



Annual Quality Report 2022/23

Executive Summary

December 2023

For the full version of the Annual Quality Report please email quality@cardiff.ac.uk

Quality and Standards Team
Education Governance
Academic and Student Support Services
Cardiff University

Summary

The Annual Quality Report (AQR) provides an overview of the University's academic quality system and its operation, including actions taken to ensure its continuous enhancement, and its alignment with external reference points. The report also highlights significant institutional changes relating to academic quality during the 2022/23 academic year.

The primary purpose of the Academic Quality Report is to provide both Senate and Council with assurances on academic standards and the quality of the student experience as evidenced by the outcomes of the annual quality system. The report includes the academic standards and quality risks with detail on their mitigation.

The report confirms that:

- the University continues to align with and satisfy external requirements.
- the standards of awards are appropriately set and maintained.
- the University is taking positive steps to address concerns regarding the student experience by:
 - oversight of actions being taken in response to student feedback; and
 - progressing the delivery of projects to enhance the student experience.
- the University can submit its annual assurance statements relating to academic quality and standards to HEFCW.

The report recognises that in terms of the student experience, Cardiff's NSS performance is disappointing and significantly below the sector in many areas. The University is updating its actions plans to take account of the latest NSS results and will be monitoring progress against the plans using its agreed framework for monitoring student feedback from student surveys.

There is significant further progress to be made to ensuring an educationally outstanding and consistently high-quality student experience for all. The Academic Quality Report is a companion document to the Annual Enhancement Report. The Annual Enhancement Report evaluates the progress in implementing the [education and students sub-strategy](#) and the activities being pursued to enhance the student experience.

Section 1: The Academic Assurance Framework

1.1 Academic standards and quality risks

The assessment of risk at the end of each section of the report details the risk factors, the current position, and mitigating actions which allows Council to be able to confidently submit its annual assurance statements to HEFCW. The University risk relating to the standards and quality is:

Risk	Quality of Education - The standard and quality of education does not meet stakeholder needs or expectations			
Risk Score	Gross Risk Score	25	Net Risk Score	20

The overall risk score is currently high as the risk that the quality of provision is considered inadequate by stakeholders has increased, as shown in the below table, due to the disappointing NSS results and the consequent regulatory oversight by HEFCW. It is a high priority to address student feedback and to make significant improvement to the student experience which will lead to a lower the institutional risk.

Each section in the report details a net risk score and the mitigating actions being taken for each area of the academic quality system which are summarised in the below table.

Risk	AQR Section	Net Risk Score	Change
The University does not satisfy: the frameworks for higher education qualifications; the expectations, core, and common practices of the UK Quality Code; the standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015.	Section 3: External Reference Points	5	=
The standards of awards are not appropriately set and maintained	Section 4: Academic Standards	10	=
The Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic awarding gap is not eradicated	Section 4: Academic Standards	12	=
Serious concerns raised about the standards of academic integrity	Section 4: Academic Standards	8	=
Educational partnerships do not provide students with a high-quality educational experience	Section 5: Education Provision	12	=
The quality of provision is considered inadequate by stakeholders	Section 6: Student Experience	20	↑

1.2 Academic Assurance Framework

The academic assurance framework confirms the method and evidential base used for the provision of the annual assurance statements on academic quality and standards which Council is required to submit to HEFCW. The academic assurance framework included in the Annual Quality Report 2021/22 was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2023.

The academic assurance framework has been updated to reflect the content of the 2022/23 annual quality report.

HEFCW Assurance Statement		AQR Section	Sources of Evidence	Comments/Issues Identified
1.	The governing body has received a report taking account of the external quality assurance review and an action plan has been put in place and implemented as appropriate, in partnership with the student body.	Section 3: External Reference Points	<p>Council has received the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) reports – the external quality assurance review – and approved the QER action plan.</p> <p>ASQC has confirmed (November 2022) that all actions included in the QER action plan have been completed. The action plan is closed (see Section 3.3).</p>	
2.	The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate.	Section 5: Education Provision	<p>The University meets the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) Part 1 for internal quality assurance, and the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, including the requirements of the UK Quality Code as confirmed by QER 2020.</p> <p>The University's regulations and policies are subject to regular scrutiny to ensure that they remain appropriate and continue to align with external reference points.</p>	<p>Enhanced data reporting is available for use by schools and Colleges for the Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process.</p> <p>Briefing sessions on updates to regulations, including the use of the University Quality and Standards Network has improved the dissemination information.</p> <p>A number of issues relating to education partnership arrangements have been</p>

			<p>The schedule of regulation and policy review is overseen by ASQC.</p> <p>The Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process ensures that schools review data to inform the development of school action plans and Colleges report to ASQC on the levels of confidence that plans will address identified issues.</p> <p>Institutional Expectations for the structure, design, and delivery of programmes continue to provide a baseline for all programmes and are used by the Programme and Revalidation Sub-Committee when revalidating programmes.</p> <p>The Education Partnerships Sub-committee established in 2022/23 strengthens the oversight and support for the effective institutional management of the education provision delivered via academic partnerships. The Sub-committee reviewed a wide range of credit bearing education partnerships in 2022/23, reporting directly to ASQC.</p>	<p>identified in 2022/23 (paragraph 5.3). Action was taken to address specific issues raised and to strengthen arrangements to be operated in future with oversight provided by the Education Partnership Sub-committee.</p> <p>The Education Partnerships Sub-committee will oversee the development and implementation of an Educational Partnership Policy which will enhance and replace the following existing policies: Study Abroad; Placement Learning; and Collaborative Provision.</p> <p>Significant improvement in the timely confirmation of programme information for 2023/24 which is evidence of the effectiveness of the revised process implemented as a result of collaborative work across teams – central professional services, colleges, and schools – supported by the Student and Programme Data Futures project.</p>
		<p>Section 6: Student Experience</p>	<p>Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC) reports to Senate, on all matters relating to education and the student experience.</p> <p>Council, at its meeting in November 2021, approved a three-year business case which prioritised activities from the Education and Students Sub-Strategy. A Portfolio Board is providing oversight of</p>	<p>NSS outcomes for 2023 were disappointing resulting in increased regulatory oversight from HEFCW. The Education Performance Oversight Group has scrutinised student experience survey data (NSS, PTES, PRES) and school/subject action plans for submission to HEFCW in accordance with an agreed framework.</p>

			<p>the implementation and progress reported to the Education and Student Experience Committee. Progress updates provided in the Annual Enhancement Report.</p> <p>Education Performance Oversight Group scrutinises student experience survey data (NSS, PTES, PRES) and school/subject action plans in accordance with an agreed framework.</p> <p>The Student View report from the Students' Union provides an additional source of student feedback, identifying key themes and issues that the Students' Union considers could be improved or introduced to benefit the student experience. ESEC scrutinises the University's response to the Student View and track the progress of agreed actions.</p>	<p>Measures of success, to assess progress in implementing the three-year business case to implement the education and student sub-strategy, have started to be regularly reviewed by the ESEC.</p> <p>A Mark Processing Project has been approved and resourced to address identified concerns about errors in student transcripts or assessment marks given to students.</p> <p>Impact of the marking and assessment boycott has resulted in a delay to the confirmation of progression outcomes and conferment of awards to some students. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of student complaints (c900 complaints relating to industrial action which is anticipated to increase when students receive final transcripts). Additional resource has been made available to respond to these complaints but there is a risk that not all students will receive a timely response.</p>
3.	The standards of awards for which we are responsible are appropriately set and maintained.	Section 4: Academic Standards	<p>Universities in England and Wales are to publish a statement as a commitment to protect the value of UK degrees, and to transparent, consistent, and fair academic standards. The University has published its degree outcome statement, approved by Council. An update will be published in 2023/24.</p> <p>The University reviews its degree outcomes and provides an update on matters identified in its Annual Quality</p>	<p>The University, along with other universities, introduced a safety net to support the principle that no student should be disadvantaged during the period of disruption arising from the pandemic. The safety net was the main reason for the increase in the proportion of 1st class degrees in 2019/20 and 2020/21. Universities UK has indicated that the use of safety nets was the main reason for an increase in the proportion of 1st class degrees across the sector,</p>

			<p>Report (AQR), including the reviews undertaken by schools via the Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process.</p> <p>Feedback received from external examiners provide significant assurance regarding the academic standards of awards and the degree outcomes profile remains aligned with the UK sector. ASQC receives an annual report on the themes identified from external examiners report and, if appropriate, actions to be taken are confirmed.</p> <p>The University's degree algorithms have been reviewed and are aligned with the UK sector Principles for Effective Algorithm Design.</p>	<p>however, the increase at the University was more modest than that for the sector.</p> <p>The proportion of 1st class degrees in 2021/22 has fallen to 29% whereas the sector remains above pre-pandemic level.</p> <p>There is a considerable gap between the good degree outcomes (1st and 2-1) of UK Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic students and UK white students. The University is analysing the data to better understand this gap and has agreed that actions being taken through its Inclusive Education project will contribute towards eliminating the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic awarding gap.</p> <p>Data on degree outcomes will be reviewed by end of 2023 and will be used to inform an updated degree outcomes statement, to be considered and approved by Senate and Council, for publication in 2023/24.</p> <p>Assurances regarding the academic standards of awards conferred in 2022/23 have been received via Examining Boards and external examiner reports. No concerns were raised by the external examiners or the Examining Boards regarding the academic standards of awards.</p>
4.	The governing body has considered a report on the	Section 6: Student Experience	The Student View report from the Students' Union, outlining key themes and issues that the Students' Union considers could be improved or introduced to benefit	

	annual dialogue between the institution and the Students' Union, scrutinised student survey outcomes and confirmed that action plans have been put in place and implemented, in partnership with the student body.		<p>the student experience is considered by Council along with the University's response. ESEC scrutinises the University's response to the Student View and track the progress of agreed actions.</p> <p>The Education Performance Oversight Group (EPOG) has responsibility for reviewing and managing student feedback survey results and ensuring monitoring and delivery of action plans to improve the student experience throughout the academic year.</p> <p>The Group reports to the Education & Student Experience Committee (ESEC), which in turn reports outcomes to Senate and Council. The Group has oversight for the submission of plans to HEFCW.</p>	
5.	The governing body has received a copy of the relationship agreement between the institution and the Students' Union, and a copy of the student charter, both of which have been reviewed within the past year.	Section 3: External Reference Points	<p>Confirmation that the Relationship Agreement between the University and the Students' Union and the Student Charter have been reviewed annually notified to Council.</p> <p>A review was undertaken in summer 2023 and the Relationship Agreement and Student Charter confirmed, with minor amendments, in October 2023.</p>	
6.	The governing body has effective oversight of	Section 3: External	The University has signed up to the QAA's Academic Integrity Charter that has been designed to provide a baseline	Academic misconduct is a growing problem and presents a threat to the reputation of higher education worldwide.

degree outcomes and academic integrity.	Reference Points	<p>position upon which universities can build their own policies and practices and completed a mapping to ensure alignment. This Charter represents the collective commitment of the UK higher education sector to promote academic integrity and act against academic misconduct. The University mapped its practices against the Charter in July 2022.</p> <p>The University meets the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, and the University's procedures are mapped and aligned with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA) Good Practice Framework.</p>	<p>It takes a wide variety of forms including the use of essay and degree mills, plagiarism, collusion between students and forged or altered qualification certificates, and more recently there are concerns regarding Generative AI.</p> <p>The University has provided advice and guidance to staff and students on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence which covers areas such as potential concerns for assessment, benefits for teaching and learning, and using AI in assessment design. The advice will be kept under review and updated as necessary due the significant development taking place.</p> <p>The University is enhancing the advice provided to students about academic integrity and, from January 2024, students will have access to an Academic Integrity Resource linked to three modules for students to complete.</p>
	Section 4: Academic Standards	<p>The University reviews its degree outcomes and provides an update on matters identified in its Annual Quality Report (AQR), including the reviews undertaken by schools via the Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process.</p>	<p>Data on degree outcomes in 2022/23 are not included in the annual quality report as there have been delays in confirming final degree outcomes for some students due to the impact of the marking and assessment boycott.</p> <p>A review of degree outcomes will be completed by the end of 2023 and used to inform an updated degree outcomes statement to be published in 2023/24. Council will receive the review of degree outcomes and will be asked to approve the updated degree outcomes statement.</p>

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