



Annual Quality Report 2020/21

Executive Summary

November 2021

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

Quality and Standards Team

Registry

Academic and Student Support Services

Cardiff University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

The Annual Quality Report provides a holistic overview of the University's academic quality system, critically reviewing all elements of the academic quality system, including quality assurance, assessment, and admissions activities. The report also highlights any significant institutional changes relating to the academic quality system during the 2020/21 academic session.

The review of the academic quality system enables Senate and Council to make a judgement with respect to the annual assurance statements to be provided to HEFCW and supports the determination of risks to be addressed or mitigated. Using a risk-based approach and assigning a risk status to each area ensures that we continually enhance and strengthen our academic quality system and that it remains aligned with external reference points.

As in 2019/20, the report comments on the University's approach to dealing with and mitigating against the disruption caused by Covid-19, demonstrating that we continue to have a robust academic quality system which can flex and respond when required.

The academic quality report also identifies opportunities for enhancement – the taking of deliberate steps to improve the quality of learning opportunities – which are prioritised alongside other initiatives to improve the student experience.

The Education and Students sub-strategy guides the prioritisation of initiatives to ensure an educationally outstanding and consistently high-quality student experience, driven by creativity and curiosity, with excellent teaching and services to enhance learning, and support student life. To supplement the annual quality report, from 2021/22, Senate and Council will receive an annual enhancement report which will provide a report on progress and outcomes of initiatives to improve the student experience.

1.2 Assessment and identification of risk

For each area of the academic quality system an assessment of risk is provided. The level of risk is determined through the evaluation of quantitative or qualitative data and information to identify any significant issues – relating to the effectiveness of the academic quality system or the student experience - and the level of confidence that the actions being taken will address and resolve the identified issues as follows:

Green	No significant issues identified; actions not required
Amber	Significant issues identified; actions being taken which will address issues
Red	Significant issues identified; action plans being developed to address issues, or actions being taken which have not demonstrated that issues will be resolved

The risk status for each area of focus in the report is provided in table 1:

Section	Area of Focus	Red	Amber	Green
2	External Reference Points			Green
4	Regulations and Policies			Green
5	Admissions			Green
6	Academic Standards			Green
6.4	BAME Awarding Gap		Amber	
7	Quality Assurance			Green
8	Student Experience	Red		
9	Relationship Agreement and Student Charter			Green
10	Student Complaints, Appeals and OIA		Amber	

Table 1: Areas of focus and identification of risk

Further details on the conclusions reached for each area of focus is provided within the body of the report.

In 2021/22, with reference to the governance effectiveness review, consideration will be given to the maturity of the method and evidential base for the provision of annual assurance on academic quality and standards, with oversight by the Audit and Risk Committee.

1.3 Assurance to HEFCW

Through this report and subsequent analysis of each area, Council is able to confidently provide its annual assurance statements to HEFCW as specified in the [Quality Assurance Statements for the Governing Bodies of Regulated Institutions](#) and the [Quality Assessment Framework for Higher Education in Wales](#) as detailed below:

- 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.**

Council has received the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) reports and approved the QER action plan in July 2020. The implementation of the [action plan](#) is reviewed annually by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) as detailed in Section 2 of this report.

- 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.**

The University has a mature quality assurance mechanisms and a well-established reputation for the quality of its student experience, we focus on

operating quality management structures that not only uphold academic standards, but also emphasise the process of self-evaluative reflection that supports ongoing enhancement and development.

The outcome of the University's Quality Enhancement Review confirmed that the University continues to meet 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.

3. The standards of awards for which we are responsible are appropriately set and maintained.

Universities in England and Wales are expected to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement as specified by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) Statement of Intent to protect the value of UK degrees. [The University's Degree Outcomes Statement](#) outlines the degree classification profile and confirms that our degree outcomes are reviewed annually, through the University's academic quality system, ensuring that our academic standards are appropriately set and maintained with reference to external expectations.

In addition, this report confirms the arrangements for setting and maintaining the academic standards of awards, including:

- arrangements for the development, monitoring and review of credit bearing provision at Cardiff University.
- institutional themes and actions identified in external examiners reports.

The University has also 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.

4. 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.

Each year Council receives a report from the Students' Union and the University provides a response. Council, at its meeting on 7th July 2021, received The Student View, outlining key themes and issues that the Students' Union considers could be improved or introduced to benefit the student experience and the Council will confirm the University's response at its meeting on 24 November 2021.

The University continues to work in partnership with the Students' Union most recently collaborating on a written response to HEFCW regarding NSS results which included the following:

- An Institutional Action Plan for 2021/22 with a focus on the questions in the NSS where the outcomes were statistically below benchmark.

- Subject-level action plans where results are at or below 70% for the most recent two or more years, and in respect of subject outcomes at 50% or less in any single year.

The institutional action plan covers all the thematic areas that were statistically below benchmark and includes reflections on progress made during 2020/21.

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.

Council, at its meeting on 23rd November 2020, received the Relationship Agreement between the University and the Students' Union and the Student Charter. Council will next receive the Relationship Agreement and the Student Charter at its meeting on 24th November 2021, providing assurance that they are reviewed annually.

6. The governing body has effective oversight of degree outcomes and academic integrity.

The Council has received and approved the University's degree outcome statement in November 2020 and the annual report on degree outcomes is included in section 6.3. The review of degree outcomes and reports from external examiners confirms that the standards of awards are appropriate.

The academic misconduct policy is mapped to the requirements of the UK Quality Code and OIA's Good Practice Framework and the University has signed-up to QAA's Academic Integrity Charter (see section 2.4). The mapping of the University's practices against Charter will be undertaken in 2021/22.