus (paragraph 2.8.1).
- The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Dashboard provides both current and historical management information which is accessible to staff at all levels, and can also be used to promote enhancement (paragraph 2.4.1).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Glyndŵr University:

- regulations for external examining should specify that sampling of assessment scripts always includes all delivery sites, and external examiners' reports should reflect this sampling, by the start of academic year 2013-14 (paragraph 1.2.2)
- establish and implement a strategy and action plan for the improvement of learning resources and student support at Glyndŵr University London, by the start of academic year 2013-14 (paragraph 2.2.1)
- ensure that learning resource issues reported through the commissioning and monitoring processes are addressed effectively and in a timely fashion, from the beginning of the academic year 2013-14 and thereafter (paragraph 2.2.2)
- include external panel members in all programme approval visits to collaborative centres, from the beginning of the academic year 2013-14 and thereafter (paragraph 2.11.5).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms the following actions** that Glyndŵr University is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- Progress is being made in the sharing of external examiners' reports with students at all centres of delivery (paragraph 1.2.4).
- Students are increasingly contributing to the quality assurance of learning opportunities at Glyndŵr University London (paragraph 2.3.4).

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the operational description and handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Institutional Review in Wales](.).[4]

About Glyndŵr University

Glyndŵr University in Wrexham was created out of the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWI), which itself had been established in 1975 as a result of a merger of Cartrefle College of Education, Denbighshire Technical College and Flintshire College of Technology. Through these colleges, Glyndŵr University can trace its origins back to 1887 with the formation of the Wrexham School of Science and Art. In 2004, NEWI became a full member of the University of Wales, having been an associate college since 1993. Taught degree-awarding powers and university title were awarded in 2008. From January 2012, all new students studying for taught awards were registered on programmes leading to a Glyndŵr University award. The University currently offers research degrees of the University of Wales, and intends to continue to do so until it obtains its own research degree-awarding powers.

The University was established to support the economic and social development of its region, continuing the strong sense of the regional mission of its predecessors, incorporating an emphasis on the employability of graduates and the socio-economic development of the region. Glyndŵr University's mission says that it 'strives to be a market-led, student-centred university of international significance open to all', and in its vision it aims to 'become indispensable as a significant, relevant and expert partner in regional and national economic and social development'.

The Board of Governors is responsible for the educational character, mission and strategy of the University. Responsibility for the management of the University resides with the Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Executive. The Senate has responsibility for overseeing the quality and standards of all the University's academic provision.

The University is structured around two Institutes - one for Arts, Science and Technology (AST) and one for Health, Medical Sciences and Society (HMSS) - and two Schools: the School for Undergraduate Studies and the Graduate School. Each University Institute is divided into a number of academic departments, each led by an Academic Head. The Deans of the Institutes are responsible for the management and strategic development of the Institutes; the Schools commission programmes from the Institutes, and oversee programme administration and management, and student support.

In 2011-12 the University had approximately 5,246 full-time and 4,291 part-time students - a total of 9,537 (5,698 full-time equivalent). There were 8,120 undergraduates and 1,417

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/institutional-review.aspx

postgraduates, including 116 postgraduate research students. Programmes are offered across 10 out of the 11 Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) Academic Subject Categories. Eight Academic Subject Categories are also supported by sub-degree provision. Many programmes are developed in partnership with employers and sector bodies, and are professionally accredited.

The University recruits 41 per cent of its students from North East Wales, and claims to be one of Wales's and the United Kingdom's leading universities in widening participation, with 99.7 per cent of home students from state schools and 20.6 per cent from low-participation neighbourhoods. The University emphasises its role in widening participation and extending opportunities to students from communities who have traditionally not had access to a university education, and it encourages and supports students to continue their studies at postgraduate level.

The University employs 201 full-time academic staff, of whom 26 are professors. These include a number of strategic external appointments, particularly in respect of research capability and leadership. Currently, 43 per cent of academic staff have research degrees and the University aims to increase this to 50 per cent by 2013. Fifty-three per cent of staff are active in professional, statutory or regulatory bodies and subject societies.

The University's main campus is at Plas Coch, Wrexham, with an additional campus in the town for the North Wales School of Art and Design. It has also established a Knowledge Industry Corridor, working in partnership with industry and the public sector to promote economic regeneration across the region. New facilities have been established, including a research centre in opto-electronics technology at St Asaph, land-based educational provision at Northop, and an Advanced Composite Training and Development Centre at Broughton. Two new state of the art buildings were opened in 2011 on the University's main campus in Wrexham: the Centre for the Child, Family and Society; and the Centre for the Creative Industries.

In 2010, the University entered into a partnership with a private college in London specialising in the delivery of business-based higher education programmes to international students. It subsequently purchased the college to establish its own delivery site in London as Glyndŵr University London (GUL). GUL now has almost 1,400 students from over 50 countries (approximately 15 per cent of the University's full-time equivalents), studying mainly undergraduate degrees in business and MBAs, and intends to extend recruitment to UK and EU students from February 2013.

The University is committed to the higher education policies of the Welsh Government. Under the conditions of its Welsh Language Scheme, the University offers all of its administrative services bilingually. A number of courses are available through the medium of Welsh, and students on any course are entitled to present work for assessment through the medium of Welsh. The University participates in the activities of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

Collaborative provision

At the time of the last Institutional Review, the University had a limited number of collaborative partnerships, all with regional further education colleges. Following the publication of a new strategic plan in 2009, the University has begun to expand its range and number of partnerships. In accordance with its mission to be 'of international significance', the University has also begun to develop partnerships overseas. It currently has nine collaborative partnerships, of which three are overseas.

Explanation of the findings about Glyndŵr University

This section explains the key findings of the review in more detail.[5]

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms[6] is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.[7]

1   Academic standards

Outcome

The academic standards at Glyndŵr University **meet UK expectations** for threshold standards. The team's reasons for this judgement are given below.

Meeting external qualifications benchmarks

1.1   Glyndŵr University has a robust validation framework, well described in the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH). The procedures for developing proposals for validation require course teams to benchmark both against *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* (FDQB). The University operates a Modular Curriculum Framework for its awards, which itself aligns with the FHEQ and the CQFW, and which defines credit requirements for University awards.

1.1.1   The review team found that these alignment processes work effectively. Programmes are tested against the appropriate national frameworks at validation. Reports of validation events generally implied, and frequently stated explicitly, that alignment was confirmed. External examiners are asked to comment on alignments of programmes with external qualifications benchmarks in their annual reports, and they do so.

1.1.2   Academic provision delivered in partnership with others is approved, monitored and reviewed using standard University processes. In addition, the approval of collaborative provision is considered in two stages, in which approval of a partner institution is followed by validation of the programme delivery by that partner. Continued alignment is confirmed through annual monitoring and periodic review (paragraphs 1.4-1.4.5).

Use of external examiners

1.2   External examiners provide regular reassurance and verification of the standards achieved by students on taught programmes. Examiners are appointed as subject specialists for modules and programmes and some, additionally, as chief external examiners. There is a well-defined process for the appointment of external examiners. Programme leaders make nominations which are checked by the Academic Registry before a School Director confirms the appointment. The review team found that both the nominee and programme leader were expected to ensure that reciprocal examining arrangements were avoided, but the University intends to develop its own internal database of University staff external examining appointments, in order to strengthen its assurance that reciprocity

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[5] The full body of evidence used to compile the report is not published; however, it is available on request for inspection. Please contact QAA Reviews Group.
[6] www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary/pages/default.aspx
[7] See note 4.

did not occur. The University will no doubt wish to expedite this prudent development. However, the team also learned of swift remedial action taken when an external examiner's own career progression led to an unexpected reciprocal arrangement. The Academic Committee maintains a detailed oversight of the appointment of external examiners, and is prepared to intervene to ensure that appointments are made in a timely manner. External examiners are informed about their role and responsibilities through a handbook, the AQH and an annual seminar for external examiners.

1.2.1   External examiners present their annual reports using a detailed standard University template that includes narrative comments and statements of compliance. The review team found that reports generally confirmed the appropriate setting and achievement of academic standards, the quality of feedback to students, and the suitability of assessment instruments. In the few cases where recommendations were made for improvement, follow-up action had been taken: for example, recruitment was temporarily suspended in a programme where potentially serious concerns were reported, and in another case a partnership was suspended and later closed.

1.2.2   For each programme, the University appoints the same external examiner for all centres where that programme is delivered. However, the review team found that neither the external examiners' report template or the External Examiners' Handbook required the examiners' reports to address performance at all sites, rather simply inviting comment on 'consistency of quality and standards at the collaborating institution(s) where appropriate'. Indeed, in one case an external examiner found it difficult to keep track of the multiplicity of student groups on the various delivery centres. The academic regulations carefully define what materials should be made available to external examiners, but do not specify that external examiners should sample work from all delivery sites. While the team heard that such multi-site sampling is carried out, it saw only one annual report in which the examiner commented specifically on assessment and performance at different centres of delivery. The team **recommends** that, to ensure transparently systematic external examining of all programmes at all centres, regulations for external examining should specify that sampling of assessment scripts always includes all delivery sites, and external examiners' reports should reflect this sampling.

1.2.3   Reports from external examiners are considered by the Academic Registry and by programme teams. A written response is sent from the programme leader to the external examiner, whose comments are addressed in the programme annual monitoring report and action plan (see paragraph 1.4.4). External examiners' reports are also considered in the University's periodic review of programmes. The review team found evidence that external examiners' reports had been addressed: for example, comments about student plagiarism had been followed up by an investigation into academic misconduct.

1.2.4   The University requires that external examiners' reports are shared with students through Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs). However, SSCC minutes seen by the review team made no reference to these reports. The University has already found, through an internal review, that its requirement was not being followed routinely, and the SSCC standard agenda has recently been amended to reflect the requirement, with strengthened guidance for staff. The University acknowledged that this recent work was still being rolled out fully for all courses at all delivery sites within the University and in collaborative partnerships, and stated that the procedures would be fully embedded by the end of the current academic year. The review team **affirms** the progress which is being made in the sharing of external examiners' reports with students.

1.2.5   An annual overview report analysing all external examiners' reports is considered by the Academic Committee; any institutional-level lessons are identified, and appropriate actions are determined. The review team found evidence that issues were being raised and

addressed, and that the Vice-Chancellor was routinely informed of such institutional-level concerns. The overview report also summarises headlines from each subject area, noting areas for improvement and good practice. The review team considered that oversight of the external examining process was effective.

1.2.6   The review team concluded that the University's processes for external examining are well aligned with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and provide a broadly sound basis for the assurance of academic standards.

Assessment and standards

1.3   The University requires that assessment strategies are clearly articulated in programme and module documentation and tested through the validation process (paragraph 1.4.3). The review team found that validation and periodic review events focused clearly on assessment matters, and the University took care to justify any variations to the standard assessment regulations. Validation panel members are well briefed on these issues.

1.3.1   University, programme and module handbooks explain assessment regulations and requirements, and state that marked work should be returned to students within three weeks, with staff feedback. Students confirmed the accuracy of handbooks (see also paragraph 3.3), and said that assessment feedback was generally helpful and supportive. In a few cases, external examiners have recommended improvements in feedback and the University has taken firm action.

1.3.2   External examiners report that assessments are appropriate and rigorously marked, and assessment procedures are well managed in accordance with University regulations. Occasional issues have been raised by external examiners and the University has addressed these robustly and in good time.

1.3.3   The University's Academic Committee maintains effective oversight of academic standards through annual overview reports, and matters of concern have been addressed by the University Executive in a timely manner. The academic regulations are approved by Senate. Regulations for academic misconduct are thorough, and processes for the detection and investigation of plagiarism work effectively.

1.3.4   The review team found evidence, in records of assessment boards and reports from external examiners, that confidence can be placed in the use of the University's regulations and the making of progression and award decisions. Regulations for the accreditation of prior learning, including the accreditation of prior experiential learning, are set out in the AQH and provide a comprehensive guide to the processes. Records of assessment boards showed that these processes had been applied.

1.3.5   The University's Centre for Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CLTA) publishes a 'Guide to good practice in assessment', which makes use of information gathered during a University-wide review of assessment during 2011-12. It explains the University's requirements for second marking and for internal and external moderation of assessment instruments and marked work. These processes are carried out effectively: for example, an external examiner commented how internal moderation had proved useful in correcting inflated grading during assessment on multiple delivery sites.

1.3.6   In common with all universities in Wales, Glyndŵr University permits students to submit any assessment in Welsh, and will arrange appropriate translation for marking purposes. One programme is delivered and assessed entirely in Welsh, and another partly in Welsh. Currently no programmes are delivered or assessed in languages other than English

or Welsh, but the Quality Strategy Committee and Senate have recently debated and recommended a change to this approach, in order to permit partner institutions to deliver and assess University programmes in other languages. The review team heard that the Board of Governors had agreed with Senate that a pilot scheme should be launched and evaluated before being more widely implemented. This careful approach was entirely appropriate. The University has not yet identified a suitable partner with which to engage in such a pilot.

Setting and maintaining programme standards

1.4   The University has robust processes for validation, annual monitoring and periodic review; they are described clearly in the AQH and were reviewed in 2010-11. Guidance to staff is widely available. Periodic review is carried out every five years, and includes revalidation. The Academic Committee receives detailed and helpful annual overview reports on annual monitoring and validation, and thus has appropriate evidence through which to oversee these processes.

1.4.1   The School for Undergraduate Studies and the Graduate School oversee and manage all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study. They commission new programmes from the academic Institutes, and close others, as required. Commissioning decisions are made transparently by a Commissioning Panel including school directors, institute deans and other senior University staff. They are supported by departmental strategic plans and informed by a detailed set of University-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs; paragraph 2.4.1). Programme teams are expected to draw upon external professional or industrial expertise in developing their proposals.

1.4.2   All taught programmes must fit within the University's modular framework, and must include elements of entrepreneurship, sustainability, employability and research. The modular framework aligns with *Chapter A1: The national level* of the Quality Code, but each curriculum must also align with any relevant sectoral standards or with professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirements (paragraph 1.5.1).

1.4.3   Validation and periodic review panels comprise experienced University academic staff and two independent external peers. Review panels meet with past and present students. Panels are required to satisfy themselves that the body of knowledge and skills developed within the proposed curriculum reflects current scholarship and the expectations of the academic discipline or profession. Particular care is given to any embedded work-based learning, and to elements of the curriculum which may be delivered by distance or e-learning (paragraphs 2.12.1-2.12.2). The review team found that panels scrutinised programme proposals carefully and provided a thorough justification of any approval conditions and recommendations.

1.4.4   Programme leaders write annual monitoring reports (AMRs) using a wide range of evidence, including external examiners' reports (paragraphs 1.2.1-1.2.3), programme statistics (paragraphs 2.4.1-2.4.2) and student feedback (paragraph 2.3). AMRs are considered at departmental level by subject annual monitoring boards, and later by the Academic Programmes Sub-Committee (APSC) of the Academic Committee. An independent report confirms to APSC that action has been taken to address any issues raised or to disseminate good practice. The review team found that, despite incomplete data in one report, the process was generally thorough and effective. The team was able to track increasing concern about physical resources in engineering over two years, and heard how this had informed a recent decision to allocate additional funding in this area (see also paragraph 2.2.2). There was also evidence in AMRs and validation reports of concerns about staffing levels in several areas, but the team was unable to track the University's response. The University will no doubt wish to ensure that AMRs routinely include student

achievement data in the future and that resourcing priorities are communicated to programme teams.

1.4.5   Detailed procedures for the modification of programmes or modules are fully described in the AQH. Decisions to close or suspend recruitment to programmes are made by the Commissioning Group, and arrangements must be made to enable the remaining students to complete their studies in an appropriate learning environment. The interests of students on other programmes who share closing modules are also protected.

Subject benchmarks

1.5   Validation panels (paragraph 1.4.3) are specifically required to examine the alignments of programmes with subject benchmark statements. Programme specifications and validation submission templates require programme teams to map these alignments, and the review team found that this was done effectively.

1.5.1   Many of the University's programmes are accredited or recognised by PSRBs, over 30 of which are involved in this way. The validation process (paragraphs 1.4.1-1.4.3) requires programme teams to benchmark the curriculum against any appropriate PSRB or sector skills standards. When programme proposals involve professional accreditation, at least one of the external members on the validation or periodic review panel is expected to have knowledge and experience of the accrediting PSRB. In some cases, joint validation and PSRB accreditation events are held with mutually agreed panel membership. Where it is intended that workplace learning will be embedded in the programme, the panel will verify that placement arrangements meet the guidelines or requirements of the relevant PSRB. The review team found that these processes effectively confirmed alignments with appropriate PSRB requirements. Where professional body requirements imply that a proposal cannot conform fully to the Modular Curriculum Framework (paragraph 1.1), a request for exemption may be confirmed at validation.

1.5.2   The University values its relationships with PSRBs and maintains an online register of its professionally recognised provision. APSC has particular responsibility for approving submissions to PSRBs, and receives all reports from accreditation activity, ensuring that conditions, recommendations and outcomes are responded to appropriately. Proposals for modifications to programmes with professional accreditation are always referred to the Academic Committee for approval. Reviewers believed that this institutional oversight of engagement with PSRBs provides opportunities for cross-institutional enhancement.

2   Quality of learning opportunities

Outcome

The quality of learning opportunities at Glyndŵr University **meets UK expectations**. The team's reasons for this judgement are given below.

Professional standards for teaching and learning

2.1   The University expects all newly appointed academic staff to have a recognised teaching qualification or to be working towards one. An induction programme, mentorship and a 12-month probationary period are provided for new academic staff. Those with little or no prior teaching experience are required to complete successfully the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Development or the Supported Student Learning programme. The former certificate leads to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA); over 60 per cent of the staff are members of HEA. A policy exists to relate teaching

qualifications to the UK Professional Standards Framework, and this includes sessional teaching staff.

2.1.1   The Learning and Teaching Strategy and Staff Development Strategy have as a priority the development of professional standards and effectiveness in teaching. Staff development needs are identified at annual appraisal. The CLTA coordinates the academic staff development programme, which includes mentoring and support for HEA fellowship applications and structured training. It also supports individual interventions within programmes and works on enhancement of practice. The CLTA has had a significant impact on pedagogic development and expects to do more. The University offered reassurance that the CLTA was adequately resourced for its current activities, and proposed co-location with other support functions as part of its future plans.

2.1.2   All new academic staff are expected to have doctoral qualifications and/or appropriate professional experience; existing staff expressing an interest may be supported to obtain PhDs or professional doctorates. Forty-three percent of staff now have doctoral qualifications. Students and staff identify examples of research-informed teaching. The University is in a good position to develop this further, and its collaborative partners also recognise the importance of research and scholarship.

2.1.3   The University oversees appointments made at its partner institutions through approval of CVs by a relevant dean. The academic qualifications and professional experience of staff are reviewed through programme approval and periodic review.

Learning resources

2.2   The Strategic Plan establishes the particular aim of upgrading the overall quality of teaching accommodation to ensure it meets the needs of widening participation students. The Learning and Teaching Strategy prioritises innovative learning technologies, including the use of the virtual learning environment and e-learning, to support learning for a diversified student body. Investment options are outlined in the Library Strategy. Based on these intentions and National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes, the University has made recent investment in its learning resources, including library and IT facilities, where students have had a major influence through the NSS and Student Council, particularly on the Wrexham site. Students appreciate this, but all recognise that further work needs to be done. The strategic allocation of learning resources is overseen by the Executive, with direct responsibilities allocated to relevant pro vice-chancellors. In some areas, the provision of learning resources is benchmarked against the sector. Staffing resources are managed by heads of departments. There is a useful and inclusive annual strategic dialogue, supported by a subject planning statement, between directors of schools, the Finance Department, heads of departments ('academic heads') and the relevant Dean; it considers resource allocation, and bids for learning resources may arise from these meetings.

2.2.1   Examples of differential resourcing and student support for learning were identified between the Wrexham and Glyndŵr University London (GUL) sites. The review team particularly noted the limited library provision at GUL and the consequent extensive reliance on external library facilities and e-resources. The GUL integration plan makes no strategic reference to learning resources. While improvements are being made to the physical resources at GUL, this needs to be done in the context of a strategic plan, particularly given the University's intention to expand provision to other sites in London. The team **recommends** that the University establish and implement a strategy and action plan for the improvement of learning resources and student support at GUL.

2.2.2   The resourcing of new provision, including existing programmes delivered at a new site, is commissioned by Schools and receives initial strategic consideration by the

Executive Group, and any need for additional resources is referred to the Finance and Resources Committee. If approved by the Executive, the provision then progresses to validation, where learning resources are further considered and subject to external scrutiny. Similar assurances of appropriate learning resources are required before approval of new partnership provision, examined in further detail at programme validation. Learning resources, for campus-based and partnership programmes, are monitored through the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) process. While this process generally works well and does identify learning resource shortcomings, action is not always immediate and has, on occasion, required external comment and student petition before the University has introduced a programme of improvement and investment. The team **recommends** that the University ensure that learning resource issues reported through the annual monitoring process are addressed effectively and in a timely fashion.

2.2.3   The University has consolidated effort around its electronic learning resources, expanding its wi-fi provision and introducing a new version of its virtual learning environment. While there are still some advances to be made in the breadth of internet coverage and performance of the virtual learning environment, a free laptop loan scheme has been introduced to ensure the widest student access to the learning technologies available. Minimum levels of information have been defined to ensure an effective online resource for students; enhancement is provided by a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Champions group. Significant support is available to staff in their use of the virtual learning environment, and training is provided by the CLTA and TEL Champions. A Postgraduate Certificate in E-Learning was introduced in 2009, with good staff engagement.

Student voice

2.3   Feedback is received from students through a number of mechanisms: student course representatives, the Student Council, Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs), Student Evaluation of Modules questionnaire, the NSS, and the Glyndŵr Student Survey. This feedback is taken through the committee structure through the AMR process, together with an action plan. Responses to the NSS are presented to students the following year in a 'you said/we did' format, using posters prominently displayed on campus. Students reported that the University has responded effectively to some concerns raised, including questions about the spending of funds allocated to library provision. Some students felt that the module evaluation process did not lead to changes in the modules. However, the University had taken account of student feedback in deciding to make significant improvements to some laboratory resources.

2.3.1   Since the NSS concerns final-year undergraduates only, the University instituted the Glyndŵr Student Survey in order to capture feedback from first and second-year students as well. Results from this survey are considered together with NSS results in University committees.

2.3.2   Students are represented on all University Senate committees, where they have been integrated increasingly during the past two years. There are some links between senior institutional managers and students' representative bodies: for example, the Student Council is sometimes attended by the Associate Director (Student Experience). In addition, the Students' Guild President and another student are members of Senate and of the Board of Governors, and recently the Students' Guild President was also made a member of the Executive Group. The review team heard that the President's feedback had influenced a recent decision that students would not be disadvantaged as a result of attending a National Union of Students national demonstration. The President had also been closely involved in some strategic institutional decisions, such as the purchase of a football stadium.

2.3.3   Training is provided to student representatives at the Wrexham campus by the Students' Guild, the Student Experience Team and the Academic Quality Team. The review team was told that this training had now greatly improved. There are regular live training sessions, and a dedicated virtual learning environment site for student representatives, as well as a Student Representatives' Handbook. At GUL, the training of student representatives is undertaken by the Quality Manager and also by visits from the Associate Dean (Student Experience), as well as by visits from members of the Students' Guild at Wrexham. GUL student representatives also have access to the same printed and digital resources as Wrexham representatives.

2.3.4   Until recently, students at GUL were less integrated into the student voice mechanisms available to Wrexham students. They have recently formed a Student Association, nurtured by the Students' Guild at Wrexham. They now have SSCCs, with some training for student representatives delivered by the Quality Manager at GUL, with visits by the Associate Dean (Student Experience) and members of the Students' Guild from Wrexham. This training makes use of the Student Representatives' Handbook and the same digital resources as for Wrexham-based students. According to the student submission, however, 'there is also still room for improvement in GUL; student representation has improved significantly over the last year, however, representation training needs to be delivered at a regular basis'. GUL students reported that the University has responded to some concerns raised, notably by improving library provision and providing a common room. The review team **affirms** the increasing contribution of students to the quality assurance of learning opportunities at GUL.

2.3.5   Postgraduate research student engagement with the management of quality is discussed in paragraph 2.10.10.

Management information is used to improve quality and standards

2.4   The University maintains a comprehensive and sophisticated range of centrally generated management information to support strategic planning and evidence-based decision-making. This data is generated from internal and external sources and is benchmarked or normalised to establish a series of evaluative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are transparently applied and accessible online by all staff. A Planning Officer has been appointed to advise programme teams on interpretation of the data.

2.4.1   Although only employed since March 2010, the use of KPIs is now embedded in the University commissioning process and in evaluating programme areas, including those delivered with collaborating partners. Monitored KPIs include: measures of student satisfaction; student enrolment, progression and achievement; widening access; employability rates; staff-student ratio; quality assurance ratings; and financial performance. The Graduate School has used postgraduate research student completion rates to lead enhancements in student skills and supervisor training. At undergraduate level, KPIs have been employed to direct programme changes or conclude activity. The KPI Dashboard provides current and historical management information which is accessible to staff at all levels, and can also be used to promote enhancement; this is a **feature of good practice**.

2.4.2   The programme AMR process draws on information including detailed student feedback (NSS, Glyndŵr Student Survey), external examiner reports, PSRB outcomes, and employer feedback. In addition, KPIs are being built into the process to inform reflection and action plans. The Academic Committee receives these reports, together with centralised information on academic misconduct, appeals and complaints, and disciplinary cases, as part of institutional oversight.

2.4.3   Equality and diversity data is gathered by the University and employed in monitoring processes. Effective central provision exists to determine the learning needs of disabled students, but occasionally this may not be recognised at programme/department level. In September 2012, the student records system was enhanced to better enable tracking of students to monitor the support they receive.

Admission to the University

2.5   General entry requirements are reviewed annually and programme-specific entry requirements are determined at validation. The University operates a centralised admissions process, governed by its Admissions Policy, to ensure consistency and fairness. An annual admissions review is undertaken by the Academic Committee.

2.5.1   The University has introduced virtual open days and a virtual tour to support the application process. Pre-entry visits are much valued by prospective students, especially those with particular needs. For international student recruitment, the University uses agents to provide specified information and advice to students; these agents are approved using standard criteria and are kept under review. A website for international students provides further information to help prepare them for their arrival, and specific instructions and orientation events are provided at enrolment (see also paragraphs 2.9.1-2.9.3).

2.5.2   Admission decisions are taken locally in some partner institutions; however, they must follow the University's entry requirements, and offers are referred to the University for confirmation. There is generally a good understanding of this process among partners.

Complaints and appeals

2.6   The University has established internal procedures for complaints and academic appeals from students, details of which are available online. For research students, these procedures are determined by the University of Wales. Information for students is also provided at induction, through programme handbooks and in the Student Guide. Independent support and advice is now available from the Student Advisor through the Students' Guild, but this does not extend to GUL. Student awareness of these procedures was incomplete, partly because not all thought it was directly relevant to them. Complaints from students at partner institutions are initially considered under local procedures to allow for more effective investigation and action, but students are entitled to access the University procedure if they would prefer or if local resolution is not achieved. All appeals are considered under the University procedure in order to ensure consistency. Students are entitled to present their concerns to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) when the University procedures are exhausted; seven chose to do so in the academic year 2011-12 and none were upheld. Over the past three years, the number of complaints and appeals has risen at the University by 50 per cent and 44 per cent respectively, following a sector trend.

2.6.1   The complaints procedure includes an initial stage intended to find informal resolution where possible, but evidence from students suggested that insufficient attention may have been paid to this stage of the process in the past. Student representation from the Students' Guild is included on all appeals and complaints panels, and an external panel member is associated with appeals; a member of the Academic Registry is in attendance to ensure consistent advice. If the appeal or complaint is upheld, the panel chair will recommend action to the University or a department and is responsible for ensuring that remedial action is taken. The Academic Committee receives reports on complaints and appeals, and upheld complaints are part of the University KPI measures. The University acknowledges that additional training is required for panel members.

Career advice and guidance

2.7   There is a well-resourced Careers Centre at Wrexham, with a wide range of resources and activities, including one-to-one support. Students confirmed that they received a wide range of careers information. A 'Glyndŵr Temps' programme allows some students to experience part-time temporary work on campus. There is also a 'GO Wales' short-term work experience programme.

2.7.1   Work placements are available for some programmes (for example, Nursing and Education). Students were largely satisfied with placement provision, apart from a case where a promised placement had not taken place and the alternative offered - time spent in a University workshop - was not felt to be satisfactory.

2.7.2   There is no careers centre at GUL. Students there have access to the same online resources as Wrexham students, with some support delivered by email and telephone. A few employment vacancies have been advertised on the GUL website's 'Jobshop' page. There is limited opportunity for face-to-face support, in that one of the careers advisors visits GUL at least once per term. The comment was made that the University was seeking to move to less one-to-one support generally, in line with a policy of using online resources. GUL students drew attention to the lack of onsite careers provision. The review team **recommends** that the University establish and implement a strategy and action plan for the improvement of learning resources and student support at GUL, taking these student support issues into account (see also paragraphs 2.2.1 and 2.8.2).

Supporting disabled students

2.8   The University has a relatively high proportion of disabled students, and has evolved measures to facilitate their learning. It has a Disability Assessment Centre with a Disability and Learning Support team, and also an Irlen Centre for students with Irlen Syndrome. The University has built up much experience in assisting students with claiming Disabled Students Allowance. The Disability Assessment Centre has a very wide range of computing and other devices, together with software, ergonomic furniture and posture aids. This equipment is used when helping a disabled student to evaluate the appropriate assistive technology to meet the student's needs, and the advice given is vendor-independent.

2.8.1   Disabled students reported receiving a high level of support for their needs and were happy with the resources provided. Some have been diagnosed with dyslexia only after arriving at the University. The student submission, and students met by the review team, gave very positive accounts of the support for disabled students. The University's comprehensive support for disabled students at the Wrexham campus is a **feature of good practice**.

2.8.2   There is no disability support at GUL, though the review team was told that students may use the resources at Wrexham. Assessment and support services can be provided only remotely. The review team **recommends** that the University establish and implement a strategy and action plan for the improvement of learning resources and student support at GUL, taking these student support issues into account (see also paragraphs 2.2.1 and 2.7.2).

Supporting international students

2.9   The University has a high proportion of international students, many of whom are studying at GUL, and their numbers have grown significantly in the past five years. There is an International Office, with a dedicated International Admissions Team which was praised by students.

2.9.1   A minimum standard of English is required before admission. However, the University provides English language courses (such as a three-month pre-master's course at GUL) to assist students in meeting the standard. A locally administered language test is used to assess students for English support needs.

2.9.2   The 'Pre-Arrival Guide for International Students' is sent to all new international students, and contains comprehensive practical information. A 'Welcome Guide' is produced each year by the International Welfare Team, with advice and contact details for various sources of support.

2.9.3   International postgraduate students at Wrexham reported examples of helpful support, including book recommendations by a supervisor, a course on academic writing, and a four-week English course. Students also praised the International Welfare Team, and the guarantee of access to University accommodation for international students at Wrexham. However, they noted some issues at GUL, such as the lack of student accommodation in London.

Supporting postgraduate research students

2.10   Glyndŵr University has suspended its application for research degree-awarding powers while awaiting the outcomes of this Institutional Review. The University has considerable experience of the supervision of research students and management of their examinations and awards. These responsibilities have been reviewed and approved by the University of Wales on a number of occasions. The current arrangements under which it manages research degrees introduce elements of uncertainty and unnecessary complexity which would be resolved by the granting of research degree-awarding powers.

2.10.1   The University's Strategic Plan 2009-14 and its Research Strategy 2011-14 specify objectives and procedures designed to develop and strengthen the research environment. The strategy builds on strengths in applied research - particularly in materials science, optics and computing - in ways designed to support economic and social development in the region and to meet the priorities of the Welsh Government. A central feature of this approach has been to ensure that new academic staff recruited are research active. Existing staff are encouraged and assisted in developing areas of research and obtaining doctorates.

2.10.2   The Research Strategy is supported by new organisational structures and leadership roles. Overall responsibility lies with the University Research and Enterprise Committee (REC), supported by the Research Office. All academic staff are members of one of the two Institutes (see About Glyndŵr University, page 3), where operational plans include specific research goals which are audited annually. The Graduate School is responsible to the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC) for the management and monitoring of research degrees, and the training and development of PGR students and their supervisors. Six research centres provide seminars, training and mentoring activities that support the development of active research communities. These structures and roles are regularly monitored and evaluated by REC.

2.10.3   The review team agrees with the University's own judgement that the research environment is unevenly spread across the institution, but noted that the investments, structures and leadership roles put in place were both appropriate and producing measureable gains. The team considered that the University's introduction of distinct investment phases into its Research Strategy, and additional targets and benchmarks appropriate to each stage of development of the research environment, is appropriate. The University also intends to require the inclusion of detailed research strategies and targets in departments' annual academic plans, since for some staff and students the academic department is a key base for their research. The University may wish to consider extending the period of probation for early career staff beyond the current 12 months so as to allow for the achievement of defined research activity thresholds. It might also consider putting in place a more explicit and extensive research leave framework than currently exists, and stating more explicitly the obligations of professors and others to plan and evidence their activities as research leaders.

2.10.4   Overall, the review team concluded that the deliberate steps taken by the University to enhance the research environment, and support for staff and students engaged in research across all disciplines, are appropriate and have produced measureable gains.

2.10.5   The selection, admission and induction of research students are governed by the University of Wales (paragraph 2.10). The Associate Director of the Graduate School reports annually on the performance of these functions to the University of Wales and to Glyndŵr University's URDC and Senate. In 2011-12, the University had 116 registered PGR students, and 16 research degrees were awarded. Some 60 per cent of PGR students are part-time and 40 per cent are members of staff. The University has a history of relatively low completion rates, which it is addressing and which are improving.

2.10.6   All PGR applicants are interviewed by two members of the academic staff, and receive induction and information in accordance with the University of Wales Common Academic Framework. Students met by the review team indicated that interview, selection and induction processes were comprehensive and appropriate.

2.10.7   Each PGR student has a supervisory team, one of whom is the director of studies and has overall responsibility for the work and progress of candidates. Directors of studies and supervisors must be suitably qualified members of academic staff, and should be active researchers, fulfilling University of Wales criteria which specify the numbers of students that an individual may supervise at one time. The Graduate School provides training and support for supervisors and maintains registers of the training undergone by supervisors and of their supervisory loads.

2.10.8   The URDC has established a points-based system for monitoring and rewarding PGR student engagement with the University's skills training and continuing professional development programmes. All PGR students are expected to engage fully with the Researcher Development Continued Professional Development Programme. Students and staff confirmed that this programme was effective in reporting, ensuring and measuring regular supervision and appropriate skills training.

2.10.9   The progress of research students is monitored both by the records of supervisions, and by a formal process of annual monitoring which produces detailed returns for the URDC. The review team agrees with the recommendation made by an external reviewer that the system of annual monitoring and its impact on completion rates would be improved if the returns included historic data describing progress since registration. The team also agrees with the recommendation that annual monitoring reports should be dealt with by independent assessment prior to the URDC meetings, so that the URDC could concern itself with overall patterns and problem cases.

2.10.10 The University obtains regular and comprehensive feedback from research students through the annual monitoring process, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and research students' representation on the URDC and REC. Students told the review team that they mainly obtained information and gave feedback through their supervisors. They confirmed that, while they were satisfied with supervision, training and resourcing, some were relatively isolated, particularly those who were part-time. In response to feedback from students, the Graduate School had recently established a common room for all its research students, as a venue for cross-discipline seminars and a social centre.

2.10.11 The University reported no current plans to deliver postgraduate research programmes based at its London campus. The review team considered that this was wise and prudent, given the limited resourcing levels and learning infrastructure at GUL.

Learning delivered through collaborative arrangements

2.11   The University's approach to the management of collaborative provision is comprehensively described in its Collaborative Policy and the collaborative provision chapter of the AQH. In order to assist in the development of its more ambitious approach to working with others, in 2011 the University commissioned an external audit of the place of international and private provision within its collaborative portfolio, the report of which has informed the development of its risk-based collaborative procedures. The action plan deriving from this audit has been regularly reviewed by the Quality Strategy Committee and good progress appears to have been made.

2.11.1   The University requires that partnership 'agreements will only be progressed with partner institutions or organisations, whether in the UK or internationally, who can demonstrate a proven commitment to excellence in quality and standards, which have appropriate academic and financial standing, appropriate infrastructure to support delivery, and legal standing to contract delivery'. Processes for commissioning, validation, monitoring and review of programmes are the same as for those provided on its own campuses, but with separate institutional approval of the partnership, with a specific focus on the delivery of a programme by the partner (paragraphs 1.1.2 and 1.4-1.4.5).

2.11.2   Partner approval is undertaken by an approval panel. The formal event takes place at the end of a comprehensive sequence of investigations and inquiries, with evidence gathered using structured templates. An initial visit is undertaken by a member of the Executive Group, following which a meeting of senior staff between the two institutions is convened to explore the potential collaboration. Sufficient evidence is gathered to develop the financial business case, the initial risk assessment, and to enable the University to commence due diligence inquiries. Positive outcomes enable the outline proposal to be considered by the Commissioning Group before detailed development continues.

2.11.3   The partner approval panel comprises a small number of internal, experienced staff, bringing both academic and student support experience to the table. There is no external panel member. The event is informed by a comprehensive set of information, and ideally takes place at the partner's site. Where this is not possible, there is an expectation that one of the panel will have visited the partner before approval is granted. The panel's report and recommendations are discussed by the Quality Strategy Committee, which makes a final recommendation regarding approval for consideration and decision by Senate.
The review team found that these processes were conducted thoroughly and with care.

2.11.4   Following approval of a partnership, programme-specific matters may be brought to a conclusion. The programme will often already exist and be delivered at one of the University's sites. In some cases, a new programme will be designed and approved for delivery specifically by the new partner. The University will only approve programmes for

which it has appropriate academic expertise to design and oversee the curriculum and delivery. The approval panel will always include an external subject specialist, and wherever possible will meet in the partner institution. The approval scrutiny specifically focuses upon staff and physical resourcing matters, programme-specific student support, and in particular on consideration of a 'collaborative delivery plan', which the review team considered particularly helpful.

2.11.5   The delivery approval event should typically take place in the partner institution but, in similar manner to the partner approval process, may take place remotely so long as one of the panel undertakes a site visit. The team found that the records of approval processes showed that they were conducted carefully and in detail. However, approval of a partner, and the delivery of a programme by that partner, might take place without a visit by an external peer to consider the resources and other facilities onsite. The review team felt that this could potentially compromise the validity of the approval process, and **recommends** that the University include external panel members in all programme approval visits to collaborative centres. Following partner and delivery approval, a memorandum of agreement is signed. The review team found that agreements are appropriately comprehensive.

2.11.6   The University recognises a range of 'models' of partnership working, including articulation, progression agreements, outreach (delivery by University staff on a partner's site), franchise, and validation of a partner's curriculum. It has carefully defined processes for each model.

2.11.7   The University's 'managing partnerships framework' describes how programmes are put into operation. It emphasises the roles of academic link tutors who act as the key channel of communication, visit the partner regularly, and produce an annual report on the relationship. The duties are well defined and the review team considered that this role was essential. The team also found that staff in University departments and partner institutions believed that they were all members of a coherent team.

2.11.8   Wherever possible, the same external examiners are appointed as for the same programmes based at the University. All partner institutions are required to submit an AMR, which is considered with 'home' AMRs. Programmes are reviewed every five years, again through normal processes (paragraph 1.4.3). The review team found that these academic quality processes work successfully: for example, in one case the external examiner feedback and the AMR process indicated serious concerns regarding academic quality, and since remedial action was deemed impossible, the partnership was being phased out.

2.11.9   Assessment boards consider results from the University and partner institutions at the same time. Results are presented separately for each site of delivery so that boards are able to identify differing performances, and are hence better able to trigger remedial action or identify opportunities for enhancement.

Flexible, distributed and e-learning

2.12   The University provides a small but growing number of programmes that combine traditional, campus-based, face-to-face teaching with online learning and teaching through its virtual learning environment. The development of these programmes has been assisted by the Postgraduate Certificate in E-Learning. Specialist support is available from the CLTA, which offers staff development workshops in e-teaching and supports an informal network of those with skills and interests in e-teaching, some of whom have over 10 years of experience in the delivery of these programmes. At the time of the review, 19 University staff had completed the Postgraduate Certificate and seven were currently taking it. A master's programme in e-learning was being developed.

2.12.1   The AQH requires that teaching and assessment arrangements ensure that the student experience for those studying at a distance is at least equivalent to that experienced by on-campus students. When developing the online elements of courses, programme teams must take account of relevant chapters of the Quality Code.

2.12.2   The programme approval process requires that pre-validation and validation panels are provided with an opportunity to test the same online delivery that students themselves will experience. The AQH also sets out minimum expectations relating to websites for distance learning/e-learning delivery. Proposals must include evidence of how the programme team will facilitate meaningful engagement with the programme, for example through the use of peer support, peer learning and collaboration across the student cohort, and must show that mechanisms are in place to monitor engagement with online provision.

2.12.3   The review team concluded that the University's good use of its strong and extensive expertise in the development and delivery of e-learning methods is a **feature of good practice**.

Work-based and placement learning

2.13   The University has substantial proportions of students on programmes leading to professional qualifications and accreditations. In addition, some 45 per cent of students are part-time and many of these are able to incorporate elements of work-based learning into their programmes. The University therefore has to arrange, monitor and assess a complex range of learning environments and forms of supervision and mentoring. The skills and experience required to do this are largely located in the academic departments responsible for the delivery of specific programmes. The institutional-level role is to ensure and test the governance arrangements in place. It does this largely through validation, annual monitoring and periodic review. The AQH contains specific and detailed criteria for the approval and review of work-based learning. Before a programme is approved or reapproved, a comprehensive statement is required allocating responsibility for the key elements of supervision, training, and health and safety.

2.13.1   The review team examined service level agreements and memoranda of agreement governing placements on programmes of professional training in Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Counselling and Psychotherapy. Specific arrangements and allocation of responsibilities varied in each case. There was clear evidence of systematic attention to core elements, such as health and safety and insurance; responsibilities of partners and work-based learning providers; responsibilities and entitlements of students; the qualifications and training of staff delivering the programmes; and the specification of key roles such as placement coordinators, mentors and link tutors.

2.13.2   Comprehensive and varied arrangements allow students to feed back regularly on their experiences and to raise issues and complain where necessary. A notable feature of the evidence examined by the review team was the positive reports in student evaluations and high levels of satisfaction expressed in NSS results for practice placements.

Student charter

2.14   A Student Charter has been developed by the Students' Guild and the University, and is reviewed annually by the Students' Guild, Student Council and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. It sets out the obligations and mutual expectations of all students and the University. It is made widely available on the University website, in the pack of materials provided to new students, and in the Students' Guild offices.

2.14.1   Students' Guild representatives considered that the Charter was a good example of reasonable expectations, and that it was a worthwhile initiative. They were unable to give examples of how it could be used or what it had achieved, but they felt it was unnecessary to use the Charter in an adversarial way, given the good quality of the relationship between students and the University.

2.14.2   The Charter will be reviewed before the start of each academic year, with any amendments agreed jointly by the University, the Students' Guild and Student Council.

3   Information about learning opportunities

Outcome

The information about learning opportunities produced by the University **meets UK expectations**. The intended audience finds that the information about the learning opportunities offered is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The team's reasons for this conclusion are given below.

Findings

3.1   The Marketing Department is responsible for managing the production of published information and the website, and it coordinates annual processes of checking and amendment by staff in academic departments. The public-facing website is clear and easy to navigate. The entire site is also available in Welsh. The University has set out its commitments to communication in Welsh in its Welsh Language Scheme 2012, published in accordance with the *Welsh Language Act 1993*. An action plan is used to monitor progress. All public and internal information media such as posters, announcements, hoardings, press releases, leaflets, video or other visual programmes, staffing advertisements and advisory services are bilingual and have identical production characteristics.

3.2   All public information issued by partner institutions is checked and signed off by the University. Annual checks are also made through the AMR process.

3.3   Students met by the team confirmed that information they had received before entry and subsequently had been accurate and accessible. Guidance on admissions criteria and procedures were clear and accessible. The Student Guide acts as an effective gateway to the varieties of information that students are likely to need.

3.4   Sources of information available on the University website comply with the Key Information Set (KIS) and Wider Information Set required by HEFCW. The KIS information is published on the Undergraduate Course web pages. A KIS project group monitors and updates KIS information on an annual basis.

3.5   Glyndŵr University London (GUL) has its own website, which is linked directly through the University website. The review team noted that the GUL website differed in appearance from the main website, and considered that the University would wish to develop greater congruence in this area.

4 Enhancement of learning opportunities

Outcome

The enhancement of learning opportunities at Glyndŵr University **meets UK expectations**. The team's reasons for this judgement are given below.

Findings

4.1 The view of the University, expressed to the review team in both the self-evaluation document and in meetings with the staff, was that a deliberate approach to enhancement was built into the new academic structure introduced in January 2010. Within the new structure, the University had introduced its distinctive commissioning approach to planning and resource allocation combined, with the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure outcomes. In this way, the University was able to set priorities, commission academic departments and Institutes to deliver them, and then assess the outcomes and costs in terms of the KPIs. It was further explained that the committee structure, combined with appointment of Pro Vice-Chancellors for each of Teaching and Learning, Research, and Operations (service delivery), allowed the fulfilment of a 'single overarching strategy for enhancement'.

4.2 As examples of how these new structures, managerial roles and decision-making processes had enhanced the student learning experience, the University drew the attention of the reviewers to numerous recent developments and innovations. It highlighted in particular: the strengthening of the student voice by increasing student representation on University decision-making bodies and collecting more feedback from students on teaching; increasing staff development and training activities; more systematic sharing of good practice in teaching across the institution; and targeting particular academic departments with extra resources and support.

4.3 The University explained that key drivers of enhancement were the creation of the Centre for Learning Teaching and Assessment (CLTA) and the appointment of an Associate Director for Student Experience, both in 2011. Numerous examples were provided to show how the CLTA and the Assistant Director (Student Engagement) together were leading the enhancement of the student learning experience.

4.4 In its meetings with students and staff, and in its review of the documentation, the review team was able to confirm that substantial improvements to the quality of student learning opportunities had taken place. These developments had been combined with a 30 per cent growth in the number of students registered between 2008 - when university title was granted - and 2011. In particular, the officers of the Students' Guild, some of whom had been at the University for much of this time, confirmed that the overall student experience and been transformed and much improved over the period.

4.5 The view of the review team was that there was substantial evidence to support the wide range of enhancements claimed by the institution. It was also clear that some of these developments had been necessary for the institution to fulfil the role of a university. Many of the changes defined as enhancements are essentially the core and routine business of longer established universities. The review team noted the recent report of the Quality Strategy Committee to Senate in November 2012 which stated that part of its plan of work for 2012-13 would include the development of a Quality Enhancement Strategy. The review team endorsed the view that the successful creation of a fully fledged university now requires a more focussed and sequential approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to key terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Most terms also have formal 'operational' definitions. More information can be found in the *Institutional Review (Wales) Handbook*, available on our website at: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/ir-wales-handbook-2012.aspx.

If you require formal definitions of other terms, please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/pages/default.aspx.

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary/pages/default.aspx.

Quality Code Short term for the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

enhancement Taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of **learning opportunities**. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

framework A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*.

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.
learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

operational definition A formal definition of a term, which establishes exactly what QAA means when using it in reports.

programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

programme specifications Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes of study**, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

subject benchmark statement A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

threshold academic standard The minimum standard that a student should reach in order to gain a particular qualification or award, as set out in the **subject benchmark statements** and national qualifications frameworks. Threshold standards are distinct from the standards of performance that students need to achieve in order to gain any particular class of award, for example a first-class bachelor's degree. See also **academic standard**.

widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.