



# Annual Quality Report 2021/22

## Executive Summary

December 2022

For the full version of the Annual Quality Report please email [quality@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:quality@cardiff.ac.uk)

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

Approved by Chair of Council 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

## Summary

The Annual Quality Report (AQR) provides an overview of the University's academic quality system and its operation, including actions taken to ensure its continuous enhancement. The report also highlights significant institutional changes relating to academic quality during the 2021/22 academic year, and the alignment of the academic quality system with external reference points.

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

The report includes the academic standards and quality risks which are aligned with the University's risk register. As the presentation of the risks in this year's AQR have been re-formatted to align with the University's risk register it is not possible to provide a direct comparison with previous reports.

The report confirms that:

- the University continues to align with and satisfy external requirements.
- the standards of awards are appropriately set and maintained.
- the University has taken positive steps to address concerns regarding the student experience by:
  - strengthening the arrangements for the scrutiny of student feedback and oversight of actions being taken in response to student feedback; and
  - progressing the delivery of projects to enhance the student experience.

The report also recognises that whilst there has been marginal improvement of the student experience, as evidenced by the NSS 2022 outcomes, the University continues to be required to submit actions plans to HEFCW and there is significant further progress to be made to ensuring an educationally outstanding and consistently high-quality student experience for all.

The academic assurance framework, first developed in 2021/22 and submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee, has been updated and confirms the sources of evidence to be used to inform the annual assurance statements which Council is required to submit to HEFCW. Council should be able to confidently submit its annual assurance statements to HEFCW.

The Academic Quality Report is a companion document to the Annual Enhancement Report: the former providing assurances to Senate and Council; the later evaluating the implementation of the [education and students sub-strategy](#) and the activities being pursued to enhance the student experience.

## Section 1: Assurance and Risk

### 1.1 Academic standards and quality risks:

Risk	AQR Section	Net Risk Score
The University does not satisfy: the frameworks for higher education qualifications; the expectations, core, and common practices of the UK Quality Code; the standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area	<a href="#">Section 3: External Reference Points</a>	5
The standards of awards are not appropriately set and maintained	<a href="#">Section 4: Academic Standards</a>	10
The Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic awarding gap is not eradicated	<a href="#">Section 4: Academic Standards</a>	12
Serious concerns raised about the standards of academic integrity	<a href="#">Section 4: Academic Standards</a>	8
Educational partnerships do not provide students with a high-quality educational experience	<a href="#">Section 5: Education Provision</a>	12
The quality of provision is considered inadequate by stakeholders	<a href="#">Section 6: Student Experience</a>	15

The assessment of risk at the end of each Section of the report details the risk factors, the current position, and mitigating actions.

## 1.2 Academic Assurance Framework

HEFCW Assurance Statement	AQR Section	Sources of Evidence	Comments/Issues Identified	
1.	<p>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>	<p><a href="#">Section 3: External Reference Points</a></p>	<p>Council has received the Quality Enhancement Review (QER) reports – the external quality assurance review.</p> <p>Council approved the QER action plan, developed in consultation with Students' Union.</p> <p>QER action plan reviewed and updated annually by ASQC. ASQC has confirmed (November 2022) that all actions included in the QER action plan have been completed. The action plan is closed (see <a href="#">Section 3.1</a>).</p>	<p>None; the action plan is closed</p>
2.	<p>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.</p>	<p><a href="#">Section 5: Education Provision</a></p>	<p>The University meets the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) Part 1 for internal quality assurance, and the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales, including the requirements of the UK Quality Code as confirmed by QER 2020.</p> <p>The University's regulations and policies are subject to regular scrutiny to ensure that they remain appropriate and continue to align with external reference points. The schedule of</p>	<p>Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) College reports have identified a need to enhance the scope and quality of data available to support quality assurance activities.</p> <p>Throughout 2021/22, a range of issues across all types of <a href="#">education partnership</a> arrangements at Cardiff were reported to ASQC; the issues only becoming known at the point where action was required to protect the student experience. ASQC has re-confirmed the need to enhance and strengthen the oversight and</p>

			<p>regulation and policy review is overseen by ASQC.</p> <p><a href="#">Institutional Expectations</a> for the design of programmes were approved for use in 2021/22 which clarify the minimum requirement to be satisfied for new degree programmes to be approved.</p> <p>ASQC has established an Education Partnerships Sub-committee which has responsibility for reviewing the quality and academic standards of credit bearing education partnerships.</p>	<p>support for the effective institutional management of the education provision delivered via academic partnerships.</p> <p>The Education Partnerships Sub-committee will oversee the development of an Educational Partnership Policy which will enhance and replace the following existing policies: Study Abroad; Placement Learning; and Collaborative Provision.</p>
		<p><a href="#">Section 6: Student Experience</a></p>	<p>Education and Student Experience Committee established from 2021/22, reporting to Senate, to provide strategic direction and advise the University on all matters relating to education and the student experience.</p> <p>Council, at its meeting in November 2021, approved a three-year business case which prioritised activities from the Education and Students Sub-Strategy. A Portfolio Board is providing oversight of the implementation and progress reported to the Education and Student Experience Committee. Progress to be summarised in the Annual Enhancement Report.</p>	<p>NSS outcomes showed an improvement in 2022, however, there are 8 indicators significantly beneath benchmark, and HEFCW required 7 subject plans to be submitted.</p> <p>Enhancement of data to provide greater insight on the student experience being progressed during 2022/23.</p> <p>Measures of success to be confirmed by the Education and Student Experience Committee. Discussed at meeting on 3 November 2022 and further iteration to be considered in January 2023.</p>

			<p>Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process used by schools to review student satisfaction, degree programmes and assessment outcomes and develop school action plans.</p> <p>Establishment of Education Performance Oversight Group to scrutinise student experience survey data (NSS, PTES, PRES) and school/subject action plans.</p> <p>A new evaluation and monitoring procedure implemented from June 2022.</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.</p>	<p>The internal audit team is reviewing the process for recoding and communicating assessment marks and confirmation of marks at Examining Boards to address the concern regarding the increase in mark errors on transcripts. A plan to address mark errors will be developed following receipt of the internal audit report.</p>
3.	<p>The standards of awards for which we are responsible are appropriately set and maintained.</p>	<p><a href="#">Section 4: Academic Standards</a></p>	<p>Universities in England and Wales are to publish a statement as a commitment to protect the value of UK degrees, and to transparent, consistent, and fair academic standards. The University has published its <a href="#">degree outcome statement</a>, approved by Council. An update to be published in 2022/23.</p>	<p>The University, along with other universities, introduced a safety net to support the principle that no student should be disadvantaged during the period of disruption arising from the pandemic. The application of the safety net resulted in an increase in the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees in 2019/20 and</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><a href="#">Feedback received from external examiners</a> provide significant assurance regarding the academic standards of awards and the degree outcomes profile remains aligned with the UK sector. ASQC receives an annual report on the themes identified from external examiners report and, if appropriate, actions to be taken are confirmed.</p> <p>A new role of External Advisor for Academic Standards created, and recruitment will take place Autumn 2022. The purpose of the consultative role is to provide external scrutiny and expert advice on the University's degree outcomes, and quality assurance and academic standards processes at an institutional level.</p>	<p>2020/21, but a smaller increase than the sector.</p> <p>The proportion of 1<sup>st</sup> class degrees in 2021/22 has fallen to 29%; below pre-pandemic, level which is unexpected as the safety net had a residual effect on outcomes in 2021/22. Therefore, further analysis will be undertaken to better understand and identify the causal factors relating to the change in profile of degree outcomes. We remain confident that there are no concerns regarding the academic standards of awards which is supported by feedback and reports from external examiners.</p> <p>There is a considerable gap between the good degree outcomes (1<sup>st</sup> and 2-1) of UK Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic students and UK white students. The University has agreed that actions being taken through its Inclusive Education project will contribute towards eliminating the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic awarding gap.</p> <p>The University's degree algorithms will be reviewed in 2022/23 with reference to the UK sector <a href="#">Principles for Effective Algorithm Design</a>.</p>
--	--	--	---	--

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.	<a href="#">Section 6: Student Experience</a>	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.	From 2022/23, the Students' Union will submit in-year 'mini-Student Views' to ensure more timely raising of issues identified by students.
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.	<a href="#">Section 3: External Reference Points</a>	Confirmation that the Relationship Agreement between the University and the Students' Union and the Student Charter have been reviewed annually notified to Council.  Minor changes to the Relationship Agreement and the Student Charter approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Students in October 2022.	
6.	The governing body has effective oversight of degree outcomes and academic integrity.	<a href="#">Section 3: External Reference Points</a>	The University has signed up to the <a href="#">QAA's Academic Integrity Charter</a> 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.	Academic misconduct is a growing problem and presents a threat to the reputation of higher education worldwide. It takes a wide variety of forms including the use of essay and degree mills, plagiarism, collusion between students and forged or altered qualification certificates.  The University has identified the need to enhance the advice provided to students about academic integrity and it is to be one



			<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>of the priorities to be addressed via the Re-thinking Assessment Project.</p>
		<p><a href="#">Section 4: Academic Standards</a></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>There has been an increase in the number of academic misconduct cases over the past three years. The Blended Learning Framework for 2021/22 provided advice to staff on the design of assessments to reduce the risk of academic misconduct, however, there has been further increases in the number of cases. Further attention to be given to the rise in the number of academic misconduct cases via the Re-thinking Assessment Project, particularly with reference to the enhancement of advice provided to students.</p>