



Annual Quality Report 2023/24

Executive Summary

December 2024

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

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Education Governance
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Introduction

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 2023/24 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 from the annual quality system. The report includes information relating to the academic standards and quality of education risks along with details of implemented controls and additional actions being taken. The residual risk score for academic standards and the quality of the student experience has been lowered as there is evidence that the implemented controls and the actions being taken are leading to an improvement in students' overall satisfaction.

There is 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 progress of initiatives being pursued to enhance the student experience.

Both reports provide evidence that the University's approach to overseeing academic standards and the quality of the student experience meets the QAA's definition of enhancement set out by the Quality Enhancement Review methodology in Wales (2020) i.e., using evidence to plan, implement, and evaluate deliberate steps intended to improve the student learning experience.

The Annual Quality 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;
- the University can submit its annual assurance statements relating to academic quality and standards to Medr (Commission for Tertiary Education and Research).

Section 1: Academic Assurance Framework

1.1 Strategic Risks

There are two strategic risks relating to education and student experience which are detailed below along with the relevant risk scores.

Risk Title	Risk Description	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score
Quality of Education and Student Experience	The quality of education does not meet stakeholder needs or expectations.	25	12

Academic Standards	Standards of awards are not appropriately set and maintained.	20	6
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- The risk score is calculated as a multiple of likelihood (on a scale of 1 to 5) and impact (on a scale of 1 to 5).
- The Inherent Risk Score is the amount of risk before any controls i.e. untreated state; the Residual Risk Score is the amount of risk that remains with the implemented controls.
- Details of the implemented controls and future actions to mitigate the risks are provided at the end of each section of the report.

The quality of education and student experience residual risk score is decreasing (from a score of 20), primarily as a result of an improved NSS outcome in summer 2024 which provides evidence that the enhancements taken via the education and student experience programme and the actions taken by schools are having a positive impact. The inherent risk score remains above target with a need to reduce both the likelihood of it happening and the impact of the risk. As the University continues to be required to submit NSS question and subject plans to Medr the likelihood and impact scoring are higher than target. Additional actions will be considered to mitigate the risk causes which may arise during the forthcoming period of transformational change.

The residual risk score for academic standards is slightly above target and will remain at this level until the Mark Processing Project addresses the issues and strengthens controls to reduce assessment mark errors, and as the Inclusive Education Framework is implemented to address the ethnicity awarding gaps.

1.2 Annual Assurance Statements

The academic assurance framework confirms the method and evidential base used to confirm the annual assurance statements on academic quality and standards which Council is required to submit to Medr. The academic assurance framework included in the 2022/23 Annual Quality Report was reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 21 March 2024.

The academic assurance framework has been updated to reflect the content of the 2023/24 Annual Quality Report.

Medr 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.	-	<p>Council received the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) reports – the external quality assurance review – and approved the QER action plan.</p> <p>ASQC confirmed (November 2022) that all actions included in the QER action plan have been completed. The action plan is closed as reported in the 2022/23 AQR.</p>	It is anticipated that the next external quality assurance review will take place during 2025/26.
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</p>	<p>The programme approval procedure has been updated to include the approval of modules and other credit bearing provision. The revised procedure better supports schools with the correct set-up and management of the full range of credit bearing provision and should improve the time taken to approve new programmes.</p> <p>The Advance HE Fellowship Programmes have been reaccredited and offer a route</p>

			<p>to align with external reference points. The schedule of regulation and policy review is overseen by ASQC.</p> <p>The review and enhancement 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 2023/24, reporting directly to ASQC.</p>	<p>to professional recognition that is flexible, practice-focussed and fully aligned with the contemporary scholarship of learning and teaching.</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>The education and student experience programme has concluded, and a benefits and measures dashboard is being used to monitor impact of projects delivered which</p>	<p>There were much improved outcomes achieved in NSS 2024, having had a disappointing year in 2023. There were improved scores across all thematic areas and all individual questions, and the University has made significant improvements in its sector position, and within the Russell Group of universities.</p>

			<p>should be realised over the next three years.</p> <p>Education Performance Oversight Group scrutinises student experience survey data (NSS, PTES, PRES) and school/subject action plans in accordance with the framework approved by the Education and Student Experience Committee.</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 tracks the progress of agreed actions.</p>	<p>Although there were improved outcomes, the University, as required, has submitted to Medr:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • question action plans with respect to the three questions notably below benchmark (fourteen questions notably below benchmark in 2023): and • six subject action plans, covering twelve subjects.
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 expected to publish a statement on degree outcomes as a commitment to protecting the value of UK degrees, and to transparent, consistent, and fair academic standards. The University has published an updated degree outcomes statement, approved by Council, in August 2024.</p> <p>The University reviews its degree outcomes annually and provides a summary on matters identified in its Annual Quality Report (AQR), including the reviews undertaken by schools.</p>	<p>The increased proportion of 1st class degrees in 2019/20 and 2020/21, mainly attributable to the use of a safety net to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by the disruption resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, is no longer evident.</p> <p>The increase in the ethnicity awarding gap in 2023/24 is mainly due to the fall in the proportion of good degrees awarded to Asian students; the significant gap for Black students has reduced slightly but still persists.</p> <p>To support Schools to address disparities in award by student characteristic, online</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, where 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>The University has approved a new Marking and Moderation Policy which is being implemented in 2024/25.</p>	<p>asynchronous guidance and resources on Inclusive Education have been developed and made available to all staff via the Education Development Toolkit.</p> <p>The Marks Processing Project commenced in 2023/24 to deliver improvements to marks entry and processing in ways that will be sustainable for the future.</p>
4.	<p>The governing body has considered a report on the 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>	<p>Section 6: Student Experience</p>	<p>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 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 Students' Union is consulted and provides input into the University's response to student feedback. School actions plans are informed by student input through the Student Staff Panels.</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 are reviewed annually and Council notified.</p> <p>Council will be informed in November 2024 of the review completed during summer 2024.</p>	
6.	The governing body has effective oversight of degree outcomes and academic integrity.	Section 4: Academic Standards	<p>The University has signed up to the QAA's Academic Integrity Charter that has been designed to provide a baseline 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>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>The University has developed and is making available to students an Academic Integrity Resource linked to three modules which all students are encouraged to complete.</p>	
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