



University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

Institutional Review
by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

June 2012

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About this review

This is a report of a standard Institutional Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David (the University). Higher education provided through partnership agreements with other organisations (collaborative provision) has been reviewed alongside the University's main educational provision.

The review took place on 11-15 June 2012 and was conducted by a team of six reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Paul Brunt
- Professor Hastings McKenzie
- Professor Diane Meehan
- Dr Mark Rawlinson
- Ms Bethan Foweraker (student reviewer)
- Ms Hayley Burns (review secretary).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education (including collaborative provision) provided by the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. In this report the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - threshold academic standards¹
 - the quality of learning opportunities
- provides commentaries on public information and the theme (postgraduate research and enhancement)
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.² For background information about the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David see [Annex A](#). A dedicated page of the website explains the method for [Institutional Review of higher education institutions in Wales](#)³ and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents.

¹ For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/pages/default.aspx

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/institutional-review.aspx

Key findings

The QAA review team considered a large quantity of evidence relating to the educational provision at the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David, both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the visits of the review itself. The review has enabled the QAA review team to arrive at two judgements about the University.

QAA's judgements about the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David.

- **Confidence** can be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards.
- **Confidence** can be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following recommendations to the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David.

Advisable

The review team **advises** the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David to:

- ensure that programme approval processes include the requirement to present programme specifications in a clear and consistent format (paragraph 1.3.2)
- ensure compliance with the Academic Quality Handbook regarding timely feedback on assessment and the delivery of all distance learning programmes within the agreed framework and timescales (paragraphs 2.3.2 to 2.4.2)
- provide agreed and consistent sets of management information for the monitoring and review of programmes, and ensure this information is used consistently to facilitate meaningful and comparable analyses of student performance (paragraph 2.6.2)
- publish the collaborative register on the website by the start of the next academic year (paragraph 4.7.1).

Desirable

The review team considers it **desirable** for the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David to:

- ensure that external examiner reports are readily accessible to all students within the next academic year (paragraph 2.5.3)
- ensure a consistent process for the appointment, training and support of student representatives from non-traditional backgrounds (part-time, distance learning and postgraduate students) across all campuses (paragraph 3.1.2)
- review the effectiveness of learning resources and any implications for student learning (paragraphs 3.3.1 and 3.3.2)
- provide postgraduate research students with formal training prior to teaching and ensure all staff new to higher education teaching undertake an appropriate qualification (paragraphs 3.4.1 to 3.4.3).

Features of good practice

The QAA review team identified the following **features of good practice** at the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David.

- The Academic Quality Handbook is comprehensive, there is extensive involvement of staff in its development and updating, and changes are communicated annually during Staff Development Week (paragraphs 1.3.1 and 2.2.1).
- The University has made significant efforts to involve the student body in the development of the new institution (paragraph 3.2.1).
- There is a range of guidance documents tailored for specific student groups and they are comprehensive (paragraph 7.1).

Detailed findings about the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

This section explains the key findings of the review in more detail. It supplies sufficient evidence to support and clarify the review team's judgements, statements and recommendations.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief [glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary](#)⁴ is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.⁵

1 Academic Management Framework

1.1 Committee and managerial structure

1.1.1 The University's committee structure was introduced in September 2009, prior to completion of the merger, through the integration of the committee structures of Trinity University College, Carmarthen and the University of Wales, Lampeter. The University's senior academic committee is Senate, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, reports to Council and has overall responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

1.1.2 Senate has a large number of standing committees, including the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC); Faculty Boards; Research Committee; Research Degrees Committee; Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee; Information Services and Resources Committee; Collaborative Provision Committee; Student Services Committee; and Staff Development Committee.

1.1.3 QAC, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), is charged with leading the continuous development and refinement of the University's academic regulatory framework and for monitoring its consistent implementation across the University. It is responsible for assuring the academic standards of awards and for monitoring the implementation of quality assurance systems across faculties.

1.1.4 The University has three faculties: Arts and Social Studies, Education and Training, and Humanities. Each of the Faculty Boards, chaired by the Dean of Faculty, has responsibility for developing and implementing the faculty's Strategic Plan and for ensuring that the faculty engages appropriately with the University's academic regulations and quality assurance framework.

1.1.5 Each school has a School Board, reporting to the relevant Faculty Board, charged with evaluating and monitoring the management, content, delivery, assessment and resources relating to the school's academic provision.

1.1.6 Executive responsibilities are clearly defined and understood, with the University's Senior Management team (comprising the Vice-Chancellor, pro vice-chancellors, deans, and Directors of Student Services, Human Resources and Knowledge and Information) being responsible for supporting the Vice-Chancellor in the management of the University.

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary/pages/default.aspx

⁵ See note 3.

1.1.7 At faculty level, deans are responsible for the monitoring of quality and standards and are also expected to lead on the quality enhancement agenda. The Quality Assurance Unit, led by the Quality Assurance and Academic Planning Manager, provides central support to the faculties for many of the University's quality assurance processes, including approval and review. The University has recently appointed a new Dean of Quality and Enhancement, thereby extending its capacity in this area for the future.

1.1.8 The University's policies and procedures are contained within its comprehensive Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) and appendices. The AQH takes full account of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

1.2 Programme approval, monitoring and review

1.2.1 The review team found that overall the procedures in place for approval, monitoring and review were robust. Subsequent to the establishment of the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David in 2010, an intensive schedule of validation events was arranged in order to address recommendations made in the University of Wales, Lampeter Institutional Review report of October 2007. As a consequence of the planned merger with Swansea Metropolitan University (SMU) and the creation of the dual-sector University, this intensive schedule also included the validation of programmes operated by partner further education colleges, some of which were in academic areas of which the University had no expertise. In light of the forthcoming merger, a curricular integration and validation working group was established in September 2010 and the University used SMU staff expertise to assist in the process of revalidation and programme coordination. As an additional quality measure, the programmes were only approved for a term of two years to enable their subsequent integration into the relevant subject area in the new University, to be managed post-merger with SMU. The review team also noted that these programmes include Edexcel HNC and HND provision delivered by Coleg Sir Gâr and Pembrokeshire College. As the University does not hold an Edexcel licence, the programmes are now delivered in collaboration with SMU under its licence. Although these arrangements were unusual, the team concluded that the University has taken a pragmatic approach to the development of the programmes and appropriate mechanisms had been put in place to ensure that the standards of this provision could be adequately maintained.

1.2.2 The intensive schedule also highlighted that a restricted pool of senior staff chaired many of the final validation panels and that the chair of QAC, to whom the panel reports, was one of these staff. In response to this increase in approval activity, a Validation and Audit Standing Panel was established with a section of their remit aimed at recruiting and developing more panel chairs. The University acknowledged that including the chair of QAC in this pool could result in a potential conflict of interest in light of QAC's role in recommending reports to Senate, although the review team observed that nothing in the conduct of the panels or the consideration of panel reports at QAC indicated this to be the case.

1.2.3 The team found the stated process of annual review to be thorough, although a University management decision to temporarily cease the provision of agreed data sets for the annual monitoring process led to inconsistent management information in its 2009-10 and 2010-11 reporting cycles (see also paragraph 2.6.1). From 2011-12 the University's annual review process requires three years of historical programme data to be considered for discussion and analysis, and the team was informed and subsequently able to confirm that appropriate reporting mechanisms were now in place for this data to be provided centrally by the Quality Assurance Unit (see also paragraph 2.6.1).

1.3 Academic Infrastructure

1.3.1 The AQH is aligned with the expectations of the Quality Code and is updated on an annual basis with input from various working groups. The revised document is discussed and approved at QAC, informed by concerns or recommendations raised by schools and faculties, and disseminated to all staff during the annual Staff Development Week prior to the commencement of the new academic year (see also paragraph 2.2.1).

1.3.2 The team reviewed a range of programme specifications and observed that while it was evident that programme specifications were always made available during programme approval processes, as stipulated in the AQH, the published documents lacked consistency in presentation and content. It was not evident to the team that an agreed University programme specification template existed. The review team concluded that it is **advisable** that the University ensure that programme approval processes include the requirement to present programme specifications in a clear and consistent format.

1.4 Conclusion

1.4.1 The review team found that the University was operating with appropriate regard for the Quality Code and formed the view that **confidence** can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards. However, the review team draws the University's attention to the recommendation regarding the development of programme specifications in a clear and consistent manner.

2 Academic standards

2.1 Effectiveness of institutional procedures for securing the standards of awards

2.1.1 Appropriate and robust arrangements are in place to ensure effective external involvement in the University's internal review processes. Final validation panels require two external members, and care is taken to ensure adequate representation from Welsh speakers as necessary. Both quinquennial review - the University's process for reapproving programmes of study - and school audit also involve a minimum of two external panel members, and it is an expectation for externals to provide written commentaries in advance of the panel meetings. The team concluded that external participation in internal review is conducted in accordance with the AQH, meets the Expectations of the Quality Code, and makes a positive contribution to the University's management of standards.

2.1.2 The University has historically had limited engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and accrediting bodies, but this is now beginning to change as the University moves towards merger with SMU and developments with further education partners through the dual-sector university framework. The University acknowledged that it would benefit from strengthening its ability to capture issues surrounding PSRB engagement.

2.2 The Academic Quality Handbook

2.2.1 Considerable work was undertaken following the merger to develop a cross-institutional set of regulations, which constitute the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH). The review team considered that QAC is proactive in regularly reviewing the regulatory framework, noting in particular the various working groups that are established to consider the annexes. Staff are then informed of changes during the September Staff Development Week, which is an event recognised by staff as the key vehicle for the dissemination of revisions to the regulatory framework and for the enhancement of academic practice.

Benefits identified included the opportunities to receive information about institutional strategy and policy, to share good practice through workshop themes, and to work in school teams on enhancements to provision. The review team considers the comprehensive AQH, the extensive involvement of staff in its development and updating, and the annual communication of changes during Staff Development Week to be a **feature of good practice** (see also paragraph 1.3.1).

2.3 Assessment

2.3.1 The assessment policies, regulations and procedures that govern the University's awards are published in the AQH. The regulations have been mapped against the Quality Code. They are also clearly referenced against the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and reflect the requirements of the small number of PSRBs with whom the University interacts. Students are directed to the regulations via student handbooks. The regulations are monitored by QAC to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose and QAC regularly advises Senate on recommended changes.

2.3.2 Information and guidance for assessments is provided to students in module guides and handbooks. The University's policy on feedback to students states that students should be given guidance on the expected timeframe for providing feedback and that normally work will be given back within a maximum of five weeks from the date of submission. However, while the University had mechanisms in place for monitoring the timeliness of feedback to students on assessed work, the review team found that not all staff were consistently meeting the University's expectations.

2.4 Distance learning

2.4.1 The University acknowledged challenges with distance learning provision, which it had sought to address in the two years following merger. A number of regulatory changes were made in the interim and a Distance Learning Working Group produced a new framework for distance learning provision which was introduced in 2011-12. The review team noted the development of the framework but were concerned that the extensive revalidation of existing distance learning provision also undertaken in 2011-12 did not stipulate compliance with that framework. The University advised that staff managing existing programmes needed a year to make appropriate plans for enhancement, but the team queried the value of undertaking such a large distance learning validation exercise and not applying a framework which had been introduced in the same year specifically for provision of that nature. The review team also found evidence that the framework was not applied to the validation of a new distance learning programme because it consisted largely of existing modules. This rationale was contrary to the regulations published in the 2011-12 AQH.

2.4.2 The review team considers it **advisable** that the University ensures compliance with the AQH regarding timely feedback on assessment and the delivery of all distance learning programmes within the agreed framework and timescales.

2.5 External examining

2.5.1 The University's scrupulous use of external examiners ensures that the academic standards of both its research and taught programmes are maintained at the appropriate levels.

2.5.2 The AQH sets out comprehensively the procedures for the appointment, induction and roles of external examiners for all taught and research programmes. External examiners are provided with an appropriate induction and relevant documentation, and are routinely invited to attend the University in advance of examination boards to meet staff and students.

Arrangements for reviewing external examiner reports are sound. The management of the University's external examiner system aligns with relevant sections of the Quality Code.

2.5.3 The review team found that staff and students were not specifically aware of the existence and/or location of external examiners' reports, and evidence of systematic, formal feedback to students on issues raised in the reports was not apparent. Different practices existed between schools in terms of how reports and responses were made available to students. Reviewers were informed of the intention to develop an intranet site to enable the wider dissemination of external examiner reports to all students, and determined that it would be **desirable** for the University to ensure that external examiner reports were readily accessible to all students within the next academic year.

2.6 Management information

2.6.1 The review team was informed that post-merger, the University undertook an intensive and complex Management Information System integration project which led to problems with access to meaningful and accurate student information. As a result of legacy data issues, a number of satellite databases had been created to store management information and there was therefore no single source of student information from which to make comparisons about performance. Consequently, a management decision was made to run the annual review for 2009-10 and 2010-11 without the provision of data centrally from the Quality Assurance Unit. This resulted in inconsistent treatment and presentation of management information in both annual review and quinquennial review, with staff providing limited commentary and reflection on the standards achieved by students. Where schools commented at all on data, their focuses were different - making analysis at an institutional level difficult. However, for the annual review of 2011-12 the Quality Assurance Unit plan to provide consistent data sets, and schools will be able to run individual reports as required for their own purposes.

2.6.2 While the team were content that the University had made significant efforts post-merger to improve the quality of management information and reporting tools, it was evident that over the past two academic years the decision to withhold the provision of consistent data sets for use in its review processes may have limited the University's ability to assure the academic standards of its programmes and awards. The team concluded that it is **advisable** that the University provide agreed and consistent sets of management information for the monitoring and review of programmes, and that it ensure this information is used consistently to facilitate meaningful and comparable analyses of student performance.

2.7 Conclusion

2.7.1 The review team found that the University was operating with appropriate regard for the Quality Code, and formed the view that **confidence** can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards. However, the University should address the issues raised about distance learning, external examiners' reports and management information.

3 Quality of learning opportunities

3.1 Student representation and the role of students in quality assurance

3.1.1 The University offers students the opportunity to participate in all relevant committees and quality mechanisms - such as annual review, validation and quinquennial review - and the review team was able to confirm that students felt well prepared for their involvement in such activities.

3.1.2 The University has also invested in mechanisms for improving the student representation system, a recent example of which was the provision of funding to the Students' Union to appoint a Student Representation Coordinator who could assist in timely organisation of elections and training sessions. All student representatives are elected and there are a number from non-traditional backgrounds, including part-time students and distance learners. While the review team could confirm that mechanisms in place for the majority of student representatives were appropriate and effective, there was evidence of differences in student representation for both students from non-traditional backgrounds and those from the London campus. For example, some student representatives had not been aware of training opportunities for their roles. The team consider it **desirable** that the University ensure a consistent process for the appointment, training and support for student representatives from non-traditional backgrounds (part-time, distance learning and postgraduate students) across all campuses.

3.2 Effectiveness of institutional procedures for communication with students

3.2.1 The University has undergone significant change through the process of merger. The review team was able to confirm that during that process students did not feel disadvantaged or overlooked. Improvements in the student representation system, the role of groups such as the Student Forum and staff-student liaison committees, and regular meetings between the Students' Union and senior management team, all assisted in communicating the nature of change to students and seeking their views on development. The review team found the efforts the University has made to involve the student body in the development of the new institution to be a **feature of good practice**.

3.3 Resources for learning

3.3.1 National Student Survey figures for the previous academic year suggest that the institution has had some success in addressing the resourcing of student learning, but that substantial issues remain. The review team found that there was evidence that the institution has structures to identify and communicate resource needs, but it is not clear that actions are completed and fed back as a result.

3.3.2 The institution has made a strategic decision to place less reliance on printed material in order to increase efficiency, effectiveness and equity in the delivery of resources for learning. This approach makes the quality of the student learning experience even more dependent on perceived access to IT facilities, as well as on the levels of service which academics understand the institution to provide. The review team found that there was a disparity in perception of appropriateness and availability of learning resources between the University and its students, and considered it **desirable** for the University to review the effectiveness of learning resources and any implications for student learning.

3.4 Quality of teaching

3.4.1 The review team found the arrangements for the appointment, probation and appraisal of staff to be robust, noting the effectiveness of the appraisal system in staff development planning and providing evidence for meeting the criteria required for promotion. The University utilises activity profiles to ensure a balance of academic and administrative duties for staff, and the review team was able to confirm the value placed on these. The University strongly encourages teaching staff new to higher education to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education, but this is not compulsory and no formal requirements exist for staff to undertake qualifications of this nature. The review team felt that the University was not in line with the expectations of the higher education sector, for

example alignment with the Higher Education Academy's Professional Standards Framework.

3.4.2 The University also offers postgraduate research students the opportunity to teach, with a number of mechanisms available to aid them, including enhanced moderation, additional teaching observations, mentoring by academic staff and access to teacher training qualifications. However, the review team found arrangements to be implemented inconsistently.

3.4.3 The review team considers it **desirable** that the University provide postgraduate research students with formal training prior to teaching and ensure all staff new to higher education teaching undertake an appropriate qualification.

3.5 Conclusion

3.5.1 The review team concluded that **confidence** can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the quality of learning opportunities available to students. However, the University should address the issues raised about student representation, the availability of learning resources, and formal training for postgraduate research students and staff new to higher education.

4 Collaborative arrangements

4.1 The University currently has a small number of active partnerships, including partnerships with the further education colleges within the dual-sector university arrangement and articulation agreements with two Chinese university partners. At the time of the review, the University was in the process of closing or had closed the majority of its inherited collaborative partnerships, many of which had been set up through the School of Theology, Religious and Islamic Studies within the University of Wales, Lampeter.

4.2 Oversight of the University's collaborative arrangements is through the Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC) and the Further Education Partnership Management Committee (FEPMC). The CPC has responsibility for providing advice and guidance to Senate on all issues relating to the University's collaborative provision. The FEPMC, reporting to QAC, is responsible for securing appropriate oversight and operational management of the provision offered through Coleg Sir Gâr and Pembrokeshire College (the dual-sector university arrangements) and includes representation from the partner colleges and Swansea Metropolitan University, reflecting its arrangements for oversight of these programmes. The review team concluded that both committees are discharging their responsibilities diligently and in accordance with their terms of reference.

4.3 The review team considered the University's procedures relating to collaborative partnerships, which are published in the AQH, and was able to establish that the procedures relating to collaborative provision are largely those used for the University's on-campus programmes, supplemented by additional procedures such as those for setting up and subsequently reviewing a partnership.

4.4 Approval and closure of partners

4.4.1 The review team noted from the AQH that the University has in place a comprehensive approach to setting up partnerships which involves initial screening, a feasibility study, a due diligence investigation, approval of a Memorandum of Agreement, and programme approval.

4.4.2 The review team was able to confirm that the Memoranda of Agreement (MoAs), which govern the University's partnerships and which define the means by which the

academic standards of the provision and the quality of the student experience will be maintained, were comprehensive and set out clearly the responsibilities of both the University and the partner. The University also utilises MoAs to govern the arrangements for partnerships being closed, and the review team concluded that these 'exit' MoAs, which clearly aim to safeguard standards and support students to complete their studies - whether through the University or another provider - are contributing to the University's effective management of this extensive task.

4.5 Partnership review

4.5.1 Collaborative provision review is the process by which the University critically evaluates the management of its collaborative partnerships and the quality and standards of the provision. Each collaborative partnership is reviewed at least once every three years and the review contributes to the decision as to whether the partnership agreement is renewed. The review team was able to confirm that procedures for managing this process were robust and evidence-based.

4.5.2 Following a decision to close one of its partnerships, the University has very recently set up its own London campus, and where possible - and in keeping with both University and UK Border Agency requirements - students have been transferred from the partner to the London campus. The review team learned that the London campus is now a permanent part of the University aimed at international students. The campus is effectively part of the University's School of Business, with the University having full control of programme delivery and the appointment of staff. Some non-academic services are offered through a third party, for which there is a legal agreement. At the time of the review, the campus had been in operation for a short time and hence it is too soon to comment fully on the arrangements. However, students who met with the review team generally commented positively on their experience of being transferred from the private partner to the University's new campus.

4.5.3 The review team further considered the University's approach to the closure of partnerships, as the University has undertaken an extensive closure task of 51 partnerships. The University noted that the scale of the action required has necessitated management action outside of the formal committee structure, with progress being reported to the CPC and Senate. The University provided the team with extensive documentation relating to the closure of its partnerships, which demonstrated that the University's arrangements for closure, while being pragmatic, are robust and being managed effectively.

4.6 Future approach to managing partnerships

4.6.1 The review team noted that the University has been developing a new set of procedures relating to the development and oversight of collaborative partnerships. While at the time of the review these were still in draft form, the review team would encourage the University in this development.

4.7 Collaborative register

4.7.1 The University has a collaborative register, which it currently does not publish on its website. The review team formed the view that, in line with the expectations of its own AQH and of *Chapter B10: Management of collaborative arrangements* of the Quality Code, it is **advisable** that the University publish its collaborative register on the website by the start of the next academic year as part of its publicly available information.

4.8 Conclusion

4.8.1 The review team found that, overall, the University has a sound framework for its collaborative arrangements and that it operates with appropriate regard for the Quality Code. However, the team draws the University's attention to the recommendation made regarding the publication of its collaborative register.

5 Quality enhancement

5.1 The review team found that the University has taken a number of deliberate steps to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities since the previous QAA Institutional Reviews. The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee reports directly to Senate and has strategic oversight of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy, which provides the framework within which quality enhancement is set. The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy is congruent with the institution's Strategic Plan and other strategic plans at institutional, school and department levels. The Strategy has five enhancement themes through which a systematic approach to improving the quality of the student experience is managed. These are: a focus on the student voice; the availability of a responsive and flexible curriculum; the emphasis on high-quality teaching, research and scholarly activity; the provision of sector-leading Welsh-medium and bilingual learning opportunities; and the enhancement of students' employability.

Conclusion

5.2 The review team saw a number of examples evidencing the University's strategic approach to enhancement and found that this approach was informed by clear strategic direction, was leading to systematic improvements in learning opportunities, and contributed to the maintenance of academic standards.

6 Arrangements for postgraduate students

6.1 Following the merger, the University has been able to award research degrees on both campuses but has made a strategic decision to close research degree programmes delivered through collaborative partnerships by December 2012. The University currently has 230 postgraduate research students studying within the institution or at distance, more than half of whom are linked to the School of Theology, Religious and Islamic Studies.

6.2 The research degree regulations operate within the overarching regulations of the University and are set out in the AQH and the Postgraduate Research Students' Guide. The University's policies have been developed in line with *Chapter B11: Research degrees* of the Quality Code and are clear about entry qualifications, admission, induction and arrangements for monitoring and supervision. Reporting mechanisms, together with the annual monitoring and evaluation process, ensure that the University has clear oversight of its research degree students. The review team found that, overall, the University provides appropriate guidance and support to enable postgraduate research students to complete their programmes and to enable staff involved in research programmes to fulfil their responsibilities.

6.3 The review team found that there was an overall sense of community among postgraduate research students at both the Carmarthen and Lampeter campuses, evidenced by the organisation of a series of events for early career researchers and postgraduate research students and a four-day Graduate Summer School.

6.4 The University had identified supervisory workloads as a potential issue arising from QAA's Institutional Review of University of Wales, Lampeter in 2007, and subsequently took

steps to ensure that the number of supervisions by an individual should not exceed the maximum permitted by ensuring that this is monitored by the Research Degrees Committee. At the time of writing, there were a small number of supervisors with a workload exceeding five supervisions, but no more would be permitted. The University confirmed that supervision would continue to be included in the academic workload allocation model. The review team found these arrangements to be appropriate.

Conclusion

6.5 Overall, the review team found that the University has a sound framework for its arrangements for postgraduate students. The relevant policies and procedures are clearly defined in the AQH and associated documentation. The research environment and postgraduate research experience meet fully the Expectation of *Chapter B11* of the Quality Code.

7 Public information

7.1 The review team found that the University has effective procedures in place to check the accuracy of published information. All students receive programme of study handbooks and undergo an induction week where key policies and information are highlighted. In addition, the review team concluded that the comprehensiveness and the range of guidance documentation tailored for specific student groups was a **feature of good practice**.

7.2 The review team noted that while most students found the information helpful and accurate, there were issues with the websites for both Welsh-medium students and students based at the London campus. For the former, there appeared to be some examples of inconsistencies between the Welsh and English sites. For the latter, the information made available appeared to be more limited in comparison to the main website. However, this is a relatively new initiative and the University described a number of developments to address this.

7.3 The University is a leading higher education provider of Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, and currently has the highest number of students studying all or part their programmes through the medium of Welsh. The review team was able to confirm that, overall, students and staff were satisfied with the level and content of information provided through the medium of Welsh.

Conclusion

7.4 Overall, the review team found that the information published by the University is accurate, comprehensive and reliable. The University has a published Welsh Language Scheme and complies with the *Welsh Language Act 1993*.

Annex A: About the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

The University of Wales: Trinity Saint David (the University) was established in November 2010 through the merger of the University of Wales, Lampeter (UWL) and Trinity University College, Carmarthen (TUCC). UWL had itself been founded in 1822 by Bishop Burgess as St David's College, and remained an independent institution awarding its own degrees until it joined the federal University of Wales (UoW) in 1972. It adopted the title of UWL in 1996. TUCC was founded in 1848 under the name Trinity College, Carmarthen, becoming an Associated Institution of UoW in 1990 and a Member Institution of UoW in 2005. Following a successful application for taught degree awarding powers in 2009, it became TUCC.

The University has placed its taught and research degree-awarding powers in abeyance and offers the degrees of UoW. Under arrangements introduced by UoW in 2005, a number of key areas relating to quality and standards have been devolved to the University, including external examiners, programme approval, award regulations, unfair practice, and complaints and appeals.

In 2011, in response to the Welsh Government's Regional Policy, the councils of UoW, the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David and Swansea Metropolitan University resolved to merge and agreed that this merger would take place through the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David's 1828 Royal Charter. It has been resolved that the University of Wales will merge into the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David. This merger will take place after the University of Wales has fulfilled its legal obligations to students on the University of Wales' current validation schemes.

Academic provision at the University is managed through 12 schools, grouped into three faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Social Studies, the Faculty of Education and Training, and the Faculty of Humanities. The University operates on three main campuses: Carmarthen, Lampeter and London - a new campus which was opened in March 2012.

Mission statement

The University's mission is 'Excellence in Education - delivered with distinction in Wales for the benefit of the wider world'. The mission reflects the importance the University places on developing itself as an educational hub for innovation and change in South West Wales. The University is also leading on the development of a dual-sector university for the delivery of post-16 education, which will create a new educational group infrastructure offering a range of meaningful educational pathways, enhancing student choice and furthering joint educational provision.

Student profile

In 2011-12 the University had around 5,350 student enrolments and 1,115 students on partnerships. The student profile is characterised by a large percentage of part-time students, many of whom undertake programmes by distance learning.

Collaborative provision

The University currently has a small number of active partnerships, including partnerships with the further education colleges within the dual-sector university arrangement (Coleg Sir Gâr and Pembrokeshire College) and articulation agreements with two Chinese university partners.

Annex B: Response from the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David

The University of Wales: Trinity Saint David welcomes the report of the QAA's Institutional Review in June 2012 which covers the academic programmes offered by the University and by its collaborative partner institutions. The University welcomes in particular the review team's judgement of confidence in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the academic standards of awards and the quality of learning opportunities for students. Actions to address the review team's recommendations will be taken forward shortly or are already in progress.

We are pleased that the review team identified a number of features of good practice and consider that this attests to the commitment of staff and students, particularly given the short period of time that has elapsed since the University's formation following the merger of Trinity University College, Carmarthen and the University of Wales, Lampeter.

Participation in the review was particularly valuable and timely, providing the opportunity for institution-wide reflection as the University prepares for further merger with Swansea Metropolitan University. We would like to thank the review team for the positive and constructive manner with which the review was conducted.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Many terms also have formal 'operational definitions'. More information can be found in the *Institutional Review (Wales) Handbook*, available on our website at: www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/Pages/Institutional-review.aspx.

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

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

Academic Infrastructure Guidance developed and agreed by the higher education community and published by QAA, which is used by institutions to ensure that their courses meet national expectations for academic standards and that students have access to a suitable environment for learning (academic quality). It consists of four groups of reference points: the **frameworks for higher education qualifications**, the **subject benchmark statements**, the **programme specifications** and the **Code of practice**. Work is underway (2011-12) to revise the Academic Infrastructure as the UK **Quality Code** for Higher Education.

academic management framework The structure in place at an institution for managing academic standards and quality.

academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

assessment criteria The knowledge, understanding and skills that markers expect a student to display in an assessment task, and which are taken into account in marking the work. These criteria are based on the intended **learning outcomes**.

assessment regulations The rules governing assessment of a programme of study, including the marking scheme, the pass mark, the requirements for progression to subsequent levels or stages of a programme, and the award and classification requirements (for instance credits to be achieved and specific marks to be attained).

Code of practice The *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

collaborative provision A term to describe how institutions work together to provide higher education, including learning opportunities, student support and assessment, resulting in a qualification from one or more awarding institutions.

confidence judgement A judgement by a QAA review team in Institutional Review that 'confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of an institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and/or of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students' (two separate judgements for standards and learning opportunities). Alternatively, the team might express 'limited confidence' or 'no

confidence' in these issues.

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

distance learning A course or unit of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.

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

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established **academic standards** and to look at approaches to assessment.

external examining The process by which one or more independent experts (**external examiners**) comment on student achievement in relation to established **academic standards** and on the institution's approach to assessment, thus helping to ensure consistent standards and fair assessment procedures across the UK.

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

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

good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to an institution's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision, which may be seen as exemplary to others. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Institutional Review A method of review used by QAA to assure the standards and quality of higher education. In this publication it denotes the quality assurance process applicable to Welsh institutions.

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned **programmes of study**, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

learning support Personal support and other facilities and systems that are put in place to assist students in their learning.

moderation A process intended to assure that an assessment outcome is fair and reliable and that assessment criteria have been applied consistently.

module A self-contained, formally structured unit of study, with a coherent and explicit set of **learning outcomes** and **assessment criteria**. Some institutions use the word 'course' to refer to individual modules.

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

professional, statutory and regulatory bodies Organisations that set the benchmark standards for, and regulate the standards of entry into, particular profession(s) and are authorised to accredit, approve or recognise specific programmes leading to the relevant professional qualification(s) - for which they may have a statutory or regulatory responsibility.

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

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

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

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is being developed from 2011 to replace the **Academic Infrastructure** and will incorporate all its key elements, along with additional topics and overarching themes.

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

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

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

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The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

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