



Gateway Quality Review: Wales

Gower College Swansea

May 2021

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Gower College Swansea

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Gower College Swansea.

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

Areas for development

The review team identified the following **areas for development** that have the potential to enhance quality and/or further secure the reliability and/or comparability of academic standards at Gower College Swansea. The review team advises Gower College Swansea to:

- ensure that the College-defined Programme Specifications for Pearson Higher National programmes meet the requirements as defined by the awarding body (FHEQ)
- clarify the guidance documentation relating to academic appeals for Pearson Higher National students (UKQC)
- consider developing documentary guidance to support the work of all employers (UKQC).

About this review

The review visit took place from 11 to 12 May 2021 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Gary Hargreaves
- Dr Fiona Thompson
- Dr Harry Williams (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.

The impact of COVID-19

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the review was conducted online and included meetings with senior management teams, teaching staff and students. The scope of the evidence considered, and the nature of the judgements and operational milestones have remained the same but with some adjustments due to the online format. During the pandemic QAA has continued to review its arrangements for delivering online reviews in order to identify and mitigate any risks.

About Gower College Swansea

Gower College Swansea was formed in 2010, following the merger of two existing colleges - Swansea College and Gorseinon College. The College delivers its provision from a range of locations, namely five campuses located in the Swansea area and two small city centre locations, with higher education courses taking place on the Tycoch, Sketty Hall and Llwyn Y Bryn campuses. Typically, the College would expect to report enrolment figures of approximately 4,500 full-time and 8,000 part-time students each academic year.

The College is committed to widening participation and prides itself on the opportunities provided and the progression rates of students from further education into higher education. The College actively encourages and supports students to explore the possibilities of higher education, and the development of higher education is a key strategic objective for the College.

Current higher education provision sits in the following areas: Sport and Public Services; Health and Care; Humanities and Languages; Engineering; Hospitality, Travel and Tourism; Maths and Science. A range of courses within these areas are offered, including Foundation Degrees, Higher National Diplomas and Certificates, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants qualifications, Professional Certificate/Graduate Certificate in Education and Training qualifications, Degree Apprenticeships, and Honours Degrees. Some of the College's provision is subject to review by Estyn and the review team was able to use the

Estyn reports as starting points for their exploration of the College's provision.

The College operates a range of partnerships, including those with its awarding bodies/organisations, with local schools and with employers. It has partnerships with University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea University, University of South Wales, University of Gloucestershire, and Glyndŵr University. The College delivers Degree Apprenticeships with Swansea University and collaborative partnership provision under franchise arrangements with University of Wales Trinity Saint David, University of South Wales, and University of Gloucestershire.

Judgement area: Reliability and comparability of academic standards

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

1 The College has clear arrangements in place to ensure that the academic standards of the programmes offered meet or exceed the UK threshold standards set out by the FHEQ.

2 The College's responsibilities are clear, although differ slightly for each awarding body or organisation. During the review visit, the review team confirmed staff's awareness of their responsibilities. These are laid out in responsibilities' checklists and also in Memoranda of Agreements or Collaborative Arrangements and Approval Reports. The awarding bodies and awarding organisations retain ultimate responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic standards.

3 The majority of the College's higher education franchised programmes are designed by its awarding bodies, although the College actively collaborates in validation and revalidation, working together with partner colleges.

4 The College staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the range of mechanisms for ensuring the academic standards of the College higher education programmes are meeting the UK threshold standards. Validation processes and programme specifications reflect the FHEQ, the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, Subject Benchmark Statements and other external reference points. During the review visit the College indicated that they would need to fully develop their College-defined Programme Specifications for the Pearson Higher National provision, and the review team would support this as an **area for development**.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)

5 The key reference point for the College in terms of the academic standards frameworks is the FHEQ. However, all Welsh universities and colleges are also required to use the CQFW in aligning qualifications and allocating credit. Appropriate references to the CQFW are contained in programme specifications, module descriptors and handbooks, and staff were able to articulate its application in the maintaining of standards.

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.

6 The College does not have degree awarding powers. It fulfils its responsibility in promoting academic standards by ensuring that qualifications are consistent with national qualifications according to the academic frameworks and regulations of its awarding bodies and organisations. The College has clear guidance and information on their responsibilities, defined in the contractual arrangements and in the responsibilities' checklists. The oversight and implementation of the College responsibilities are fully understood by staff.

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.

7 The College undertakes comparative research as part of internal and external validation and revalidation processes. As part of the awarding bodies' network of partner colleges, the College is able to standardise its provision and use progression data from comparable institutions. Aligned with market research undertaken during validation processes, the College ensures that students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level. External examiner reporting and annual programme monitoring note favourably on comparable programmes offered in other UK higher education providers. There are robust processes in place that include College Programme Leaders who work with the awarding bodies, partner Link Officers, assessment approval, second marking and moderation, examination boards, and the oversight of external examiners.

8 The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, and Higher Education Strategy outline the College's intentions to review and monitor all qualitative feedback and quantitative data for teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that targets are met. This includes enrolment, progression and results. The College Curriculum and Quality Strategic Group (CQSG) has oversight of quality, standards and improvement, and the monitoring and review of standards; governed ultimately by the awarding bodies and organisations.

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.

9 The College has clearly defined responsibilities for all aspects of its quality assurance. It has extensive and robust processes in place, including through its committees, to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure across its HE provision. The majority of HE programmes are validated by partner universities (awarding bodies). Key arrangements include direct collaboration and contact between the College Programme Leaders and awarding bodies' partner Link Officers. This is further enhanced by collaboration with partner colleges. Processes and procedures are well documented and include clear Programme Leader responsibilities, updated on an annual basis. University Link Officers, or equivalent, work collaboratively with the relevant Programme Leader at the College and provide visit reports and liaise with external examiners.

10 All assessments are usually approved by the partner Link Officer to ensure they are fit for purpose. If modules are delivered by both the university and the College, the same assessment is used, however, there is scope for the College to reflect local contexts. Amendments are made by agreement between the Module Leader and the university partner Link Officer. Adaptations to assessments were made particularly in response to the impact of COVID-19 and the College lockdown after 20 March 2020, in line with contingency regulations.

11 Programmes have a range of requirements for second marking, or sampling of assessed work, by the Programme Leader, partner Link Officer or Module Leader in order to ensure the College complies with the awarding body's procedures. First marking of assessments is undertaken by the College, regardless of the awarding body. Second marking can take place by another member of the College teaching team. College internal moderation standardises assessment and ensures consistency. Moderation reports of the assessments are coordinated by the partner Link Officer. Examples of the reports comment positively on the consistency, fairness and accuracy of assessment processes, highlighting

good practice in assessor feedback.

12 All external examiners are appointed by the awarding body/organisation. External examiner reports sampled support the view that threshold standards achieved by students at the College meet national standards for the sector.

13 Examination boards are a requirement for each university. Whilst there are a range of procedures in the conduct of the boards, there is also consistency, with the role of Exam Board Chair undertaken by each university. The College Programme Leaders report to the Board. Pearson requires the College to submit their exam board minutes to the external examiner and examples of minutes provided demonstrate compliance with the awarding organisation's requirements.

14 A new HE Quality Cycle is in place for Summer 2021 and the aim is to begin delivery of the process with the HE Learner Voice and Quality Development Plan (QDP).

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

15 The College makes full use of their awarding bodies/organisations to support the programmes delivered across the College. There is ongoing employer engagement; employers are included in validation and embedded in the College's strategic plan. External examiner reports are an essential reference point in ensuring assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent.

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

16 The College has a number of formal mechanisms for evaluating, monitoring, reviewing and enhancing the core practices of its higher education provision. From Summer 2021, this will include the new HE Quality Cycle under the direction and strategic lead of the Director of Quality and Curriculum. Higher education programmes are delegated to seven learning areas, with HE Specific Groups whose focus is to drive improvement and enhancement of HE provision.

17 The Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Group (CQSGHE) has oversight of the College's HE strategy and effectiveness. The College Management Team is responsible for reviewing and analysing trends, and performance for annual programme reports. CQSGHE also monitors feedback from students. The CQSGHE reports to the College Management Team and the Governing Body's Curriculum and Quality Sub-Committee. The Terms of Reference for the CQSGHE are clear and recent actions indicate they have a deliberative function to drive improvement and enhancement.

18 The College indicates that the Quality Development Group (HE) was introduced this academic year by the Director of Quality and Curriculum. The Terms of Reference are clear and examples of recent actions indicate they have key role in reporting on all quality development and quality assurance matters.

19 The HE Operational Group includes staff, Learning Area Managers (LAMs) and Programme Leaders. The focus of this group is on sharing practice, ensuring consistency across different programmes, identifying CPD, and reporting on quality of the HE provision, highlighting any potential operational improvements, and reporting to the CQSGHE. This includes the development of an overarching Annual Operational Plan (AOP).

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

Judgement

20 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, including the College Principal and an awarding body representative. 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.

21 The review team concludes that there can be **confidence** that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable.

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.

22 The process for applying to study at the College depends on the programme awarding partner and also intended mode of study. Applications to the College for all full-time courses are made via UCAS, whereas applications for part-time courses are submitted directly to the College via its website. For University of Wales Trinity Saint David and University of South Wales franchised programmes, applications are managed by the College. For University of Gloucestershire franchised programmes, applications are administered by the University. The College has a dedicated Higher Education Admissions and Progression Officer who is responsible for administering all full-time and part-time recruitment and enrolment processes.

23 Courses may require an interview, audition or portfolio submission as part of the application process. Specific programmes may require students to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check; where this is the case, the Higher Education Admissions and Progression Officer is responsible for ensuring these additional requirements are met. Offers are decided by an Admissions Tutor, which is normally the Programme Leader. At the point an offer is made, applicants are sent the College's Higher Education Booklet, which outlines the enrolment process and signposts to additional resources.

24 Applicants may disclose additional learning requirements as part of their application. It is then the responsibility of the Higher Education Admissions and Progression Officer, who will work with the College's Learning Support Manager to ensure that the appropriate support is put in place for each applicant. Given that the College does not have degree awarding powers, recognition of prior learning (RPL) remains the responsibility of the relevant degree-awarding body or Pearson. The College supports students in their applications for RPL, however, the ultimate decision lies with the relevant awarding partner. During the review visit, meetings with students and student representatives confirmed that the information provided during the application process met their expectations.

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

25 The awarding bodies are responsible for the approval of provision, with the College being pro-active in the development of provision, with well-designed processes for seeking internal approval for new provision, as demonstrated in their proposed provision in BA Policing. The College predominantly uses modules and programmes validated by the relevant awarding body. However, the College will also propose specific modules for inclusion in franchised provision. This demonstrates their effective engagement in programme design.

26 There are three groups focusing on higher education: the Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Group (CQSGHE), the Quality Development Group (HE), and the HE Operational Group. The CQSGHE considers proposed new provision and final approval to proceed lies with the College Management Team. The CQSGHE is the key strategic level group for quality and HE development, and scrutinises the effectiveness of the quality systems and of delivery across HE provision. The Quality Development Group was introduced this academic year with a focus on the quality assurance of provision, the

identification of areas for improvement, and the sharing of good practice. The HE Operational Group is the driver for enhancement activities at an operational level. The interrelationship between these three groups is well understood by staff and feeds into the newly developed HE annual quality cycle. The effectiveness and high quality of delivery is evidenced through external examiner reports; annual monitoring; student feedback (with a range of approaches, including use of module review and the National Student Survey); as well as ongoing monitoring, including of data, through the three HE groups and course team meetings.

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

27 The awarding bodies approve the appointment of staff through a process that demonstrates they are qualified to deliver at higher education level. The College requires all teaching staff to be teacher trained, or to achieve that status within two years, and they offer the opportunity for staff to engage with the UK Professional Standards Framework and to gain Fellowship status. The College has a comprehensive Staff Development Strategy setting out the different means for identifying individual staff development needs, team development needs, and cross-College needs, enabling the College to determine staff development priorities.

28 Staff are required to engage in a minimum of 30 hours continuing professional development (CPD) per year and there is financial support via a bursary or a professional development fund for scholarly activity or higher level qualifications. The College provides structured training and CPD opportunities through its 'Bridging the Gap' provision, which draws on a range of data in order to determine cross-College development needs. 'Bridging the Gap' is a combination of mandatory provision, as an induction for those new to delivering at HE level, plus staff development activities, culminating in an annual HE conference. The College has a formal process for performance review which allows for the identification of staff development that may be for an individual or cross-College. In addition, the College has a very comprehensive annual approach to planning staffing.

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

29 Resources are planned for on an annual basis, drawing on a range of data and with input from Learning Area Managers, and are approved by the College Management Team. Students are very positive about the resources available to them. The College has a bespoke Higher Education University Centre on its main campus and will be opening a business school on the Sketty Hall campus for 2021-22. There is an HE-specific library as well as an HE Library Adviser, with students also able to access additional electronic resources via their awarding body university. Students access information via the College virtual learning environment (VLE) and, where relevant, via the VLE at their awarding body institution, with programme handbooks signposting relevant policies and processes. The College has well-established student support services with comprehensive pastoral support and guidance built into the HE programme. The College has recently introduced the roles of Pastoral Care Coach and HE Advocate, and the HE Advocate ensures that the needs of HE students are represented in all policies and procedures.

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

30 The Learner Involvement Framework for Higher Education outlines how the College aims to engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational

experience. This includes engaging students through module and programme reviews, consultations, operational forums and an established student representative structure. The review team also heard from students who had been involved with a recent programme validation demonstrating that the College was actively engaging students in quality assurance processes.

31 The College elects two Student Governors and a Students' Union President. These roles ensure that the voice of all students at the College, both FE and HE, are heard on key committees and groups including the College's Learner Services Committee and the Corporation Board's Curriculum and Quality Committee. Students elect Course Representatives for each level of each programme of study, who routinely provide feedback to Course Leaders through attendance at Course Team Meetings and the Higher Education Operational Group (HEOG). Currently, training for student representatives is provided by the students' union on a relatively informal basis, however, during the review, the students' union outlined future plans to formalise this training.

32 The College organises Student Voice Forums (SVFs) at course, faculty and College-level. At these meetings, the College's Higher Education Management Team receive direct feedback from students and student representatives on the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and facilities, including access to resources via the library. All higher education students are invited to participate in the College's annual Higher Education Learner Voice Survey in which they are asked a core set of questions which explore their experiences of starting at the College, teaching and learning, and assessments. The relevant Faculty Dean is responsible for interrogating the data from the Survey. The data is also reported to the HEOG and the Curriculum and Quality Strategic Group, the latter of which is responsible for reviewing the survey results holistically, as well as setting a benchmark for student satisfaction. Programmes which fall below this benchmark for satisfaction are investigated further including interviews with concerned students. Students also complete the NSS, the data of which is considered by the College in a similar manner to that outlined for the Higher Education Learner Voice Survey.

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

33 The College has established policies for dealing with non-academic student complaints and assessment, appeals and academic malpractice. Students enrolled at the College may submit complaints using the College's approved internal process. Students are encouraged to resolve complaints informally with the member of staff/department involved, so as to avoid a formal complaint. Where this is not possible, students may submit a formal complaint via the Quality Unit to the Director of Quality and Curriculum. Students unsatisfied with the outcome of their complaint may submit an appeal to the College Principal, after which they may appeal directly to the awarding institution or, alternatively, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

34 For academic appeals, students enrolled on franchised university programmes appeal directly to the relevant awarding partner. Students enrolled on the College's Pearson Higher National provision may appeal a mark or grade using the College's approved internal process, which is outlined in the Assessment, Appeals and Academic Malpractice Policy, however, the current version of this policy states that the appeal process only applies to FE students. During the review process, the College confirmed to the review team that Pearson Higher National students would indeed appeal a mark or grade using the process outlined in the Assessment, Appeals and Academic Malpractice Policy and therefore that the text was inaccurate. The review team therefore identifies as an **area for development** the need for the College to clarify the guidance documentation relating to academic appeals for Pearson Higher National students.

35 The College maintains a complaint log to allow for the identification of trends and areas for development. The Director of Quality and Curriculum is responsible for providing a report to the College Management Team and the Corporation Board's Curriculum and Quality Committee on the nature of the complaints received, how they were resolved, and any actions that are necessary for improvement. Information on the process for submitting a student complaint and academic appeal is communicated to students during the induction process. Information on complaints and appeals, including the policy documents themselves, can also be found on the College's website.

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

36 The College does not deliver research degrees.

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.

37 The College has well-established processes for the sourcing, approval, monitoring and assessing of placements and other work-based learning. Both students and staff are aware of the processes and students understand what is expected of them and who they should talk to in the case of any difficulties. The College has responsibility for the assessment of placements. Students were very positive about the management of placement and work-based learning, and the career opportunities they provided. Employers involved in apprenticeship provision are provided with a useful and detailed handbook outlining their responsibilities. Employers offering placement opportunities in other provision are supported directly by the Programme Leader or placement module lecturer. The review team identify as an **area for development** that the College build on the effective support offered to apprentice employers and consider developing documentary guidance to support the work of all employers.

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

38 The College has effective arrangements and resources in place to support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. Students enrolled on a full-time course are assigned to a tutorial group with a named tutor who is responsible for providing pastoral support and signposting to additional support services. Part-time students are not assigned to a tutorial group, but are supported on an ongoing basis by the Programme Leader and teaching staff. The review team heard universally positive views from both students and student representatives with respect to the breadth and depth of the support provided by the College. Students with additional learning needs are supported throughout their programme of study at the College by a comprehensive student support network which includes the College's Learner Support Team and Neurodiversity Team.

39 The College invests significantly in enhancing the employability and professional skills of its students. Several higher education programmes of study include modules focused on professional skills development, demonstrating a commitment on behalf of the College to embedding employability into the curriculum. Augmenting this, the College's 'Better Jobs, Better Futures' programme aims to provide a wraparound employability and careers advice service for students. The programme has three main strands, each of which are led by a Career Coach, Adviser or Consultant. The Career Coach is the first point of contact for any student within the programme and is there to help students tailor their CVs, conduct mock interviews and prepare more broadly to apply for jobs in different sectors. The

Adviser and Consultant are responsible for engaging with employers in the local area and further afield to identify possible employment opportunities for the College's students. The development of independent learning skills is also a key focus for the College and in addition to teaching staff, the College's team of Library Advisors provides information and sessions on developing academic skills.

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

40 Arrangements are well embedded for monitoring and review, with the three management groups - Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Group (CQSGHE); Quality Development Group (HE); and HE Operational Group - having improvement and enhancement within their terms of reference. In addition, regular course team meetings provide an opportunity to identify and address any issues as they arise. The annual monitoring processes provide opportunities to reflect on a range of data, including student feedback, and identify issues and actions with monitoring of actions by CQSGHE. The College's Strategic Plan has self-improving as a core organisational value, embedding enhancement across its activities with actions captured in an action plan. The learner voice is a key element of this process. Students have a range of opportunities to feed back to the College, with improvements introduced in response and actions taken fed back to the students through a 'You said - We did' process. Regular review mechanisms are also used to identify cross-College development needs and opportunities which feed into the 'Bridging the Gap' initiative.

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

41 The College engages with external organisations and expertise in a range of ways. The external examiner system (managed by the awarding bodies) is the main source of external expertise. External examiner reports are considered, initially, by programme teams who also draw on external examiner input during the year, for example, with regard to assessments. Analysis of the reports features within the annual monitoring processes. As the provision is vocational, the College draws on external expertise, for example, in the form of live assessment briefs and external speakers. The College also works closely with regional and local employers in the development and design of programmes to ensure that they are relevant and responsive. Validation and course approval events, managed by the awarding bodies, include external input.

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

42 The College's higher education provision is closely aligned to local employer and industry demand. The College currently works with several degree-awarding bodies and organisations and must therefore operate within different academic regulations and assessment frameworks, depending on the programme of study. The quality of the student academic experience is monitored on an ongoing basis by the College's awarding partners and by the College's internal quality assurance processes (see also paragraphs 30-32).

43 The College is committed to making a positive difference to its community and the review team heard several examples from both students and staff of non-typical students achieving good outcomes at the College. Students are supported throughout the student lifecycle, from admissions to completion, by a comprehensive support network which includes dedicated staff members for students with additional learning needs. Students on full-time courses are assigned tutorial groups with a named tutor for pastoral support, while

part-time students are supported by a combination of their Programme Leader and teaching staff. There is a significant focus on careers, employability and professional skills development, which is exemplified by the College's 'Better Jobs, Better Futures' programme.

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

Judgement

44 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, 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. The review team were 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, allowing students to succeed in, and benefit from, higher education. 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 UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

45 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

46 The College has a strategic commitment to promote the Welsh language and enhance its Welsh medium provision in line with the expectations of the Welsh Language Standards. The Welsh Language Manager at the College is ultimately responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and reports on progress and any areas for development to the Welsh Language Development Group and Welsh Language Operational Group. The Welsh Language Development Group meets on a termly basis and is responsible for identifying any obstacles that may affect compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, whereas the Welsh Language Operational Group serves as a meeting place for Welsh Advocates, who are responsible for fostering the Welsh language at the College within their home departments and faculties.

47 The work of the Welsh Language Development Group is overseen by the Curriculum and Quality Strategy Group. Actions identified by the Welsh Language Development Group are fed into the annual curriculum planning process via the CQSGHE and ultimately feed into the College's annual operation plan. In the 2020-21 annual operation plan, the College identified the need to extend the range of programmes delivered partly or wholly through the medium of Welsh. At the time of the review, the College had identified several target areas which are all linked to the Welsh Government's priority areas, according to the 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy. These include Health and Social Care, Public Services, and Child Care. Work boosting the proportion of content delivered in the medium of Welsh in these areas is ongoing.

48 The College currently asks members of staff to report their level of Welsh proficiency on an annual basis. At the time of the review, of the 806 members of staff that had reported their level of Welsh, 51.4% had no Welsh speaking skills, 30.4% reported speaking entry-level Welsh, and the remaining 18.2% had some level of proficiency in speaking Welsh, from foundation-level to fluent. The number of Welsh speaking staff is monitored actively by the Welsh Language Development Group, and this has led to several posts being advertised with Welsh speaking skills identified as an essential skill. The College also encourages staff members to engage with the Welsh Government's 'Work Welsh' project. Data from enrolment indicates that the proportion of Welsh-speaking higher education students is 7.1%. The College's population of Welsh speaking students is broadly comparable to the area in which the College is located.

49 The College has a range of policies and procedures in place to enable the delivery of its higher education provision. The majority of these are provided in English, however, upon request, the College can provide translated documents. Students are encouraged to submit their work in Welsh and may also avail themselves of a Welsh speaking tutor. The College has recently appointed a Welsh Employability Skills Lecturer who is responsible for delivery of Welsh language lessons, whilst also supporting the delivery of content in the priority areas of Health and Social Care. During their studies, students are actively encouraged by the College to obtain some level of proficiency in the Welsh language.

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Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL
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Tel: 01452 557000
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk