Annual Quality Report 2017/18

Executive Summary and Action Plan

December 2018

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Quality and Standards Team

Registry

Academic and Student Support Services

Cardiff University

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT 2017/18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Quality Report provides a holistic overview of the University's academic quality management systems during the 2017/18 academic session. The report considers all elements of the academic quality system, including quality assurance, enhancement, assessment and admissions activities, and confirms that all processes and procedures are regularly reviewed and that enhancement activity is responsive to feedback and external requirements.

This report provides a risk assessment status and narrative for each area of activity from which Council can provide assurance to the HEFCW in discharging its responsibilities under Quality Assurance Statements for the Governing Bodies of Regulated Institutions and the Quality Assessment Framework for Higher Education in Wales.

Risk assessment status

Two areas (shown in Table 1) are identified with a 'red risk assessment status signifying serious issues of concern: assessment and feedback (Section 5); and examination paper errors (Section 6).

The following areas have changed risk assessment status:

- Admissions: 'amber' to 'green', reflecting the successful delivery of the confirmation, clearing and adjustment in summer 2018 and the progress of the First Choice Admissions programme in further professionalising the admissions activity;
- Annual Review and Enhancement: 'green' to 'amber', as there has been a delay in completing the review of the process;
- Publication of results: 'red' to 'amber', reflecting the significant improvement in the timely publication of results to students in 2017/18 and the further planned actions to sustain this improvement;
- Academic appeals: 'red' to 'amber', reflecting improvements to the process and the time taken to consider academic appeals in 2017/18 and the further planned actions to sustain this improvement;

Section 1: External context for quality and standards

The UK and Welsh Higher Education landscape continues to change at pace in 2017/18. In addition to the consultations undertaken by the Office for Students (OfS) in England, a number of Welsh specific external reviews and consultations took place on a reformed Post-Compulsory Education System for Wales, the implementation of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales and the publication of the revised UK Quality Code. The outcomes of all consultations are monitored to gauge the likely impact on University policies and processes and inform the preparations for the University's Quality Enhancement Review taking place in the 2019/20 academic session. In response to developments regarding the TEF, and to support the University prepare for future subject-based and institutional TEF, a Steering Group has been established.

In October 2018, HEFCW is undertaking its Triennial Assurance visit to the University conducting interviews across two suites of visits, with a focus on enhancement activity, student experience, and quality assurance at the University. The HEFCW report will be considered by the Council.

Confirmation is provided that assurances regarding the standard of awards were provided by Examining Boards, and by external examiners, after the University was required to vary arrangements for the delivery and assessment of programmes in response to industrial action taken by UCU in February and March 2018. The priority of the University was to minimise disruption to students and to ensure that students had the opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the programme and module learning outcomes.

Section 2: Academic Regulations

A major review of the academic regulations of the University is being undertaken with the aim of re-writing the regulations to address issues of accessibility and legibility. Following consultation with staff and students, Senate will be asked to approve the new regulations for implementation in the 2019/20 academic year.

Section 3: Admissions

The 2017/18 academic session successfully moved Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment (CCA) into business as usual, delivered Phase 1 of the First Choice project and completed the preparatory work for Phase 2. This project is centralising the admissions function and improving the applicant experience to ensure targets on student quality, recruitment, and widening access are delivered. Further work is being undertaken to analyse the areas of risk highlighted through the admissions forecasting process and review for future year's entry and a new contextual admissions policy is being developed.

Section 4: Academic Standards

The policies and processes for reviewing and maintaining our academic standards remain robust as reported through our external examining system and reports received from professional statutory and regulatory bodies. Further work is ongoing to ensure the scope and purpose of all quality related processes are fully aligned to external requirements and institutional priorities outlined in section 1.

The review of the scope and purpose of the University's Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) and Periodic Review processes will be completed during 2018/19 to ensure that the processes align with external and institutional priorities.

A holistic review of programme design, development and approval will be undertaken to ensure that the University develops strategically relevant degree programmes, which can be approved in a timely manner, and lead to an excellent student experience.

Section 5: Student Engagement and Experience

Actions have been taken in response to the continuing disappointing score in NSS for assessment and feedback and further actions are planned in session 2018/19. The action plan, developed in partnership with the Students' Union, to address concerns that the overall satisfaction in Nursing have been at or below 70% for two or more years will be considered by HEFCW's Quality Assessment Committee at its meeting in Autumn 2018.

Actions have been identified for the area of Assessment and Feedback which remains with a 'red' risk assessment status. The range of actions involve partnership work with students, the application of 'Principles and Commitment of Assessment', which support schools address the volume of assessment, and pilot system improvements.

A Centre for Education Support and Innovation (CESI) has been established to enable our academic ambition and drive forward our excellence in learning and teaching with a new Director starting in January 2019.

Section 6: Examinations, Examining Boards, Academic Appeals, Unfair Practice, Fitness to Practise, Discipline Cases, Student Complaints and OIA Cases

In response to the risk assessment for examination paper errors, publication of results to students and academic appeals and student complaints being 'red' in the 2016/17 annual quality report, the following actions were taken:

- stabilisation actions implemented for 2017/18; and
- engagement of an external organisation, PA Consulting, to undertake an independent review of the service areas.

The stabilisation actions and some immediate actions identified by PA Consulting were implemented in 2017/18 and had a positive impact on the timely publication of results to students and the time taken to conclude academic appeals cases. Further improvement is required and further actions will be taken in 2018/19, centred on the recommendations contained within the PA Consulting report.

The proportion of examination papers which contain errors has not decreased and consequently the risk assessment status remains 'red'. Actions to be taken to address this concern will involve prioritising and implementing the recommendations contained in the PA Consulting report and seeking external support for schools with the highest error rate and largest number of students to focus on improvement.

Council can continue to be confident that:

- continue to have confidence in all quality policies and processes operated during the 2017/18 academic cycle;
- the standards of awards have been appropriately set and maintained; and
- that key quality enhancement activities and actions are identified for the 2018/19 academic year.

Table 1: Summary of Quality Processes Risk Assessment Status

Activity Name	Red	Amber	Green	Change since 2016/17
Academic Regulations		Amber		=
Admissions			Green	↑
Annual Review and Enhancement		Amber		↓
External Examining			Green	=
Programme Approval Policy		Amber		=
Collaborative Provision Policy Framework		Amber		=
Periodic Review		Amber		=
Accreditation by Professional Bodies			Green	=
The Student Experience		Amber		=
Assessment and Feedback	Red			=
Examination Paper Errors	Red			=
Publication of Results		Amber		↑
Academic Appeals, Unfair Practice, Fitness to Practise, Fitness to Study and Discipline Cases, Student Complaints and OIA Cases		Amber		↑

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

The actions for areas with a risk status of 'red' are detailed below as they require substantial or immediate action:

Reference	Action	Person Responsible	Completion by	Risk Status
Assessment and Feedback				
5.6.1	Student Engagement and Education Support Team to review the outcomes of the Partnership Project on supporting student assessment and feedback literacy and report in the 2018/19 Annual Quality Report	Head of Student Engagement and Education Support Team	Report on progress in the 2018/19 Annual Quality Report	Red
5.6.1	Student Engagement and Education Support Team to support schools on the practical application of the 'Principles and Commitments of Assessment' specifically through the development of new programme and changes to existing programmes	Head of Student Engagement and Education Support Team	Report on progress in the 2018/19 Annual Quality Report	Red
5.6.1	Student Engagement and Education Support Team to support schools to review the volume of assessment and to address the overassessment of students	Head of Student Engagement and Education Support Team	Report on progress in the 2018/19 Annual Quality Report	
5.6.1	Student Journey Programme of the Education Portfolio to progress a series of projects to improve the way Schools design and manage assessment to include: • to pilot the Assessment Mark Integration tool, to allow marks to be automatically transferred between Learning Central and SIMS.	Student Journey Programme of the Education Portfolio	Report on progress in the 2018/19 Annual Quality Report	Red
5.6.1	Student Engagement and Education Support Team to explore new ways in which key messages related to assessment and feedback can be better communicated to students	Head of Student Engagement and Education Support Team	Report on progress in the 2018/19 Annual Quality Report	Red

Examination Paper Errors				Red
6.2.1	To address the prioritised recommendations in the PA Consulting report;	Head of Registry	Report to Council on findings and action plan	Red
6.2.1	To seek external support to undertake a rapid improvement event with a focus on schools with the highest error rates and largest numbers of students impacted.	Head of Registry	Report to Council on findings and action plan	Red
6.2.1	To gather data and address the causes of students not receiving the correct examination information at the commencement of their examination.	Head of Registry	Report to Council on findings and action plan	Red