

Quality Enhancement Review

Swansea University

Review Report

May 2026

Contents

About the Quality Enhancement Review method.....	1
About this review.....	1
About this report.....	1
1. Contextual Information about the provider, student population and the review.....	2
Summary information about the provider, including strategic framework, organisational structure.....	2
Composition, key trends and anticipated changes in the student population, including information on retention, progression and outcomes.....	2
Commentary on how the provider supports national priorities	2
Commentary on the preparation for the review, including how provider and students worked in partnership in review preparation	3
Summary of the nature and rationale for the enhancement priorities identified for the review and in the Self-Analysis.....	3
Summary of the provider's follow-up to the previous review	4
2. Review judgements and findings	5
Commendations.....	5
Recommendations	5
Areas of ongoing development.....	5
3. Statement on the provider's strategic approach to enhancement 6	
Commentary on the strategic approach taken to planning enhancements to the student experience	7
Commentary on the actions taken to ensure effective implementation of enhancement priorities	8
Commentary on the process of evaluation and reporting on the results of enhancement priorities, and how this informs future progress and enhancement activities	9
4. Commentary on the provider's support and enhancement of the student learning experience	11
Use of external reference points to support and enhance the student learning experience .	11
Views and feedback from students.....	11

Developments to enhance learning and teaching arranged through partnerships with students	12
Effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategy in improving the quality of learning opportunities	12
Effectiveness and evaluation of initiatives to enhance learning and teaching	13
Academic, pastoral and learning support for students	14
Recruitment and training of staff including staff development.....	15
Dissemination of good practice	15
Summary of the arrangements for the support and enhancement of the student learning experience	16
5. Academic standards and quality processes	17
Developments in the provider's approach to managing quality and standards.....	17
The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of standards	18
The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of quality	18
The contribution of the provider's quality processes to ensure improvement and enhancement of the student learning experience	19
A summary of the effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic quality and standards	19
6. Collaborative provision	20
Information on the extent and nature of collaborative provision and plans for change (including work-based learning)	20
Developments in the provider's approach to quality and standards	20
The use of quality processes to confirm continued effectiveness of provider's management of collaborative provision.....	21
A summary of the effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision including arrangements for securing academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience	22

About the Quality Enhancement Review method

The QAA website explains the method for [Quality Enhancement Review \(QER\)](#) and has links to the QER handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find more information about the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#).²

About this review

This is the Report of the QER conducted by QAA at Swansea University. The Review Visit took place on 12-14 May 2026. The review was conducted by a team of four reviewers:

- Professor Alan Howard
- Professor Kathryn Thirlaway
- Ms Hayley Burns
- Ms Nida Ambreen (Student reviewer)

QAA reviews are evidence-based processes. Review judgements result from the documents review teams see, the meetings they hold, and drawing upon their experience as peer reviewers and student reviewers. In advance of the review visits, the provider submitted a self-evaluative document (the Self-Analysis), contextual information about the nature of their provision and students, and a range of materials about the provider's arrangements for managing quality and academic standards.

In this review, the QER team makes judgements on:

- the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) Part 1 for internal quality assurance
- the relevant baseline requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework in Wales.

It is possible for the judgements to be expressed in three levels which indicate whether the provider 'meets these requirements', 'meets them with conditions', or 'does not meet requirements'. More detail on these categories is provided in the QER Handbook.

The QER review also makes a statement about the provider's strategic approach to enhancing the student learning experience.

About this report

The judgements for this review can be found on page seven, followed by any commendations, areas of ongoing development and recommendations made by the review team. This is followed by detailed findings of the review.

These reports provide an information base for the production of thematic reports that identify findings across providers in Wales.

1 About QER: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/quality-enhancement-review>.

2 About QAA: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us>.

1. Contextual Information about the provider, student population and the review

Summary information about the provider, including strategic framework, organisational structure

1 Swansea University (the University) was founded in 1920. The University's strategic direction is set by the University's Council and is underpinned by five key pillars: 'Our Civic Mission', 'Our Student Experience', 'Our Learning and Teaching', 'Our Research' and 'Our Enterprise'. The University is research-intensive and aspires to balance excellent teaching with world-leading research and innovation. A new institutional Vision for 2030-35 is currently under development.

2 Council is the governing body of the University. Senate is the academic authority of the University and is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. Both are supported in discharging their responsibilities by a range of sub-committees. Management of the University resides with the Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Senior Leadership Team. Operationally, the University's seven constituent colleges were merged in 2021 to form three Faculties: Humanities and Social Sciences; Medicine, Health and Life Science; and Science and Engineering. Each has a common structure consisting of Schools led by a Pro Vice-Chancellor / Executive Dean. The University employs around 2,600 full-time equivalent academic and professional staff across three campuses.

3 The University currently has 26 active taught education partnerships. Nine of these partnerships, eight of which are overseas, offer double, dual or joint awards in collaboration with the University. Other collaborations include joint delivery of degree apprenticeships with two further education colleges in Wales, and franchised provision. The University also has a wide range of articulation agreements with institutions overseas.

Composition, key trends and anticipated changes in the student population, including information on retention, progression and outcomes

4 In 2024-25, there were 17,166 full-time equivalent enrolments, comprising 14,042 undergraduate (UG) students, 2,442 postgraduate taught (PGT) students and 682 postgraduate research (PGR) students. This included 2,601 international students. Despite a rise in PGT enrolments in 2023-24, and growth in foundation year students, student numbers have declined by around 8% across the past three years.

5 The University is actively seeking to grow its collaborative provision, including its transnational partnerships. In 2024-25, 223 students studied with collaborative partners in the UK – almost all in Wales – and a further 727 studied with collaborative partners overseas.

6 Retention and progression have recovered steadily since the Covid pandemic. Retention increased from a low of 89.0% in 2021-22 to 93.4% in 2024-25, and progression from 76.7% to 87.7%.

Commentary on how the provider supports national priorities

7 The University seeks to align with national priorities through governance, curriculum design, sector engagement, and inclusion. One example is the University's contribution to the Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. The University has achieved the

Race Equality Charter Bronze Award, launched a Race Inclusion Student Advisory Committee, and embedded inclusive curriculum approaches in the Curriculum Transformation exercise.

8 Another example is the University's achievement of University of Sanctuary status, in alignment with the Welsh Government's aspirations for Wales to be a Nation of Sanctuary. University of Sanctuary status recognises institutions that actively support and provide a welcoming environment for individuals seeking refuge, particularly refugees and asylum seekers. As part of this initiative, the University's partnership with Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University in Ukraine has enabled 53 Ukrainian students to undertake study visits to Swansea.

9 The University's portfolio and curriculum support national workforce priorities. This includes in the education sector, where the University participates in the National MA Education (Wales) programme. The University also supports national health priorities through its teaching and research portfolio, and through targeted growth in Welsh-medium provision in these areas to address national skills needs. The Welsh Language and Culture Strategy underpins the University's commitment to growing both the range of Welsh-medium provision and the number of Welsh-medium enrolments, in support of the Welsh Government's goal to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Commentary on the preparation for the review, including how provider and students worked in partnership in review preparation

10 Preparation for the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) began in January 2025 with the development of a QER 2026 Project Management Plan. The plan was overseen by the QER Project Board, which met fortnightly, and brought together members from the Students' Union, and professional, academic and senior leadership colleagues. Chaired by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards), the Board reported to the Senior Leadership Team and through the committee structure, including Senate, to Council which had ultimate oversight.

11 The Students' Union engaged with the QER preparation process in collaboration with the University from the outset, including as members of the QER Project Board. The Students' Union and the University agreed to integrate their submission into a single Self-Analysis, submitted jointly. With support from consultants from the National Union of Students, the Students' Union facilitated wider student input, and hosted a QER Self-Analysis writing group, which considered drafts of the Self-Analysis document.

Summary of the nature and rationale for the enhancement priorities identified for the review and in the Self-Analysis

12 The University identified three areas of focus through which it sought to articulate the strategic approach to enhancement: enhancing through data; enhancing through curriculum; and enhancing through the design of the quality structure. The rationale for choosing these priorities was to illustrate the University's culture of continuous, evidence-based improvement.

13 Following discussion, the University identified three enhancement priorities, in order to illustrate the approach to planning, implementing and evaluating enhancement initiatives. These priorities are reviewed in detail in Section 3 of the report.

- **Priority 1: Generative Artificial Intelligence**
An initiative which is in the planning stage.

- **Priority 2: Curriculum Transformation**
An initiative which is in the implementing stage.
- **Priority 3: Retention and Progression**
An initiative which is in the evaluating stage.

Summary of the provider's follow-up to the previous review

14 The University received a positive outcome from the most recent QER in 2020, receiving five commendations, three affirmations and no recommendations. In response to the affirmations, the University devised a post-review action plan.

15 Actions completed include embedding peer observation in the PGCert qualification for new teaching staff and the Professional Development Review process for existing staff; and the launch of 'MyEngagement' and Continuous Enhancement Monitoring data initiatives, which are detailed further in Sections 3 and 4 of this report.

16 In response to wider changes in the sector, including the launch of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024) and Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on reasonable adjustments, the University has also updated its Code of Practice for Learning, Teaching and Assessment and its Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

2. Review judgements and findings

Based on the information presented, the review team judges that:

- Swansea University **meets** the requirements of the ESG Part 1 for internal quality assurance.
- Swansea University **meets** the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

This is a positive judgement, which means the provider has robust arrangements for securing academic standards, managing academic quality and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Commendations

The QER has identified three commendations, which are summarised below.

- The University's systematic, institution-wide implementation of Curriculum Transformation, which has established a coherent and evidence-based framework for redesigning all taught programmes to enhance the overall student learning experience.
- The way in which the University's professional services, academic colleagues and students have worked in partnership to improve the student experience.
- The University's employability initiatives that contribute to improving students' career-readiness.

Recommendations

The QER makes one recommendation.

- That the University reviews its guidance and practice relating to extenuating circumstances to remove ambiguity and ensure greater clarity and consistency for all students.

Areas of ongoing development

The QER has identified one area of ongoing development, which is summarised below.

- The steps being taken to strengthen the consistency of guidance and practice relating to the permitted use of generative AI in assessed work across the University.

3. Statement on the provider's strategic approach to enhancement

17 The review team explored the University's strategic approach to enhancement within the context of its overarching strategic approach. The review team noted that a new Education Strategy is nearing publication, and that its themes and priorities were already informing institutional developments. This strategy emphasises the integration of learning and teaching with student engagement, and the University's commitment to working in partnership with students.

18 The University identified three specific enhancement priorities for this QER:

- Generative Artificial Intelligence
- Curriculum Transformation
- Retention and Progression

19 Enhancement priorities were selected to illustrate the University's approach to planning, implementing and evaluating enhancement initiatives. The priorities reflect the University's commitment to continuous improvement, enabled by enhancement through data; enhancing through curriculum; and enhancing through the design of the quality structure.

20 Evidence of the University's enhancement work was provided through case studies, presentations and supporting documentation. This included the Generative AI Framework, Curriculum Transformation Framework and overview of the work of the Retention and Progression Working Group.

21 During the review visit, the review team explored these priorities in detail through meetings with senior staff, professional services, academic staff and students. A presentation was delivered to the team, providing further insight into the rationale, planning and evaluation of enhancement initiatives, as well as the role of students as partners in shaping and informing these priorities.

22 The review team explored the deliberate steps taken by the provider to enhance the student learning experience through examining the use of evidence to plan, implement and evaluate the student learning experience. As part of this report, the review team provides commentaries on its findings of these three areas in the sections below.

23 The overall outcome of the enhancement-led approach to the review and the review team's consideration of the enhancement priorities is a statement on the provider's strategic approach to enhancement of the student academic experience. The review team makes the following statement on Swansea University's strategic approach to enhancement of the student learning experience:

24 *The University's strategic, evidence-informed approach to enhancement is underpinned by five priorities: Belonging, Transformative Curriculum, Bright Futures, Inspiring People, and Student Voice. These are implemented flexibly through institutional planning processes, enabling responsiveness to internal performance indicators and external expectations. The interrelated use of data, quality processes and curriculum development drives the approach to enhancement, with strong collaboration between academics, professional services and students as a key strength.*

25 *The Curriculum Transformation project is a major initiative under which all programmes have been redesigned to meet framework criteria, including co-creation with*

students and external stakeholders. The Bright Futures priority is supported by initiatives such as the Student Futures Board, integration of careers and employability services, and a new Employability and Skills Strategy, improving equitable access to work-based learning.

26 Progress is monitored through a governance structure led by the Education Enhancement Board, overseen by the University Education Committee and ultimately reporting to Senate and Council. Active input from the Student Advisory Forum and Student Data and Performance Group ensures that student feedback and data directly inform evaluation. Overall, the University demonstrates a coordinated, inclusive and data-informed approach to enhancement.

Commentary on the strategic approach taken to planning enhancements to the student experience

27 The University identified Generative Artificial Intelligence as an enhancement priority to illustrate its approach to planning enhancement initiatives. The review team heard that the University adopted an Artificial Intelligence Framework in response to the increasing use of generative AI in higher education and its potential to enhance the student experience. The framework formed part of a wider strategic approach to curriculum transformation and Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy.

28 Evidence from the review visit demonstrated that the framework was developed through phased institutional planning, rather than a reactive approach. Senior staff explained that early discussions focused on concerns relating to academic integrity, inconsistent assessment practices, equity of access to AI tools, sustainability, and the rapid pace of technological change, and that the 2023 Russell Group statement on generative AI had been helpful in informing their approach. The University aimed to avoid fragmented approaches across teaching, research, and professional services by establishing institution-wide principles and guidance. The review team noted that the framework was designed to allow flexibility across disciplines, while maintaining a coherent institutional approach.

29 The framework was linked to the University's Curriculum Transformation agenda. Staff highlighted that the framework sought to support the development of AI literacy, critical thinking, and graduate employability skills, recognising that employers increasingly expect graduates to use AI responsibly and effectively. The University also sought to address concerns from some academic colleagues and students relating to sustainability and digital inequality by providing access to an institutionally-supported generative AI tool.

30 Additionally, staff development opportunities on artificial intelligence in education demonstrated that continuing professional development (CPD) was available to support staff in developing knowledge and confidence in the use of AI within teaching and learning practices. Evidence also indicated wider institutional planning to support implementation of the framework, including curriculum redesign activities and assessment review guidance. The review team also heard about plans to embed AI literacy within broader student skills development and preparation for graduate employment.

31 Evidence showed strong student partnership in the planning and development of the generative AI framework. This included Students' Union representatives and Academic Integrity Ambassadors contributing through workshops, working groups, and consultation activities. During the visit, students reported that overall, the framework reduced confusion regarding acceptable AI use in assessments, and that the AI in Assessment Scale provided clear guidance. Students also valued opportunities to discuss concerns relating to academic integrity, ethical AI use, and assessment expectations. The review team heard that students considered the framework to be particularly useful in reducing anxiety around the use of AI in

coursework and helping them understand disciplinary expectations more clearly. However, the review team heard that some inconsistencies across departments, including collaborative provision, remained. These included differences in the interpretation of AI guidance, the use of Red-Amber-Green rating systems, assessment declarations, and varying levels of staff confidence in applying the framework within teaching and assessment practices. The review team identified as an **area of ongoing development** the steps being taken to strengthen the consistency of guidance and practice relating to the permitted use of generative AI in assessed work across the University.

Commentary on the actions taken to ensure effective implementation of enhancement priorities

32 The University identified Curriculum Transformation as an enhancement priority to illustrate its approach to implementing enhancement initiatives. The review team considered the University's Curriculum Transformation project to be a significant institutional enhancement initiative at this stage, arising from Priority T1, Transformative Curriculum, within the new Education Strategy Implementation Plan. The review team found that the initiative is well-placed to meet the University's aspiration to achieve a diverse and adaptable portfolio, providing clear, consistent and coherent student learning journeys, and promoting dynamic approaches to teaching and assessment that integrate digital technologies and emerging pedagogies.

33 Curriculum Transformation has established a common institutional framework for the redesign of all taught programmes. The framework combines structural requirements, including the move to a minimum 20-credit module structure where appropriate, with broader design principles requiring programmes to embed graduate attributes, employability, inclusivity, sustainability and generative AI. The review team heard that this approach has provided a clear and consistent basis for programme teams to redesign curricula while retaining appropriate disciplinary flexibility.

34 The review team found that the University has implemented the initiative systematically across the institution. All taught programmes have now been redesigned and approved as meeting the requirements of the Curriculum Transformation Framework. The review team heard that this was achieved through close collaboration between academic staff, professional services, students, employers and professional bodies, supported by workshops, toolkits and tailored guidance. Students have contributed both through programme-level co-creation and through formal roles as student reviewers.

35 The University has also established a comprehensive framework for evaluating the success of the initiative. Process measures confirm that all programmes have been approved against the framework and that key themes, including sustainability, inclusivity, graduate attributes and generative AI, have been embedded. Early optimisation measures indicate reductions in module numbers and assessment volume, with Phase 1 programmes showing an estimated 22% reduction in modules and a 31% reduction in assessments. These changes are intended to provide students with more coherent programme structures and more balanced assessment loads.

36 The review team noted that only a small number of programmes have been launched to date, with the majority due to commence in 2026-27. As a result, while implementation is substantially complete and early benefits are evident, the full impact on student satisfaction, retention, graduate outcomes and the wider student experience is still emerging. The University has identified clear timelines for further evaluation as cohorts progress through the transformed curriculum.

37 Overall, the review team considers that Curriculum Transformation is a highly effective and strategically significant enhancement initiative. The University has implemented the initiative systematically across all taught provision, supported by strong institutional leadership, extensive partnership working including with employers and professional bodies and a well-developed framework for evaluating impact over time. The review team **commends** the University's systematic institution-wide implementation of Curriculum Transformation, which has established a coherent and evidence-based framework for redesigning all taught programmes to enhance the overall student learning experience.

Commentary on the process of evaluation and reporting on the results of enhancement priorities, and how this informs future progress and enhancement activities

38 The University identified Retention and Progression as an enhancement priority to illustrate its approach to evaluating enhancement initiatives. The review team considered the University's retention and progression work to be a successful example of evaluation of an enhancement initiative, arising from Priority T5, Belonging, within the new Education Strategy. Although the University monitors retention and progression annually, a sector wide drop in retention in 2021-22, with a decrease of 3.3% at the University, led to the establishment of a dedicated working group. The Retention and Progression Working Group (RPWG) was created to identify key points in the student journey where intervention would support student progression, assist in retention and support ongoing communication with students. RPWG developed data definitions, mapped progression pathways and identified patterns linked to student characteristics.

39 RPWG created a dedicated data dashboard and aligned this with the University's parallel work on Learner Analytics, which indicate improved retention and progression outcomes. The review team heard that these improvements were a result of introducing earlier intervention for students where required, in response to progression, engagement and non-submission data; increasing consistency in student communications across the faculties; an ongoing dialogue with students regarding their progression with a focus on their own perspectives on what success looks like in their context; and changes to policies and procedures such as extenuating circumstances, engagement monitoring and personal tutoring.

40 The review team identified specific examples of interventions, including pre- and post-examination support for students identified at risk based on data made available to professional services and academic staff. These included revision and academic success sessions, dissertation stations in the library, academic integrity support through Academic Integrity Ambassadors, and peer mentoring programmes. Notably, data and insights from work undertaken by the Students' Union showed that students involved in clubs and societies progressed at significantly higher rates. The review team heard that this finding has influenced further belonging and engagement initiatives, in collaboration with the Students' Union.

41 RPWG was responsible for evaluating the initiatives put in place, reporting through the education governance structures. This evaluation identified a number of areas that could support retention and progression aligned to three themes: data, support and policy. As a result, the RPWG was formed into a Student Data and Performance Group (SDPG). SDPG has focused on using existing and enhanced data sets to translate into meaningful information for staff and continues to identify patterns in data, both internally and externally, to enable action to be taken to improve student outcomes on a timelier basis.

42 The review team found the positive relationships between professional services

departments and Faculties to be a primary factor in the success of the initiatives put in place to improve retention and progression. The review team considered SDPG to be effective in ensuring that there is consistency of approach between Faculties in engaging with professional services and sharing of good practice. Professional services and academic staff confirmed in meetings that there is a holistic approach across the University to identifying risks, implementing actions, monitoring progress and supporting students. Communities of Practice are also an important feature of the partnership approach.

43 Overall, the review team considers the RPWG and SDPG have carried out a highly effective set of initiatives, with systematic evaluation of the actions implemented to support student retention and progression. The review team was able to confirm that a cycle of continuing reflection, evaluation and adjustment is leading to enhancement in support of student outcomes.

4. Commentary on the provider's support and enhancement of the student learning experience

44 The review team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to support and enhance the student learning experience. The review team considered a range of documents including the new Education Strategy and its associated implementation plan, Curriculum Framework Toolkit, Governors Annual Quality Assurance Report and staff guidance on Continuous Enhancement. The review team also considered minutes from meetings of key institutional committees with responsibilities for quality and academic standards, learning and teaching, and the wider student experience. In addition, the review team met with staff and students.

Use of external reference points to support and enhance the student learning experience

45 The University systematically uses external reference points to inform programme design, approval and review. Through a review of Curriculum Transformation and Continuous Enhancement Monitoring documentation, the review team found that the University refers to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), Subject Benchmark Statements and Characteristics Statements in its quality arrangements. Sector datasets and benchmarks such as Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and league table metrics feed into Portfolio Review, Continuous Enhancement Monitoring dashboards and discipline-level performance reviews.

46 The review team found that the University uses appropriate national surveys to benchmark their undergraduate student experience against the sector, including the National Student Survey. Staff guidance for Curriculum Transformation and for Continuous Enhancement Monitoring confirms that the University also engages external expertise, including external subject specialists to support new programme development, and external examiners in reviewing provision. The review team noted that there are over 200 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PRSB) accredited programmes at the University, and PSRB engagement is embedded across the programme lifecycle, with professional standards informing curriculum design and delivery.

47 In summary, the review team was assured that the University made effective use of appropriate external reference points to support and enhance the student learning experience.

Views and feedback from students

48 The University demonstrates a structured approach to gathering student feedback through the National Student Survey (NSS), internal surveys, learner analytics, Student Advisory Forums, and Students' Union representation systems. The Big Swansea Survey further extends opportunities for engagement beyond final-year undergraduate students, to students at all levels. The review team identified examples of student feedback-informed enhancements relating to communications through the digital learning platform, access to academic information, timetabling, office hour guidance, and support services. A review of minutes for University committees at School, Faculty and University level confirmed that student representation is embedded within the University's quality assurance and enhancement processes. The review team found that the Students' Union Annual Quality Report, considered by Council, offers detailed insights into students' views and priorities.

Student representatives participate in Action and Enhancement Groups, contributing to discussions on programme delivery, the student experience, and areas for improvement, while student feedback informs action planning and decision-making.

49 The review team identified examples of where the University might consider taking more proactive steps to strengthen communication and close the feedback loop. Evidence indicated that some students remained unclear about actions taken in response to feedback and were unaware of systems such as the MyEngagement learner analytics tool. Furthermore, during the review visit, some students, in particular, postgraduate students and students on collaborative provision overseas, reported having limited access to library resources.

50 Case study evidence demonstrates the University's commitment to strengthening student engagement and partnership working. The review team found that the transition from the Student Partnership and Engagement Committee (SPEC) to the Student Advisory Forum (SAF) has enhanced inclusivity and opportunities for student participation, while initiatives such as the Academic Integrity Ambassador programme and student-led skills sessions further support collaboration, co-creation, and student involvement in enhancement activities.

51 The review team found that the embedding of student voice in governance structures, the development of student-led initiatives such as the Academic Integrity Ambassador programme, and the responsive use of feedback from multiple channels inform tangible improvements in communication, teaching, and support services. The review team **commends** the way in which the University's professional services, academic colleagues and students have worked in partnership to improve the student experience.

Developments to enhance learning and teaching arranged through partnerships with students

52 The review team considers that the University demonstrates a structured and strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching through partnership working with students, Students' Union representatives, and external stakeholders. The Education Annual Plan 2025-26 identifies priorities including curriculum redesign, implementation of the Hwb interface for student services, development of the Education Development Team, and enhancement work informed by student data and experience. Learner analytics developments through MyEngagement aim to strengthen identification of student engagement and support needs, alongside projects focused on student belonging and campus experience.

53 Curriculum transformation activities demonstrate student-informed enhancement through authentic and inclusive assessment approaches within the departments of Physics and Biosciences, supporting engagement, accessibility, and skills development. Student partnership is also evident in the co-creation of the Generative AI Framework and AI in Assessment Scale, involving Academic Integrity Ambassadors, postgraduate researchers, and student representatives. Wider initiatives, including Academic Communities, the Global Lounge, and GO! Team volunteering, further support belonging, engagement, and employability.

Effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategy in improving the quality of learning opportunities

54 The review team found that the University's new Education Strategy, which outlines the University's strategic approach to learning and teaching, is effective in improving the

quality of learning opportunities. The new Education Strategy informs enhancement initiatives aimed at improving the quality of learning opportunities, which are operationalised through its associated implementation plan and the annual planning process.

55 A review of committee minutes confirmed that there is effective monitoring of enhancement initiatives, and progress made against enhancement priorities, by the Education Enhancement Board. This Board is overseen by the University Education Committee, which reports to the Senate and Council. The Education Enhancement Board is advised by the Student Advisory Forum and by the Student Data and Performance Group, ensuring that student feedback and performance data both contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of enhancement activities. A review of committee terms of reference confirmed that students are actively involved as partners in the enhancement of learning opportunities.

56 Transformative Curriculum is one of the five priorities of the Education Strategy. The review team found that the Curriculum Transformation project, which introduced a new curriculum framework, has been an effective driver of the goals of the Education Strategy to improve the quality of learning opportunities for students. The review team established that all programmes have now been validated against the framework criteria, which has involved extensive co-creation with students and stakeholders.

57 The Welsh Language and Culture Strategy 2022-27 has been effective in improving the quality of learning opportunities available through the medium of Welsh. A review of documentation, confirmed in a meeting with academic staff leading on Welsh-medium provision, demonstrated that the Curriculum Transformation project has allowed the University to increase the range of Welsh-medium modules offered, and increase the proportion of Welsh speakers at the University studying through the medium of Welsh.

58 Student performance data demonstrates improvements in retention and progression, and the University performs favourably in comparison with sector benchmarks in NSS and graduate outcomes. Consequently, the review team is confident that the new Education Strategy was successfully improving the quality of learning opportunities.

Effectiveness and evaluation of initiatives to enhance learning and teaching

59 The University has demonstrated a structured and data-informed approach to enhancing learning and teaching, underpinned by the new Education Strategy, annual planning, and governance arrangements. Enhancement priorities are identified through consideration of institutional data, including NSS, graduate outcomes, retention and other performance indicators, together with student feedback and strategic objectives. Enhancement activity is coordinated through the University Education Committee, supported by Faculty Education Committees, and Boards of Study, which provide clear reporting lines from programme to institutional level and which are well understood by academic and professional staff.

60 The review team found that the University has established effective quality processes to monitor and evaluate enhancement activity, particularly through the introduction of Continuous Enhancement Monitoring and associated scorecards of key quality metrics. These provide an ongoing, evidence-based approach to programme evaluation, supported by Programme Enhancement Plans that enable timely identification of issues and responsive action planning. Senior leaders described CEM as a significant improvement on previous annual and periodic approaches because it supports continuous review and allows programme teams to adjust priorities in response to emerging evidence.

61 The review team considers that the University has effective and well-embedded arrangements for evaluating enhancement initiatives that enhance learning and teaching and using evidence to inform continuous improvement.

Academic, pastoral and learning support for students

62 The review team found that the University demonstrates a developing and increasingly integrated approach to academic, pastoral, and learning support through digital systems, personal tutoring structures, and employability initiatives. The Personal Tutor Hub on the digital learning platform, with approximately 600 staff enrolled, represents a move towards greater consistency and standardisation in the delivery of personal tutoring support. The enhanced MyEngagement system enables early identification of student needs, supports wellbeing and progression, and allows academic and pastoral interactions to be recorded within a single platform, thereby strengthening coordination of support. Additionally, during the visit, undergraduate students confirmed that the support from third-year students through the buddy system is working effectively to help first-year students to settle in at the University. Moreover, the Hwb initiative, developed in collaboration with the Students' Union, has streamlined access to support services and improved navigation across provision. Students from both campuses confirmed that they enjoy a similar student experience.

63 Evidence demonstrates that the University is successfully embedding a range of employability initiatives, strengthening transferable skills development and supporting engagement with authentic, practice-based learning opportunities. A review of documentation and meetings with professional services staff confirmed that the establishment of a Student Futures Board, the unification of the careers and employability service and the establishment of the Employability and Skills Strategy have ensured more equitable access to opportunities to develop career-readiness across the University. The Employability Skills Team (EST) has engaged directly with academic staff in programme development as part of the Curriculum Transformation project, embedding employability in teaching and learning in alignment with the University's Graduate Attributes framework. The review team noted EST's significant progress against defined key performance indicators on student employability, including Graduate Outcomes data and engagement of students from widening participation backgrounds, as evidence of the University's strategic approach to enhancing employability. Students praised examples of employability enhancements in their subject areas, and valued opportunities to engage in community volunteering and training in areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion.

64 In addition, the review team found that the University works closely with employers to understand workforce needs and ensure that graduates are well prepared for employment. The review team noted innovative examples of authentic learning opportunities aligned with the Graduate Attributes framework, and of placements and work-based learning. Senior and academic staff also cited examples of Welsh-medium provision that addresses specific workforce needs, including in medicine and allied health professions, and in sports media, and of student-led employer engagement activities and volunteering projects. The review team **commends** the University's employability initiatives that contribute to improving students' career-readiness.

65 Students reported a lack of clarity regarding the evidence requirements and processes associated with extenuating circumstances. The review team identified some discrepancies between students' understanding of the evidence required to support applications and the guidance set out in the University's published policy. Variations in students' experiences across different faculties also suggested inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of procedures. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the University review its guidance and practice relating to extenuating circumstances, to remove ambiguity and

ensure greater clarity, consistency, and transparency for all students. In particular, clearer communication, more consistent processes across faculties, and improved signposting of decision-making pathways and outcomes would support a more equitable and transparent student experience.

66 Evidence indicated that some students remain unclear about the role of their Personal Tutor and the range of support systems available. In addition, the visit highlighted concerns regarding the availability of Personal Tutors, with some students reporting difficulties in accessing timely support due to competing demands on tutors' workloads. These highlight the need to further strengthen communication, visibility, and student awareness to ensure more consistent understanding and access to support services.

Recruitment and training of staff including staff development

67 The review team found that the University has a clear strategic approach to staff development, aligned to the Education Strategy priority of 'Inspiring People' and overseen through the Education Enhancement Board. The University provides a structured programme of development led by Swansea University's Education Development Team (EDT), including a Postgraduate Certificate, Advance HE Fellowship, targeted workshops and the annual Learning and Teaching Conference. Recent enhancements include the redesign of peer observation and development activity in emerging areas such as generative AI.

68 The review team also found that professional services staff are actively included in these opportunities. Most EDT-led activities are open to professional services colleagues, who are eligible to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate and apply for Advance HE Fellowship where they meet the relevant criteria. Of the 791 staff across the University who have achieved Fellowship status, 33 are in professional services.

69 Overall, the review team considers that the University provides comprehensive and well-aligned staff development opportunities that support both academic and professional services staff in enhancing the student learning experience.

Dissemination of good practice

70 The review team found that the University has established governance arrangements to support the dissemination of good practice, with the Education Enhancement Board providing oversight of enhancement activity and staff development. Mechanisms include cross-institutional role-based communities of practice and structured academic development led by the Education Development Team, alongside institutional events such as the Learning and Teaching Conference.

71 The review team found that dissemination is embedded within Curriculum Transformation activity, where targeted workshops and supporting resources promote consistent approaches across programmes. Evidence from the University's evaluation of Curriculum Transformation indicates that good practice has been systematically identified and is being disseminated more widely.

72 The review team considers that the University has well-developed arrangements for disseminating good practice in supporting and enhancing the student learning experience. These arrangements are increasingly embedded and provide evidence of positive impacts.

Summary of the arrangements for the support and enhancement of the student learning experience

73 Overall, the review team is confident that the University has appropriate and effective arrangements in place to support and enhance the student learning experience. The review team identified several examples of the University making effective use of external reference points, data, quality processes and student partnership to drive quality assurance and enhancement initiatives. In particular, it was evident to the review team that the Curriculum Transformation exercise is a powerful driver for enhancing the student learning experience.

5. Academic standards and quality processes

74 The review team is confident that the University has effective arrangements for managing and enhancing its academic quality and standards. The review team considered a range of documents including the new Education Strategy and its associated implementation plan, Curriculum Framework Toolkit, Governors Annual Quality Assurance Report and staff guidance on Continuous Enhancement. In addition, the review team considered a sample of quality process reports and minutes from key institutional committees. In meetings, the review team heard from staff and students about the effectiveness and continuing evolution and development of these arrangements.

Developments in the provider's approach to managing quality and standards

75 At institutional level, the review team identified changes in the University's governance of education, driven by an aim to be more agile, transparent and enhancement focused. The Senate maintains overall responsibility for the University's academic provision. The University Education Committee reports to Senate and sets and steers education strategy relating to learning, teaching and student experience. It has two sub-groups with specific remits for quality, standards and enhancement: Regulations, Quality and Standards Board and the Education Enhancement Board. The University has aimed to strengthen academic governance further by expanding the number of Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellors, including the appointment of a Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards) whose remit is to bridge strategy and implementation.

76 The University restructured its seven academic colleges into three Faculties, to ensure more effective, accountable and streamlined governance and to enable more consistency in terms of processes. There is a common governance and administrative structure within each Faculty, including a Faculty Education Committee reporting to the University Education Committee, which is chaired by an Associate Dean for Education. The remit of the Faculty Education Committee is to assure and enhance quality and implement policy. Communities of practice have been established to create cross-institutional networks that support consistency and share good practice.

77 Student engagement is embedded in quality assurance processes, with representation and dialogue taking place through formal arrangements such as Boards of Studies, Student-Staff Forums and University committees. Students also reported being engaged actively as partners in initiatives such as Curriculum Transformation.

78 The review team found that the University has invested significantly in its data to better inform and enable more agile decision-making. The Student Data and Performance Group and Student Future Boards provide data and information on key metrics. 'Swansea Insights' consolidates previously fragmented data into dashboards. Professional services and academic staff confirmed that these changes have led to higher engagement and confidence in using data, and production of timely evidence to provide to governance groups.

79 Programme approval and modification processes have been consolidated under the Portfolio Approval and Enhancement Board. Continuous Enhancement Monitoring, with its use of Programme Enhancement Plans, has evolved the University's oversight of quality and standards, by moving to a risk-based approach. The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of standards.

The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of standards

80 The annual Quality Assurance Report to Governors provides assurance that the University is appropriately managing standards. It includes sections on external examiners and on dialogue with the Students' Union, demonstrating strategic oversight of these key stakeholders. The Continuous Enhancement Monitoring process embeds quality assurance and enhancement across the student lifecycle, using live data and targeted action planning. Standards are set and maintained in alignment with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and Medr's expectations. The University has more than 200 programmes accredited by PSRBs and maintains a PSRB accredited and approved programme register.

81 The review team identified that the Regulations, Quality and Standards Board is the body that oversees and approves all new or amended regulations and policies on behalf of the University Education Committee. Regulations, Quality and Standards Board receives regular reports on exam outcomes, external examiners' findings and programme performance. Attention is paid to collaborative and transnational education growth.

82 At local level, Faculty Education Committees and Boards of Studies, chaired by Programme Directors, scrutinise teaching, assessment and feedback and draw on module performance data, survey data and external examiner reports to embed standards day-to-day.

83 In summary, the review team was assured that the University uses quality processes effectively to manage and maintain standards across all its portfolio.

The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of quality

84 The review team found that the University has a comprehensive and well-structured framework for the management of academic quality and standards, supported by clear governance arrangements and defined responsibilities at all levels of the institution. Senate provides overarching academic oversight, while the University Education Committee and its sub-committees, including the Regulations, Quality and Standards Board and the Education Enhancement Board, are responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of academic regulations, quality assurance processes and enhancement priorities.

85 At programme level, Boards of Study and School Education Fora play a central role in assuring and enhancing quality and the student learning experience. Their terms of reference and meeting records demonstrate active consideration of programme performance, student feedback, external examiner reports, assessment outcomes and curriculum development, including Curriculum Transformation. Staff and senior leaders confirmed that these arrangements are well understood and operate effectively in practice.

86 The University makes systematic use of institutional data to inform quality assurance and enhancement. Continuous Enhancement Monitoring, scorecards of key performance indicators and Programme Enhancement Plans provide an integrated and ongoing approach to identifying issues, implementing actions and reviewing impact. The review team also saw case studies demonstrating how targeted interventions based on student survey and performance data had led to measurable improvements in the student experience.

87 Overall, the review team considers that the University makes effective use of its quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of its management of quality. The systematic use of data, the clear allocation of responsibilities, and the integration of

monitoring and enhancement provide strong assurance that academic quality and standards are being maintained and enhanced across the institution.

The contribution of the provider's quality processes to ensure improvement and enhancement of the student learning experience

88 The University makes systematic use of external reference points to secure standards and guide enhancement. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education, European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Medr's regulatory expectations shape institutional policy and processes. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), Subject Benchmark Statements and Degree Characteristics inform programme approval and portfolio review. Stakeholder Advisory Boards enable employers to be involved in co-designing and co-delivering curricula.

89 The review team identified that a wide range of PSRBs are engaged throughout the lifecycle of programmes. The University uses scheduled reapprovals, annual self-evaluations and structured reporting to maintain compliance and clarity and seeks early dialogue with PSRBs when proposed changes could affect approvals. These bodies also contribute to enhancement activities through these mechanisms. External subject specialists support new programme development with independent academic and market validation. There is oversight of this through the Portfolio Approval and Enhancement Board and the Portfolio Management Board.

90 The Artificial Intelligence Framework demonstrates a clear commitment to ethical and compliant AI use in assessment, particularly around integrity, transparency, and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) alignment. Students and academic staff confirmed that the policy had supported their use of AI in particular in assessment.

91 In summary, the review team is assured that quality processes play an integral role in enhancement of the student experience.

A summary of the effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic quality and standards

92 Overall, the review team is confident that the University has robust and effective arrangements for securing academic quality and standards. The University's comprehensive regulatory and governance framework is evidenced by clear institutional structures, providing a strong foundation for maintaining and enhancing academic standards across all provision. The consistency of policies and procedures with national frameworks, such as the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), helps to ensure that threshold standards are maintained across all subject areas and delivery modes. Moreover, the alignment of key policies, including the Assessment, Marking and Feedback Policy, with relevant institutional requirements and sector expectations, ensures consistency in assessment practice, academic integrity, inclusivity, and the consideration of generative AI.

93 In conclusion, the review team found that the University's arrangements for securing academic standards are well-established, coherent, and aligned with sector expectations, and the students are embedded in quality assurance processes. The University's policies, procedures, and governance arrangements provide a robust framework for assuring that threshold academic standards are consistently met while supporting the quality of the student academic experience and continuous enhancement.

6. Collaborative provision

Information on the extent and nature of collaborative provision and plans for change (including work-based learning)

94 The University has five UK-based collaborative franchise, degree apprenticeship and consortium arrangements, including with the further education colleges Coleg Cambria and Gower College Swansea. While the review team found evidence that existing partnerships are operating effectively and delivering intended outcomes, it was clear that the University's strategic ambitions for the continued development of its collaborative partnership portfolio are centred on growth in international markets. For international provision, University staff confirmed in meetings that their intention is to move to a more strategic, proactive approach than previously. The review team heard that the intention is to refresh the Internationalisation Strategy, which ended in 2025, in line with a revised Institutional Strategy due to be published in 2026-27. The University has ambitious targets to increase the number of transnational education students from approximately 1,000 in 2025-26 to 5,500 by 2029-30, primarily through extending the volume of activity with existing collaborative partners, rather than growing their number of partners.

95 The University's register of collaborative partners shows 26 current collaborative partnerships across the world, including the UK, which includes eight institutions within the Texas Strategic Partnership. Additional strategic partnerships include University of Canberra, Munich University of Applied Sciences, Université Grenoble and Wuhan University. These arrangements span a variety of subject areas including engineering, business, science and medicine, and a range of partnership models. These include dual degree programmes in engineering and law, offered in collaboration with Trent University in Canada, and a Joint Education Institute with Nanjing Tech University, covering programmes in science, engineering and technology. There is also a collaboration with Uniciti for nursing and medicine in Mauritius. The University has plans to develop the relationship by establishing a School of Medicine.

Developments in the provider's approach to quality and standards

96 The review team identified that partnership provision had been considered as part of the wider changes to the University's governance structure. This includes the introduction of a new role of Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor International, to bridge strategy and implementation. Each Faculty has an Associate Dean for International, who leads the Faculty's international engagement and priorities, including collaborative provision, and chairs their Faculty Internationalisation Committee, which approves new transnational education provision and monitors performance. Oversight and management of risk registers and mitigation plans are operated within the Faculty, with professional services involvement. These documents are reviewed as part of the annual partnership review. A dedicated international pathway arrangement continues to be offered by SwanNGlobal Education, located on the University's Bay Campus. The review team viewed the revised governance structure positively, noting its contribution to strengthened oversight and recognising the effective partnership between faculties and professional services as a key factor in supporting institutional governance and decision-making.

97 The review team identified changes to the University's quality structures that strengthen and streamline provision. The newly formed University Partnerships Board, which reports into University Education Committee, now covers the full partnership lifecycle, from initial concept and due diligence to renewal or exit, and is intended to ensure proportionate oversight as the portfolio grows. A Partnerships Operations Group coordinates academic

and professional services support. The review team heard that this Group is developing new processes and approaches with new operating models and practical solutions for implementation and delivery, which it is anticipated will be embedded as 'business as usual'. There is a risk-based approach to oversight and management of collaborative partnerships, which is intended to be proportionate. For example, the review team heard that established, low-risk UK partnerships are increasingly operating via the University's Continuous Enhancement Monitoring process in common with University-based provision, while newer or higher risk collaborations retain annual and cyclical review until the University is confident that quality systems are fully embedded. The review team examined documentation from a range of collaborative partnerships and found evidence of a well-established, robust and comprehensive approach to the development and approval of collaborative provision.

98 The review team also considered the University's approach to reviewing its collaborative provision annually. The annual review, prepared by the Global Engagement team, assigns a risk rating based on governance, risk, delivery, return on investment and strategic alignment. The review team saw examples of online questionnaires with questions aligned across the three groups of stakeholders: supervisors (for PGR arrangements); programme directors and link tutors (for taught collaborations); and partnership managers (Global Engagement Team), which form the basis for the rating. The review team considered the risk-based approach to provide a robust framework for prioritising activity and ensuring that areas presenting the greatest risk receive appropriate attention and oversight.

99 The review team found that the University aims to move to a more standardised, consistent and scalable model for collaborative partnerships. At approval stage, support models are planned, with additional measures in place for partnerships for which the University is the awarding body, including joint and dual degrees. The review team reviewed partnership documentation confirming that Joint Management Boards, Joint Academic Boards and Joint Boards of Studies structures are put in place between the University and the collaborative partner and that these are operating effectively.

The use of quality processes to confirm continued effectiveness of provider's management of collaborative provision

100 The review team found that the University Partnerships Board offers effective oversight of collaborative provision, using market intelligence, internal performance data and in-country analysis for international proposals to prioritise subject areas and ensure robust business cases. Portfolio Management Board oversees the development and review of the home and international portfolio. Portfolio Approval and Enhancement Board also plays a key role in collaborative partnership approval, reviewing risk assessments and partner/country due diligence, and assessing the suitability of the partner to deliver the programme. While the annual review of collaborative provision focuses on governance and strategic considerations, programme delivery, student outcomes and the student experience are integrated within the University's core quality assurance and enhancement processes, ensuring that collaborative provision is subject to the same monitoring and evaluation arrangements as on-campus provision. The review team viewed the separation of commercial and academic oversight positively, as it promotes student-centred decision-making and ensures that collaborative partner student outcomes and experience are considered alongside those of on-campus students within a consistent quality enhancement framework.

101 University and collaborative partner staff confirmed that Joint Management and Academic Boards ensure a sense of ownership between both parties. The Boards are used to identify risks and address these at an early stage, ensure ongoing engagement (such as annual visits and regular meetings) and ensure compliance. The same external examiner is

appointed for collaborative provision as for corresponding on-campus provision to ensure consistency, and staff at collaborative partners confirmed that external examiner feedback is shared with collaborative partners and their response co-ordinated by the relevant link tutor. Support provision for students is mapped out with the partner at initial approval stage and detailed in the Operations Manual/Division of Responsibilities. The review team found this to be a detailed document, providing clarity on roles and responsibilities of the University and the collaborative partner.

A summary of the effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision including arrangements for securing academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience

102 Overall, the review team is confident that the University has robust and effective arrangements in place for oversight and monitoring of collaborative partnerships. The review team verified that signed collaboration agreements are in place for home and international partnerships. The review team saw comprehensive evidence of due diligence processes for these arrangements. Low-risk collaborative partnerships are moving towards continuous enhancement monitoring. New or high-risk partnerships are subject to an annual programme/partner review and cyclical quality review, linked to periodic review points. The review team was able to establish that there is clear oversight of partnerships by the University Partnerships Board, with an annual report prepared by the Global Engagement Team, setting out the health of each partnership on a risk-rating basis.

QAA3114 - R14836 - July 2026

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2026
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

+44 (0)1452 557 000
www.qaa.ac.uk