

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY**TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK SUBMISSION, JANUARY 2017****1. INTRODUCTION**

We are pleased to present this narrative as part of the Cardiff University Teaching Excellence Framework submission. In it we evidence how we:

- Engage our students with real-world challenges, research agendas and professional practice to provide significant levels of stimulation and stretch;
- Develop well-qualified, employable graduates;
- Encourage high levels of student engagement, including a strong, embedded relationship with the Students' Union;
- Support all our students to enjoy and benefit from a university education.

2. MISSION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. Cardiff University's mission is to create and share knowledge, and to educate for the benefit of all. Our ambition is to be an educationally outstanding, research-excellent university, driven by creativity and curiosity, and fulfilling our social, cultural and economic obligations to Cardiff, Wales and the world. Our commitment to education and students is stated clearly in our institutional strategy, *The Way Forward*.
- 2.2. We are a comprehensive, civic university, with a broad portfolio extending across the humanities, natural, physical, health, life and social sciences, engineering and technology. We educate and prepare students for a wide range of professions. We are the fourth largest UK provider for medicine, dentistry and allied health professionals and the sole provider in Wales of graduates for a number of subjects including optometry, pharmacy, dentistry and dental therapy, physiotherapy, Japanese, Portuguese, planning and operational research.
- 2.3. We have a diverse student community. 46% of our home undergraduates are from England and 36% from Wales. We recruit 85% of our undergraduates from state schools. 24% of our students come from low participation areas, with a significant number from England (not captured within our TEF metric workbook, which focuses on Welsh-domiciled students' data only). POLAR data show us to be one of the most successful Russell Group universities in attracting traditionally under-represented students from UK-wide low participation neighbourhoods (LPN). In the most recently available dataset (2014/15), we rank second of 24 Russell Group universities for the proportion of young full-time first degree entrants from LPNs, perform above our own benchmark (of 8.7%) and have a higher proportion of LPN entrants than the Russell Group average (CU: 9.6%, RG average: 6.5%).
- 2.4. We have a strong partnership with our Students' Union, which has been ranked in the top ten since 2011 and in the top five since 2015 (National Student Survey). This collaboration helps to inform the continuous improvement of our provision. Student satisfaction with the Students' Union has been consistently high (87% in NSS 2016, exceeding both the UK and Welsh sector averages).
- 2.5. A member of the Russell Group since 1998, we are in the top five universities in the UK for research excellence, rank second nationally for the impact of our research (Grade Point Average, 2014 Research Excellence Framework) and are in the top five UK HEIs for the number of knowledge transfer programmes. We are responsible for 85% of all intellectual property income generated by Welsh universities and contribute £2.9bn to the UK economy.
- 2.6. Cardiff University excels in connecting industry, business, and government with our students and academics, nurturing student entrepreneurship and championing grass-roots business development through our Innovation System. We also enjoy a clinical innovation partnership with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to support professional learning and

collaborative research. Our library service plays a key role across the Welsh sector, leading a collaborative project to implement an all-Wales library management system for which we received the *Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award* for 'Outstanding Library Team' in 2015.

- 2.7. Cardiff University plays a distinctive role in Welsh economic, social and cultural life, and has a strong focus on engagement. Firmly embedded in the nation's capital city and located in the historic civic centre and at the University Hospital of Wales, we foster productive relationships with local communities, schools, employers and cultural bodies, and support the development of Welsh medium educational provision. Our medical, dental and healthcare students and graduates contribute extensively to the delivery of health and social care across Wales. Our work to strengthen the impact of social policy was recommended for core funding in the *Diamond Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales* (2016). The 2015 review of initial teacher training in Wales, *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers*, also highlighted our contribution and commitment to research capacity building across the Welsh education sector.

3. TEACHING QUALITY

3.1. Engaging our students

3.1.1. *Student participation in learning*

- .i Levels of student engagement with their studies are consistently high. Numbers of registered undergraduate students requiring formal intervention through our 'failure to engage' procedures run at less than 0.2% annually. Personal tutors play a key role in identifying students whose levels of engagement give cause for concern. In collaboration with the Students' Union, we updated our *Code of Practice for Personal Tutoring* in 2014/15, and in 2015/16 implemented a revised monitoring system through which to capture student engagement. Resultant dashboards of data support early identification of students potentially at risk of underperformance and/or drop-out due to low engagement.
- .ii Retention rates confirm that our strong focus on inclusion and tailored supports meet the needs of our students. We are on or above the benchmark for retention for all contextually-flagged student groups, and significantly above our benchmark for both full-time mature and part-time students. Module completion rates are high: we significantly outperformed our Fee and Access Plan strategic outcome target of 92%+ in 2014/15 (99.3%) and internal analysis of our 2015/16 HESA return indicates a similar rate (provisionally 98%).
- .iii This success reflects sustained work undertaken to support students to balance their studies with other responsibilities, including financial advice and study skills support, as well as encouraging students experiencing challenges in their lives to consider temporarily interrupting their studies as a positive and supported choice. Our peer-to-peer student mentoring scheme helps to support first year transition to university. Following successful pilots, by 2015/16 this scheme was in operation across half our academic Schools (42% of the student body) and it is now being rolled out across the University. Satisfaction rates are high: in 2015/16, 69% of mentees assessed the scheme as beneficial to their first year transition and 93% of mentors valued the opportunity to support their peers.

3.1.2. *Students as partners*

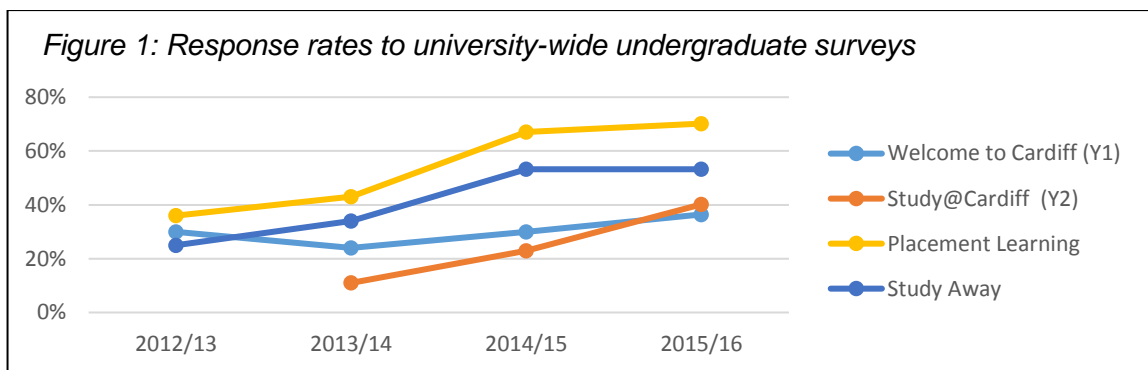
- .i Our student academic representation system is mature and embedded, with over 1,000 representatives. Trained by our Students' Union, student representatives engage with their programme cohorts and speak on behalf of students in a range of well-established forums at School, College and University levels. Students also play a key role in our quality assurance processes, including annual and periodic review cycles, and new programme approval. In

2015/16, 82 students participated formally in quality-related events as panel members. This work provides significant challenge for participating students and supports the development of a range of transferable skills.

- .ii Students have direct and regular access to senior decision-makers. Elected SU officers meet regularly with the Vice Chancellor and other members of the University Executive Board. They participate as full members of major committees, including Senate and Council, and also serve on the steering boards for student-facing capital and revenue projects, including the Centre for Student Life (CSL), a new £50M landmark building marking a major investment in the student experience. The CSL is a partnership project with our Students' Union and is a direct response to the results of a 2012 Students' Union commissioned survey of student capital investment priorities. The survey highlighted opportunities to enhance student services and improve spaces for learning and studying. This new facility is creating a hub for our student support services, together with extensive flexible and technology-rich social learning spaces, a large auditorium, and extended remote access to support for students across our campuses and studying away from Cardiff. Students' Union surveys of students located at our University Hospital of Wales campus in 2011 and 2013 also led directly to the enhancement of study, social and support services including investment in additional common room spaces.

3.1.3. Student voice

- .i Our annual cycle of student survey and module evaluation enables direct engagement with our students about their educational experience. Survey response rates have grown year-on-year (see figure 1). Successive cohorts completing the optional NSS questions around engagement confirm that students feel they have good opportunities to provide feedback about their experience of studying at Cardiff.



- .ii The impact of regular and responsive dialogue with our students is evident through both operational changes (such as introducing reading weeks, increasing social and group study spaces, altering feedback processes and increasing work placement opportunities), and more strategic, institution-wide measures, for example a new approach to library fines, changes to student printing provision and extending counselling services.
- .iii We work collaboratively with the Students' Union to encourage the wider student community to contribute to University life and shape the student experience. We are active partners in the Students' Union's annual 'Speak Week', which serves as a principal mechanism for reaching out to students through a diverse range of student-led events. Engagement has increased year-on-year: in 2016 there were over 2,200 individual response cards from students (up from 800 in 2015 and 228 in 2014). These submissions tell us what we are doing well and how we are able to improve the student experience further. It has been particularly pleasing to note how many students take the time each year to comment on how much they are enjoying their time at the University. Issues raised are discussed in our regular Students' Union-University partnership meetings and College education forums, and also inform the Student Written Submission to University Council.

- .iv Council considers the Student Written Submission (SWS) on an annual basis, together with response and actions agreed by University Executive Board. This distinctive approach provides our students with access to our Governing Body, and in turn helps to shape our investment priorities. In the last three years, the SWS has directly influenced a number of changes across the University including the expansion of 24/7 library opening hours, changes to the delivery of wellbeing and careers support services for our University Hospital-based students, the roll out of lecture capture capability across the institution and the introduction of contactless payment facilities across campus.

3.1.4. *Valuing student engagement*

- i We know from international research that students who participate in structured student-led activities are more likely to engage in university life and have positive outcomes overall. We have worked in partnership with the Students' Union to develop frameworks that enable students to recognise and value the skills that positive engagement with clubs, societies and volunteering can help them to develop. From 2016/17 onwards, certain types of participation are eligible for inclusion within the University's enhanced transcript, itself a project that has benefitted from strong University-student collaboration.

3.2. **Challenging our students: rigour and stretch**

3.2.1. Across our professional programmes students are challenged and stretched through community-based placements providing real-world contexts for learning. For example, students across our extensive healthcare portfolio engage with patients from the start of their studies, supporting communities in our outreach teaching centres in the Rhondda and Cynon Valleys, through our practice partnerships across Wales and in a diverse range of city centre provision for health and social care. This enables them to develop a holistic understanding of the diverse contexts in which health care is delivered. Our interprofessional education work is sector-leading in both its reach and depth and is impacting on the preparation for practice of almost 5,000 undergraduate medicine, dentistry and allied health students (23% of our undergraduate student body). Student evaluations indicate that our approach is working: in our most recent evaluation, 71% agreed that they had learnt something new from observing the approach of another profession and 93% agreed that working with students from other professions would enable them to work more effectively in clinical practice. Similarly, our consistent approach to fitness to practise engenders in our students a common understanding of ethical and professional standards.

3.2.2. This focus on contextualising academic knowledge extends across our undergraduate provision: through the integration of academic study with industry, community engagement, cultural economy, socio-economic development and public value projects, students are stretched to apply their knowledge and understanding to real-world challenges. Tailored approaches include:

- Simulations and scenario-based group work (e.g. geology students working with a mining company; biology students roleplaying environmental health professionals; language students scripting and participating in community radio programming);
- Assessments that require the alignment of professional communication tools with academic analysis (e.g. geographers preparing blogs, film and photo essays; media students creating infographics and online profiles; physicists writing business cases to commercialise disciplinary knowledge);
- Participation in projects that require students to draw on knowledge outside of their disciplinary comfort zone (e.g. cross-School design projects in engineering; maths students writing computing programmes to solve mathematical problems; English literature students working with medical education students);
- Working directly with external organisations (e.g. archaeology students working with

museums on the conservation of specific artefacts; modern language students supporting language learning in secondary schools; embedding sociology students in policy-rich environments; architecture students working with local communities; students in the National Software Academy working with businesses and charities).

3.2.3. External examiners commend consistently our undergraduate programmes for the intellectual breadth, depth and complexity of the core academic knowledge to which students are exposed and the close integration of subject matter with our research expertise. They also commend our rigorous yet varied and innovative range of assessment methods through which we challenge all students to achieve their full potential, including the most able and talented. This includes our extensive portfolio of integrated Master's programmes in 19 different specialisms, through which high performing undergraduate students are able to access CQFW level 7 provision and learn alongside postgraduate peers. The proportion of students opting to complete such programmes is high: in 2015/16, 62% of students from programmes that offered both Bachelor's and Integrated Master's routes, achieved the higher level qualification.

3.3. Supporting attainment: feedback and progression

3.3.1. We are confident that our assessment and feedback practices provide students with consistent opportunities to become confident learners. We recognise that stretch and challenge can be uncomfortable for some and this may lead them to express dissatisfaction with aspects of the assessment and feedback process. We have given serious consideration to our below-benchmark performance on the core metric for assessment and feedback in the NSS in the most recent year of data, having been in line with our benchmark in previous years. Internal evaluation of student outcomes using *Pearson's chi-square* with significance tested at both the $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ level shows no statistically significant correlation between satisfaction and overall performance for our students. In particular, whilst our split metrics indicate that we are below the benchmark this year for full-time, white, home students in terms of their satisfaction with assessment and feedback in the NSS, our own analysis indicates these students are as likely to achieve good degree outcomes as other groups.

3.3.2. In the period since 2012, we have given significant attention to ensuring that the student experience of assessment and feedback combines the rigour and stretch that students rightly expect of a research-intensive institution with the high quality support necessary to ensure that students reach their potential. This commitment is underlined by the challenging KPI we set in the 2012-17 University strategy of achieving 80%+ student satisfaction with assessment and feedback in the NSS in every School, an ambition well in excess of the sector average. Over the period since 2012, the number of Schools within 10% of this target has risen from 8-13 and the range between lowest and highest performing Schools has reduced by 11%.

3.3.3. As an institution that successfully combines high entry standards with a strong widening participation agenda, and that recruits from across the whole UK and internationally, we recognize that our students arrive with different levels of preparedness for university-level study. Our Academic Study Skills Centre helps individual students to develop their confidence and abilities with foundational concepts and skills. Students evaluate the support provided consistently highly, with 93% of those participating in academic skills classes in 2015/16 reporting that they had developed their knowledge as a result. Our Maths Support Service also provides students with the opportunity to enhance the mathematical and statistical skills they require to be successful in both their academic studies and future employment. This service offers flexible daily drop-in sessions, pre-arranged appointments and access to a wide range of learning resources. In 2015/16, 734 students made use of face-to-face services, of whom 181(25%) were from a POLAR3 low participation neighbourhood.

3.4. Valuing our teaching

3.4.1. *Expectations of academic staff*

- .i We regard the student experience as our core business and this is reflected in our strategic and operational plans. The University strategy confirms the strategic importance we assign to learning and teaching. Four of our ten key performance indicators *directly* address the student experience and teaching quality.
- .ii We expect our academic staff to develop and sustain significant research and scholarship portfolios: the creation of new knowledge is fundamental to our mission and shapes the learning environment that we offer our students. However, the *Cardiff Academic Framework* sets out very clear expectations that our staff *must* engage in teaching and student-related activities as part of their core work and ensure 'that learning and teaching is research-led and provides students with stimulating, flexible and intellectually challenging learning opportunities'. Teaching excellence is clearly signalled as *expected* through our criteria for academic promotion, professorial banding and our performance development review framework. A majority of professors contribute actively to undergraduate teaching.
- .iii We were one of the first research-intensive institutions in the UK to develop a distinctive 'teaching and scholarship' academic career pathway. This pathway has grown in maturity, with 42 staff promoted to Senior Lecturer, 12 to Reader and eight to Personal Chair over the period 2013/14 to 2015/16. Since launching our 'leading teaching teams' programme (developed with the *Leadership Foundation for Higher Education*) in 2014/15, 27 colleagues have participated, of whom ten have already progressed into more senior teaching leadership roles.

3.4.2. *Supporting excellence in learning and teaching*

- .i In 2015/16, the University launched an academic orientation programme for all new colleagues, building on our existing induction programme. This placed renewed focus on expectations and support for teaching and the student experience. Over 100 colleagues have participated in the programme to date. In 2015/16, a new *Academic Practice Programme* was also launched which supports early career staff to understand the totality of the academic role, and includes preparation for FHEA.
- .ii The *Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching and Learning* has served as a key vehicle for supporting the development of teaching skills. Aligned to the *UK Professional Standards Framework* and HEA-accredited, 425 academic colleagues have completed the compulsory elements of the programme since it began in 2004 (154 in the period 2013-16). This programme has been consistently praised by external examiners for a comprehensive approach to feedback, and for its innovative coverage of the particular needs of Welsh-speaking students.
- .iii We launched the *Centre for Education Innovation (CEI)* in 2015/16 to give further focus to learning and teaching. To date, 20 teaching development projects have been funded and are being conducted in partnership with students. These address a variety of topics including: digital curation tools for learning; electronic lab books; video feedback; flipped classrooms; bilingual marking sets; developing the digital capabilities of academic staff; e-portfolios; maximising undergraduate laboratory time; and embedding student understanding of societal grand challenges through problem-based learning. A new online hub to bring together teaching materials, tools and best practice was also launched in January 2017.

3.4.3. *Recognising excellence in learning and teaching*

- .i We actively encourage and support nominations for the *National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS)*, which has only been open to Welsh applicants since 2011. To date, six colleagues have submitted successful applications, making Cardiff joint second in the Russell Group over that period. Cardiff University currently has 12 HEA Senior Fellows, most

of whom have been awarded within the last two years. Over a third of our academic staff are known to hold a higher education teaching qualification.

- .ii The *Cardiff University Celebrating Excellence Awards*, introduced in 2012, provide a formal mechanism for recognising colleagues who demonstrate outstanding commitment and contribution to University life. The awards are peer-nominated, independently adjudicated and provide the opportunity to celebrate excellence in teaching and educational leadership. Since 2013/14 the two flagship teaching awards – ‘outstanding support of the student experience’ and ‘excellence in teaching’ – have received 69 nominations.
- .iii Our Students’ Union launched their annual *Enriching Student Life Awards* in 2011. These student-led awards recognise staff that make significant contributions to students’ academic achievements, as well as to their overall experience. For the 2016 awards, students submitted over 500 individual nominations, demonstrating the importance of the awards as a platform for students to value and celebrate University staff. Categories include Personal Tutor of the Year, Most Effective Teacher, Most Uplifting Staff Member, Student Representative Coordinator of the Year, Most Innovative Staff Member and Welsh Education Champion.

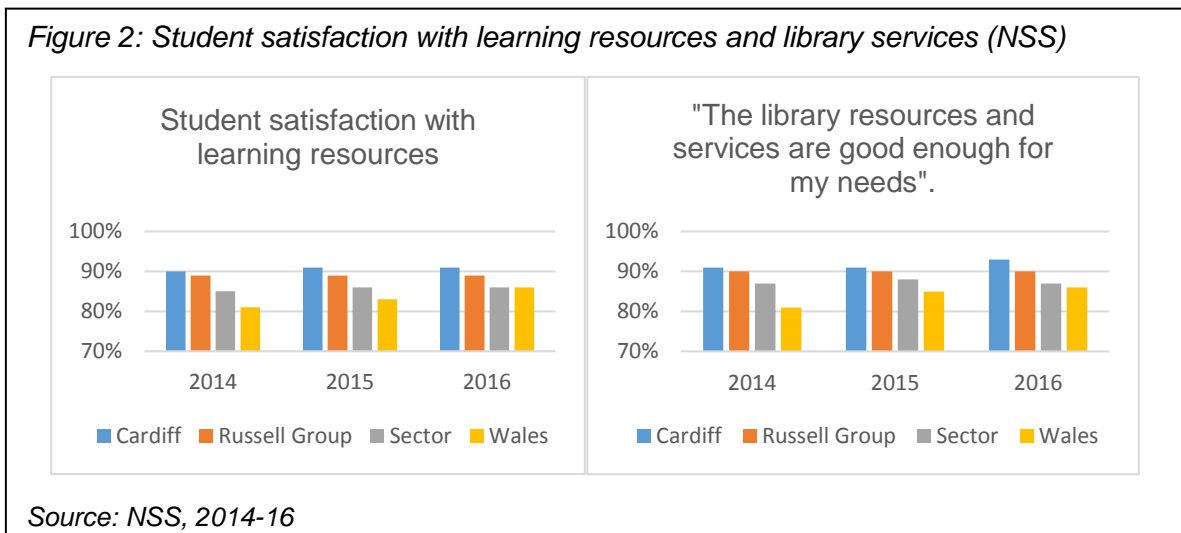
4. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Resources

4.1.1. Over the period 2012-2022 we are investing an additional £260M in our teaching and learning environment including: the new Centre for Student Life; a campus-wide programme to transform our existing physical learning spaces; new teaching accommodation for our journalism, maths and computer science schools; new timetabling and lecture capture capability; and new student residences.

4.1.2. Library and information resources

- .i Our NSS data provide strong evidence of student satisfaction with our learning resources, where we outperform both the sector and our key comparator groups (figure 2). Satisfaction with library resources in particular is very high.



- .ii Our online study skills resources are designed to extend the reach of our information literacy provision. For example, our *Welcome to the Library* induction package is on the home page of our VLE, and available to embed into School/ programme level pages. Student use of these packages has grown significantly since launch in 2014, with a four-fold increase in page views between September-December 2015 and the same period in 2016 (overall page views increased from 2,060 to 8,538, unique page views from 1,394 to 5,697).

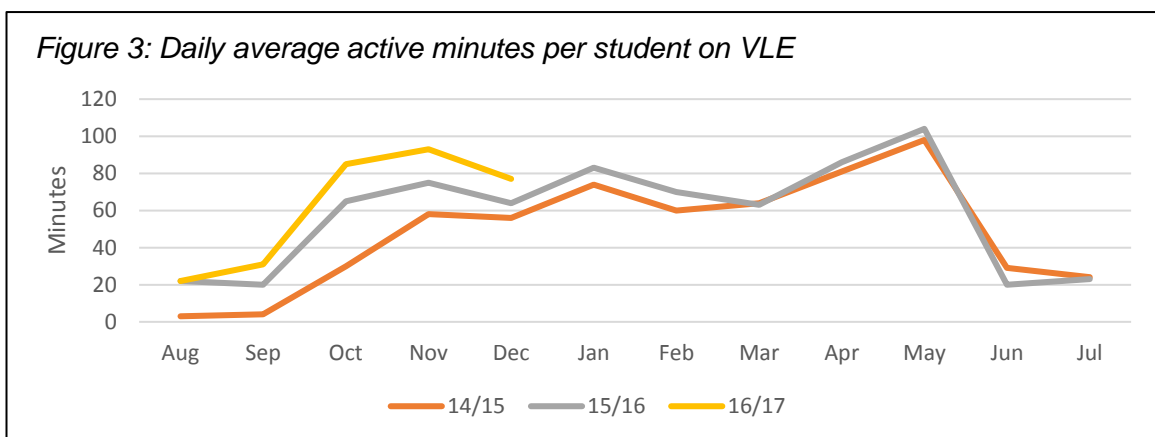
- .iii Library buildings on our two main campuses are open 24/7, with services significantly extended over the last three years in response to student feedback. Our Arts and Social Sciences Library’s overall gate count for 2015/16 was 321,224 users in total. Usage during extended hours (10pm-9am) was 33,726 users (10% of total use). For our Health Library the annual figure was 323,863 users, with 55,895 of these during extended opening hours (17%).

4.1.3. *Physical learning spaces*

- .i Our £38M strategic programme to update and upgrade our core teaching spaces, running from 2015-22, is ensuring that teaching and learning continues to benefit from spaces that are modern, comfortable, flexible and technologically enabled. This programme is in addition to our regular cycle of estate maintenance and refresh. Feedback from students and staff on the new teaching and learning spaces, gathered through focus groups, user experience questionnaires and the Students’ Union has been extremely positive. The refurbished spaces have been described by students as ‘vibrant’, ‘welcoming’, ‘rejuvenated’ and ‘bright’, and the improved acoustics and ventilation have been noticed by both students and staff.
- .ii This programme runs in parallel with the development of specialist teaching spaces and improvements to academic buildings. Over the period 2013-16, a further £19.2M has been invested in a range of facilities, including: a new dental simulation suite; new architecture studios; new wet, dry and computing labs for chemistry, archaeology, engineering, earth sciences; new sound studios for journalism; and library refurbishments.
- .iii We have responded positively to student requests for more social, group and independent learning spaces. We have invested £7.2M in our Students’ Union building over the period 2013-16. This has enabled the development of new suites of social study spaces, an *International Lounge* and a multifunctional social facility, *Y Plas (The Place)*. We have also developed a new 100m2 student study common room on our University Hospital of Wales site. Our 8,000m2 Centre for Student Life, scheduled for completion in 2019, also includes 600+ individual study spaces, a range of flexible rooms available for students to book for group working and fit-for-purpose space for our extensive student advice, health, wellbeing and futures provision.

4.1.4. *The virtual learning environment*

- .i Active student engagement with our VLE, *Learning Central*, has seen year-on-year growth over the period. 2014/15-2016/17 (figure 3).



- .ii Our current *LearnPlus* project, is making teaching event capture technology routinely available, with roll out due for completion during 2017. In addition to lecture recording, the technology supports innovative practice including podcasting, flipped learning, live webcasts, delivery of feedback to students, the capture of off-site teaching and student-led recording. We anticipate that it will also provide a valuable, inclusive tool for supporting students with additional learning support needs.

.iii *LearnPlus* has only been available to most academic Schools since Summer 2016, and student and staff engagement with the new service is already strong: over the period September – December 2016 there were on average 2,613 unique viewers accessing an average total of 2,308 hours of viewing per week. In addition to lecture capture, over 300 staff have used personal capture for blended learning, and a number of Schools are also piloting the use of the technology to capture student assessment activities.

4.2. **Experiencing leading edge research and professional practice**

- 4.2.1. We engender a research ethos across our undergraduate curriculum, with emphasis placed on research methods and the process of knowledge generation. All students receive discipline-relevant research training as part of their undergraduate studies. We have more than 40 subject-based student societies that also provide a key co-curricular channel for students to engage with leading edge research. External examiners consistently commend the University for our research-focused curricula. Our DLHE data confirm that students themselves recognise the benefits of our approach: 93% of those progressing to further study reported that their course had prepared them well.
- 4.2.2. All Schools promote opportunities for undergraduate students to engage directly with research evidence and to experience the research process, not only through a standard dissertation model but also via research showcases, individual and group projects, research placements, research-in-practice modules and undergraduate research conferences. Each year more than 5,000 undergraduates undertake dissertations or similar independent project work, and all students will engage in research activities over the course of their degree. External examiners consistently commend the quality of our undergraduate students' research work.
- 4.2.3. The *Cardiff Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (CUROP)* provides summer research placements and is one of the largest undergraduate research schemes in the UK. Placements are allocated competitively and all successful applicants receive a full stipend to support participation in a placement of up to eight weeks' duration, working with supervision on live research projects. Students and supervisors present projects at an annual poster conference. All our academic Schools host CUROP placements and interdisciplinary opportunities are particularly encouraged. Since CUROP was piloted in 2008, over 700 students have completed placements. In Summer 2016, 152 students worked on 138 unique research projects. Student evaluation data are consistently positive. In 2016, there was 100% agreement from students that project participation had developed research skills and provided insights into the research process.
- 4.2.4. 40% of students who complete a CUROP placement proceed to postgraduate study at Cardiff with a further 35% taking up postgraduate study at other institutions. Around 40% of supervisors have published co-authored work with undergraduates stemming from CUROP projects. Recent examples include papers in *Environment and Behaviour*, *Experimental Brain Research*, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, *Medical Education*, *European Journal of Communication* and *International Journal of Press/Politics*. 55% of projects have resulted in presentations or posters at national or international conferences and CUROP research has contributed to over £5M of successful grant funding. We are expanding the scheme year-on-year.
- 4.2.5. Our annual *Da Vinci Innovation and Impact Awards*, inaugurated in 2013, showcase innovation talent and help forge links between the University and private, public and third sectors. Interdisciplinary teams bring together undergraduates, postgraduates and academic researchers to develop innovative scientific ideas and bid for seed-corn funding via short, three-minute pitches presented to a mixed audience of students, academic staff, business leaders, government representatives and the general public. Of the six winners in 2016, two were undergraduate students and a further winning pitch given by a lecturer was developed

during a CUROP project.

- 4.2.6. Students also have the opportunity to experience research in an international context, including at our *Danau Girang Field Centre* in Malaysia and through strategic partnerships with international universities and research centres. In Summer 2016, 170 students participated in a range of funded overseas research placements supported through a newly established University fund. Projects included: the migration strategies of small seabirds and climate change in Portugal; occupational therapy in Malawi; European motor racing engineering; international orchestral performance; and archaeological digs across Europe. Undergraduates also engaged in collaborative research projects at the Murphy Institute on Labour and Urban Studies, New York, the Technische Universität Dortmund – Sozialforschungsstelle, CUNY, and the University of Finland. Feedback from students and external partners has been extremely positive, with students commenting particularly on the value of seeing first-hand how academic knowledge can be applied to real-world, global contexts.
- 4.2.7. Our undergraduate provision benefits significantly from industrial, professional and practitioner partnership and co-teaching. In addition to extensive formal placement learning and internship opportunities (see section 5.2 below), we ensure relevant direct practitioner input to teaching across our provision - to inspire, motivate and stretch students, as well as to contextualise their academic learning. Inputs include skills demonstrations, practitioner-led tutorials, interactive workshops, provision of topical case study materials, and participation in practice-focussed assessment activities such as skills assessments, pitches, briefings and client reports. In 2015/16, 942 individuals from business, the professions and practice held honorary University posts with teaching-related obligations, including practising architects, lawyers, social workers, engineers, musicians, arts professionals, business people, policy makers, scientists and healthcare professionals. This is in addition to our extensive network of clinical tutors and mentors, well in excess of 1000, who support our healthcare students on placements throughout Wales and beyond.
- 4.2.8. The launch of our *National Software Academy (NSA)* in 2015 exemplifies our strong relationship with practitioners and our approach to building curricula that are practice-rich. Over 60 organisations visited the NSA during 2015/16, providing client-based projects, 'lunch and learns', targeted talks within modules, mentoring and paid placements. Students are able to network with industry, and employer feedback of the collaborative learning environment is very positive. The NSA is already valued by the sector and was recognised as the *Collaborative Partnership of the Year* at the 2016 *ESTnet Wales Technology Awards*. The success of the NSA's approach to problem- and project-based learning is informing the development of further programmes across the University.
- 4.2.9. Our undergraduate provision also benefits from external advice from a range of professional and industry stakeholders. Examples include: the development of the Business School's unique public value approach that flows through into its teaching portfolio to prepare undergraduate students to recognise the challenges that management has to play in tackling the challenges facing contemporary society; ensuring our health professions education is closely aligned to NHS workforce planning needs; and the provision of all our architecture students with a practitioner mentor.
- 4.3. **Supporting Welsh medium education and the Welsh language**
- 4.3.1. We have worked closely with the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* since its establishment to deliver a shared agenda that maximises the particular contribution Cardiff University can make to preparing highly skilled graduates for the Welsh workforce. We are pleased that the metrics data confirm that the experiences of students participating in Welsh medium provision at Cardiff University are in line with our benchmark across all indicators.

- 4.3.2. Numbers of *Coleg*-funded lecturing posts have increased steadily over the period: there are currently 15 staff in *Coleg* academic posts and two previously *Coleg*-funded post are now University-funded. The range of disciplines offering undergraduate provision in Welsh has also expanded strategically, with a particular focus on our professional portfolio (law, journalism, medicine and allied health), fundamental skills (maths) and the Welsh language. Numbers of undergraduate students participating in Welsh medium provision have increased steadily over the last three years (despite a Wales-wide decline in the number of school pupils attending Welsh medium secondary schools), from 321 undergraduates studying at least 5 credits and 233 studying at least 40 credits through the medium of Welsh in 2013/14 to 419 and 276 respectively in 2015/16. We anticipate further growth as recently established provision in journalism and across our healthcare portfolio reaches maturity.
- 4.3.3. We also support Welsh-speaking students and the Welsh language more broadly. Increased investment in support for Welsh-speaking students to undertake the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Welsh Language Certificate* has seen participant numbers grow year-on-year from eight in 2012/13 to 55 in the last year. In 2015/16 we also established *Cymraeg i Bawb/ Welsh for All*, providing those students with no or more limited Welsh language competence access to free language classes. The programme had 200 participants in its first year, with particular demand from students in health-related disciplines. Registrations for the first semester of 2016/17 were up 90% on the same semester the previous year.

5. STUDENT OUTCOMES AND LEARNING GAIN

5.1. Employment, further study and skills

- 5.1.1. In 2015/16 82% of our undergraduates qualified with a first or 2i honours degree and 14% went on to postgraduate study, of whom 55% choose to remain at Cardiff University, putting us fifth in the Russell Group in terms of retention of undergraduates for further study.
- 5.1.2. We are in line with our benchmark for employment and further study and are pleased to be joint 14th in the UK for employability according to the *Global University Employability Ranking 2016*. Our most recent performance in DLHE in terms of highly skilled employment is anomalous, and we are actively seeking to understand any local circumstances such that we can put corrective actions in place. We are pleased to note that the split metrics show that we perform in line with the benchmark across all categories.
- 5.1.3. We prepare students for entry to a wide range of professions and work closely with employers. Over 130 of our programmes are professionally accredited, accounting for 44% of our total undergraduate graduating cohort in 2015/16. This includes statutory-regulated medical, health and social care programmes, but also a wide range of undergraduate provision where accreditation is an enhancement to the degree - across the natural and applied sciences, engineering, business, law, journalism, planning, social science and psychology.
- 5.1.4. In addition to clinical placement learning across our extensive undergraduate healthcare portfolio, 64 other undergraduate programmes have a professional training/ placement year. This includes provision in the natural and applied sciences, engineering, business and management, psychology, architecture and urban planning. In Schools that offer a year in industry/ practice, we have observed significantly better graduate prospects for students who take up this opportunity.
- 5.1.5. Many programmes offer work-related modules that include placements with an extensive range of partners, including major corporations and SMEs, public bodies, local and national government and third sector organisations. We have a commitment to grow placement opportunities across the University. Our students also compete successfully for prestigious national internship programmes: for example, Cardiff University students secured all four of

the Welsh Government’s highly competitive, year-long paid social research placements in 2015/16. Internal analysis of KIS data for a sample for our larger programmes (law, business, history and psychology) and for our physical sciences and engineering provision indicates that we offer above average levels of placement learning vis-à-vis our Russell Group comparators.

5.1.6. Our provision for graduate entrepreneurship is particularly successful. Our student enterprise team offers training, support and guidance to current students and alumni within five years of graduating. This includes the annual ‘Spark’ competition, through which students compete for funding to scope, launch or further develop new businesses. We are in the top twenty institutions across the sector in terms of graduate start-ups, lead the Russell Group in terms of active numbers of graduate start-ups and rank in the top three in terms of numbers still active after three years (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Cardiff University support for graduate start-ups

HE-BCI Survey Indicator, 2014/15	CU actuals	CU ranking vis-à-vis:	
		Sector (n=205)	Rus Grp (n=24)
Number of graduate start ups	34	35	6
Number still active after at least three years	77	19	3
Number of active firms	204	14	1
Est current employment: all active firms (FTE)	365	14	5

Source: HE-BCI survey, 2014/15

5.1.7. Our extracurricular employability initiative, the *Cardiff Award*, was launched in 2011/12. 1,446 students have participated so far. There are currently over 500 students registered on the award, and a managed plan to grow this to 1000+ registrations at any one time by 2020. The programme offers participants direct, high quality access to graduate recruiters. Our analysis indicates that BME and mature students in particular enhance their graduate employment prospects as a result of participation. Recruiters tell us they place high value on the programme.

5.1.8. We also support our students’ future career prospects through our international mobility activities. We offer 30 undergraduate programmes that incorporate a full-year study abroad, as well as a wide range of shorter options. Our *Global Opportunity Centre (GOC)*, established in 2014, provides a focal point for services to raise students’ awareness of the developmental and employability related benefits of increasing international understanding and intercultural competence through overseas experiences, as well as working with Schools to build international opportunities into the curriculum. In 2015/16 we exceeded our key performance indicator in this area, with more than 17% of our home undergraduate students having international experiences of at least four weeks during their studies. 99.5% of our internationally mobile students would recommend taking a placement abroad and 95.8% agreed that their inter-cultural awareness has improved as a result. Internal analysis of our most recent DLHE data confirms that that GOC support has a statistically significant positive impact on graduate employment outcomes.

5.1.9. An outward mobility bursary scheme totalling £1.6M over four years ensures personal circumstances are not a barrier to accessing international experiences. Analysis carried out by Universities UK using 2014/15 data confirms that our approach is providing equal opportunity for all students. In Wales, Cardiff University enabled the largest number of students from NS-SEC 4–8 to experience outward mobility as part of their programme of study. Cardiff University is also in the top ten institutions across the UK for this measure.

- 5.1.10. We encourage our students to recognise the power of language learning for employability. *Languages for All*, launched in 2014/15, complements *Cymraeg i Bawb/ Welsh for All* (see Section 4.3 above). The programme offers our students access to free language tuition in nine modern foreign languages. Courses are offered at a range of levels and allow for progression. In its first year there were 993 enrolments, rising to 3,303 in 2015/16. Numbers in the year-to-date show further growth, with 1,703 participants in the first semester vis-à-vis 1,602 at the same point last year. Pass rates are high at 78% (2015/16). In 2015/16, a quarter of students who went abroad via our global opportunity programmes had studied with *Languages for All* prior to travel.
- 5.1.11. As residents in a thriving capital city, our students benefit from access to a wide range of volunteering opportunities, including many integrated into University-led strategic initiatives. In 2015/16, approximately 550 students volunteered for our flagship widening participation and community engagement projects. These included *Confident Futures* and *Discovery* mentoring schemes (discussed in 5.3 below); GSCE Maths and English revision clubs; after-school homework clubs based in the City's most deprived areas; and our South Wales-based community engagement projects, the *Community Gateway* and *Strong Communities, Healthier People*. Students also deliver support to their peers through structured programmes: 240 students volunteered across our *Student Mentoring* scheme (see 3.1.1) and *Wellbeing Champions* initiative (see 5.2.2); volunteer numbers across the two schemes have risen to 352 so far in 2016/17 and we plan to grow both further in future years. Feedback on the benefits of participation is very positive: 98% of student mentors and 100% of wellbeing champions in 2015/16 reported that they had developed their skills as a result of participation.
- 5.1.12. The Students' Union launched a new service, *Cardiff Volunteering*, in 2015/16 to further extend the range of opportunities available. During its first year, the initiative engaged with almost 1,000 students who accumulated 16,404 community volunteering hours, working in close partnership with over 40 local community groups and organisations. In 2015/16 *Cardiff Volunteering* also appointed and trained 25 lead volunteers, all of whom gained a Certificate in Professional Development in Leadership.

5.2. Positive outcomes for all

5.2.1. Widening participation in higher education

- i. We are extremely proud of our strong commitment to widening participation and to making higher education accessible and achievable to those from non-traditional backgrounds. We are pleased that our split metrics show students from disadvantaged backgrounds are as satisfied and successful as students from more advantaged backgrounds - demonstrating our success in attracting widening participation students, supporting them to complete their studies and helping them to progress. Disabled students and students from BME backgrounds are as satisfied and successful as non-disabled and white students, demonstrating the effectiveness of our personalised and tailored support provision.
- ii. The success of our outreach and aspiration raising work is demonstrated by our upward trajectory over the last three years in increasing the proportion of our total student body from Communities First/Welsh Index of Mass Deprivation (CF/WIMD). The proportion rose from 16.4% in 2012/13 to 17.3% in 2015/16, amounting to an increase of 88 students. We have the second largest CF/WIMD cohort in Wales and have set ourselves a challenging Fee and Access Plan strategic target to increase to 18% despite a competitive environment and a declining 18 year old population. POLAR data also indicate our success more generally in attracting students from UK-wide low participation neighbourhoods (see Section 2.3 above). We also contribute substantially to providing high quality education for students of all ages who have not participated in HE before: 16.5% of our mature students are from UK low

participation neighbourhoods and have no previous HE experience, compared to a Russell Group average of 10.5% and sector average of 12.8%. We are also above our benchmark of 14%.

- .iii We support our students to successful outcomes: in the most recent comparative data (2013/14) only 4% of our young, full-time, first degree entrants from LPNs were no longer in HE following the year of entry, which exceeds our benchmark and compares favourably to the Welsh (7.9%) and UK (8.2%) sector averages. For mature, full time, first degree entrants in LPN with no previous higher education qualification, the figure was equally positive and exceeded our benchmark: 8.6% of our entrants were no longer in HE compared to the Welsh sector average (12.6%) and UK average of (12.5%).
- .iv Cardiff University was one of 12 HEIs in receipt of RCUK-funding from January 2013 to December 2016 to undertake a *School-University Partnerships Initiative (SUPPI)*, through which new researcher-led STEM flagship events were developed for Year 8 and Year 12 secondary school students – to inspire and raise aspiration. This work engaged 500 school pupils from 14 schools. More generally, the University works with more than 300 schools and colleges in disadvantaged areas across Wales to raise aspiration, broaden awareness and promote the benefits of HE. Each year our *Step Up to University* widening participation programme enables over 100 students to secure a place to study at Cardiff University.
- .v Our *Discovery* programme gives young people, aged 14-19 with Autistic Spectrum Disorders the opportunity to experience university life, and includes a residential summer school for students, parents and carers. Since its establishment in 2013/14, 296 young people have participated in the programme. In 2008/9, Cardiff University was also one of the first HEIs to engage actively with care leavers accessing HE. Our commitment was rewarded with a *Quality Mark* from the children and young people's charity, *Buttle UK*. Our support package is designed to encourage students who have experienced the care system to study with us, assist transition to university and promote good outcomes. We offer mentoring, year round university accommodation, support to secure private sector accommodation and a bursary. In October 2016, Cardiff University also became the first champion institution in Wales for the *Stand Alone Pledge*, publicly committing to supporting students studying without the support and/or approval of a family network. Our retention rates for these students are excellent, with 80% progressing to a degree. Between 2013/14-2015/16 we supported 24 undergraduate students who had experience of the care sector and/or were estranged from their families through to graduation. There are currently 63 disclosed care leaver/estranged students studying with us, of whom 40 are in receipt of bursary support.
- .vi Our community education programme, *Live Local, Learn Local*, brings free courses to disadvantaged communities in South East Wales. This incorporates a part-time route into full-time undergraduate study through our *Pathways to a Degree* programme. Flexible, well-supported courses help those with life experience, and who may have been away from education for a number of years, to achieve their ambition of studying for a degree. We offer established pathways in accountancy, business, English language and literature, philosophy, international relations and politics, journalism and communications, modern languages / translation studies and social sciences. A Pathway to Healthcare, providing access to seven pre-registration undergraduate programmes in nursing, midwifery and allied health also launched in 2016/17. The *Pathways* initiative is beginning to produce graduates: three students graduated with 2i honours degrees in 2014/15, of whom one progressed to postgraduate study; seven graduated in 2015/16, including one with a first class degree and four with upper second class honours, with three progressing to postgraduate study.

5.2.2. Supporting student wellbeing

- .i In the context of a sector-wide rise in student mental health concerns, we have invested in both early intervention and crisis support. Our portfolio of services includes access to

workshops and self-directed support, as well as face-to-face and Skype-based therapy. In the period since 2013/14, we have invested approximately £500k of additional funding per year in our student health and wellbeing services. We have increased our full-time counselling staff and have expanded our online offer, as well as extending core service delivery hours. We also collaborate with our Students' Union on a number of annual wellbeing campaigns, including *Mind Your Head Week* and the *Time to Change Pledge*, both designed to destigmatize mental health concerns.

- .ii We have seen a marked increase in students seeking support from our wellbeing and counselling services before they reach crisis point: between 2013/14 and 2015/16 unique service user numbers rose from 1,187 to 3,694 individual students. Of students considering dropping out, 90% said the support they received enabled them to continue their studies.
- .iii In 2015/16, we piloted a new peer-to-peer *Wellbeing Champions* programme, training students to provide a "peer ear", promoting a pro-active approach to health and wellbeing, and increasing awareness of our support services. 262 students engaged with the 12 pilot student champions over 149 hours, including participating in 18 structured events. In Spring 2016, 51 new champions were trained and are now actively engaged in delivering the service. Potential to offer online provision is being scoped, as well as developing specialized support for vulnerable and/or under-represented groups such as LGBT+, international students and student carers.

5.2.3. Cardiff University has been consistently named in the *Stonewall Top 100 Employers* in recognition of its commitment to our LGBT+ community and we are the top ranked UK university in 2016 and 2017. The benefits to students of studying in our LGBT+-friendly community have been recognised nationally: we were one of only six universities awarded full marks in Stonewall's *Gay By Degree 2015* study, which reviewed 158 UK universities' treatment of lesbian, gay and bisexual, and transgender students. Our collaborative working with Stonewall also illustrates our commitment to an inclusive curriculum. One exemplar of this is our School of Healthcare Sciences, which is leading the way in educating future healthcare professionals to be equipped to support LGBT+ patients. The project won the Chief Nursing Officer's *Betsi Cadwaladr Prize* in May 2016.

5.2.4. Training is provided to our student residences staff to support LGBT+ students, our *Global Opportunity Centre* has created specific guidance to support LGBT+ students travelling overseas, and our Student Support and Wellbeing Services include a range of provision specialising in gender identity and sexual orientation. We regularly host employability events with senior LGBT+ speakers from various industries. Feedback from students is monitored regularly via the LGBT+ working group that acts as a link between the University and the LGBT+ student society. The consistent message is that the supportive and welcoming environment that the University provides is appreciated and well-regarded by our students: 'The work that the University has done on LGBT equality has not only made me accepted as a student but embraced by the University for who I am and what I do'.

5.2.5. In 2016 *I, Too, Am Cardiff* was launched. This is a student-led, Harvard-inspired initiative helping to give our BME students a voice. The campaign's centrepiece is a pop-up exhibition of 13 student images and profiles (in English and Welsh) that is currently travelling around our campuses. It is hoped that the campaign will prompt discussion and raise awareness of issues experienced by black and minority ethnic students. We are currently preparing our institutional submission for the *Race Equality Charter Mark*.

6. BACKGROUND TO THE SUBMISSION

6.1. This submission was prepared with input from Cardiff University Students' Union and from our network of student representatives. The document draws on internal University and Students' Union data, as well as a range of external data sources.