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Monitoring and review policy

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Scope and Exclusions

From 1st August 2022, this policy provides an overview of the monitoring and review processes for all credit bearing modules/programmes leading to a Cardiff University award (including collaborative provision, study abroad and placement modules/programmes). It allows us to examine what is working well and what needs to be improved.

Monitoring and review are a key component of the University's mechanisms for managing quality and standards and confirms how we continue to meet our regulatory requirements set out in expectations and practices set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for internal quality assurance.

This policy outlines how our monitoring and review processes are interconnected avoiding any unnecessary duplication of work. Our processes draw upon data available through the survey management framework, module evaluation and outcomes, external examiner reports as well as the views of professional or regulatory accrediting bodies to enable discussions at the appropriate time in the academic cycle so that prompt action can be taken at a point when it will have the most impact.

Exclusions

Non-credit bearing modules/programmes which do not lead to a Cardiff University award

The University offers a variety of non-credit-bearing modules/programmes that do not lead to a Cardiff University award. It is expected that the monitoring and review of all non-credit-bearing provision will follow the principles set out in this Policy. Some non-credit-bearing programmes are accredited by external professional bodies and as such may also be subject to their policies and practices with regard to quality assurance.

Institutional oversight

This Policy has been endorsed by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) in May 2022 and approved by Senate in June 2022. It will be kept under regular review to ensure it continues both to support internal processes that function efficiently and effectively and to fully meet the expectations and practices set out in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and section 1.5 and 1.9 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for internal quality assurance.

Our monitoring and review processes have been mapped against the UK Quality Code expectations and core and common practices alongside the supporting advice and guidance on [Course Design and Development](#), [Partnerships](#), [Monitoring and Evaluation](#), [Assessment](#), [Enabling Student Achievement](#), [External Expertise](#), [Student Engagement](#) and [Work Based Learning](#) as appropriate.

In addition, our processes have been mapped against standard 1.9 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for internal quality assurance with specific relation to the on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Expectations for standards	Expectations for quality
The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework'	Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector recognised standards'	From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.
Core practices for standards	Core practices for quality
The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.
Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.
The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
	Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.

	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.
Common practices for standards	Common practices for quality
The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement	The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
	The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.
	The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

Section 1: Key principles

The monitoring and review processes outlined in this policy are designed in relation to a guiding principle of subsidiarity, which supports the efficient processing of University business whilst ensuring appropriate rigour and scrutiny.

We are committed to the regular monitoring of our modules and programmes in order to:

- maintain academic standards and continue to meet our regulatory requirements set out in expectations and practices set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for internal quality assurance
- ensure there is continued alignment with PSRB requirements (where relevant)
- facilitate continuous enhancement of provision to reflect developments in the sector, institution, and discipline

We recognise that the process of monitoring and enhancement of modules and programmes is iterative and happens through a range of informal and formal mechanisms. Monitoring and review provides Colleges and Schools with a defined opportunity to take a holistic view of both the module/programme(s) and the environment in which learning and teaching occurs, drawing together evidence and observations from a range of internal and external sources, in order to identify actions to be taken and report on progress being made as required.

Monitoring and review is an academic process underpinned by peer review and informed student involvement. The monitoring of modules and programmes is risk-focused and aligned with the University's Education Sub-Strategy.

The Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) is responsible for monitoring the core indicators of the quality and standards across the institution reporting annually to Senate and Council on performance through the Annual Quality Report.

Section 2: Annual Review and Enhancement

The annual review and enhancement (ARE) process provides each School, College and the University the opportunity to pause and reflect on our education provision - what has worked well and what changes need to be put in place?

Co-ordinated at College level, the process is developed around a portfolio of evidence related to baseline regulatory requirements and institutional enhancement activities. Our revised approach is based on the following principles:

Evidence-based

The process uses a range of data that underpins each area of focus, allowing for both a local and strategic approach to review and development. Schools' are able to discuss the data at the time it becomes available giving the opportunity to make recommendations and actions at a point when it will have the most impact.

Proportionate

The process takes account of the differences in size and shape of each School - it is not a 'one size fits all' approach. It's important that all Schools reflect on all data but action plans will only be required where the data identifies the outcomes are borderline or below benchmark.

Timely

Rather than producing one School ARE report each year, the process is designed to enable discussions at the time the data becomes available. This avoids any duplication of effort and the outcomes of the discussions can be implemented without having to wait until the end of the academic cycle.

Connected

Discussions that take place through the Survey Management and Module Enhancement Framework have been integrated into the ARE process thus avoiding repetition and allowing for a strategic focus. This provides a consistent institution-wide approach to action-planning and monitoring which will be captured through the completion of one single School Student Experience Enhancement Plan (SEEP)/action log.

Areas of focus under review

The areas of focus are reviewed each year by the Academic Standards and Quality Committee to ensure they remain fit for purpose and there are clear links to external regulatory requirements and institutional enhancement activity.

Action Planning

Schools are encouraged to take a collaborative approach when developing their Student Experience Enhancement Plan or action log allowing for a shared responsibility for all actions. It is designed to be a live, working document with the focus on developing a limited number of SMART actions that each School can

confidently carry out. It should focus on how any intervention strategies will be reviewed and impact assessed with specific timelines identified.

Institutional oversight

At its final meeting each year, the Academic Standards and Quality Committee receive College ARE reports that provide an overview of discussions with Schools including assurance that where Schools have been identified as 'at risk' for falling below benchmark in multiple areas of focus, action plans specifically address areas for improvement along with timescales for evaluation.

In addition, each College provides an overview of the implementation of the process, reporting on areas of strength and areas that require further development in the [Annual Quality Report](#) that is submitted to Senate and Council.

Section 3: The Survey Management Framework

The Survey Management Framework provides improved assurance around the management and actions from survey results, as well as a framework to celebrate and share the excellent practice that is evident. This approach is characterised by:

- timely release of data and a focus on sector/benchmark performance.
- structured discussions with Schools to focus on excellent performance; and areas that may need improvement and support.
- a consistent institution-wide approach to action-planning and monitoring.

The Student Voice

The Survey Management Framework uses a range of student voice data, including NSS, PTES and PRES results to hold discussions with each College and each School. Each School prepares a Student Experience Enhancement Plans (SEEPs) reflecting on the results and any ensuing actions. These plans provide us with assurance that the student experience is being managed and improved. In addition, each of the three Colleges provide a reflection on those questions that perform beneath benchmark.

Module Enhancement

Module Enhancement allows staff to gather feedback from students at a modular level. Engaging our students and taking time to gather and respond to feedback is a crucial aspect of the Education and Students sub-strategy and one of the ways in which we can demonstrate that we are acting on student feedback. By listening to and working in partnership with our students, we can actively improve the student experience.

The outcomes of discussions on Student Voice and Module Enhancement data are facilitated through the ARE process to allow for more systematic monitoring of action being taken in response to module and survey feedback from students. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data identify potential areas for actions and highlight good practice and ensures that agreed actions are tracked and the impact of actions taken are assessed in subsequent review periods in a continuous enhancement cycle.

Progress Monitoring of Research Students

Our Policy and Procedure on the Monitoring of Research Students is student-centred, purpose-driven and complements the ongoing monitoring that is part of regular supervision. It comprises a system of regular reporting, review and feedback, built around the student's Research Plan, and is mandatory for all students registered for research degrees (with the exception of PhD by Published Works and programmes that are highly structured and include substantial taught elements and built-in schedules of assessment, such as MRes, DCLinPsy, DEdPsy) including full-time, part-time and staff candidates.

The Procedure includes an Initial Review (undertaken in the first year only), Annual Review and Interim Review (undertaken mid-way between the Annual Reviews). The monitoring events provide an opportunity for the student and their supervisor(s) to reflect on progress during the reporting period, re-evaluate training needs, update the Research Plan, and to raise concerns about the academic or practical arrangements to support the project. It allows the student and their School to be confident that the student is continuing to progress at a satisfactory rate and that the academic and practical arrangements supporting their programme remain adequate.

If progress is considered unsatisfactory, or if a student fails to comply with the requirements of the Procedure, the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies will meet with them to explore the concerns and inform an appropriate course of action. This gives the student the opportunity to demonstrate that they can improve their performance against a set of objectives sufficiently well to remain registered on the programme.

Institutional oversight

The monitoring and review of modules and programmes including our postgraduate research programmes through a new revalidation process and an integrated Survey Management Framework and Module Evaluation Framework provides a robust and evidenced based mechanism for Schools to address any issues and to plan enhancements to the student experience.

This interconnected approach primarily through the Annual Review and Enhancement process, ensures that School action plans are monitored at an institutional level and remain in line with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1 (para 1.9) and the specific expectations for standards and quality outlined in the UK Quality Code.

Section 4: Revalidation of programmes

Revalidation of programmes within a defined schedule of activity will provide Schools with the opportunity to ensure their portfolio of programmes continued to be strategically and academically fit for purpose based on the following principles:

- A thorough review of each Schools portfolio ensuring that there is strategic alignment with University priorities.
- The purpose and aims of the programmes remain relevant and aligned with subject benchmark statements.
- The content and learning outcomes remain appropriate and to consider the cumulative effect of changes, approved by Board of Studies, to programmes made over time.
- Programme structures and programme rules continue to be aligned with University regulations and incorporate the Cardiff University principles of programme structure, design and delivery, and Cardiff graduate attributes, whilst adhering to the guidance on assessment and the digital education strategy.
- Where relevant, programmes meet the requirements of PSRB and are ready for accreditation.
- The programme information, which is published remains up-to-date and accurate, in line with our responsibilities under Consumer Protection Law.

Revalidation has a symbiotic relationship with Annual Review and Enhancement process and the Programme Development process when supporting Schools where it has been highlighted that major changes are needed to a programme or where significant recommendations have been made by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).

Through the revalidation process, any programmes needing major changes to structure, design or delivery could be achieved without having to duplicate effort through the parallel programme development process. Panels reviewing the information will include an external advisor and will be sufficiently qualified to recommend approval of the changes to ASQC through the revalidation report.

Action Planning

As identified in Section 1, Schools will continue to update their Student Experience Enhancement Plan or action log as part of the revalidation process to focus on how any intervention strategies will be reviewed and impact assessed with specific timelines identified. The SEEP will be the comprehensive document that connects the actions from all processes together to ensure there is a consistent and coherent approach.

Institutional oversight

As outlined in Section 1, the Academic Standards and Quality Committee will receive College revalidation reports that provide an overview of discussions with Schools

including assurance that all programmes continue to be strategically and academically fit for purpose.

In addition, each College provides an overview of the implementation of the process, reporting on areas of strength and areas that require further development in the [Annual Quality Report](#) that is submitted to Senate and Council.

Section 5: Programmes with external partners

We continue to work with a wide range of partners, including educational institutions, in the UK and overseas. These collaborations allow our students to gain valuable experience in a work environment or study.

A key consideration when reviewing partnership activity is whether collaboration with a partner poses a risk to the University's academic standards and student experience, and by implication the reputation of the University. The need to protect these is of paramount importance and must be the primary consideration in the evaluation of the benefits of any form of collaboration

We take a risk-based approach to managing our collaborative arrangements, with established policies, ensuring we remain compliant with the expectations and core and common practices outlined in the UK Quality Code, and the supporting advice and guidance on Course Design and Development, Partnerships, Monitoring and Evaluation, Assessment, Enabling Student Achievement, External Expertise, Student Engagement and Work-Based Learning.

Institutional oversight of collaborative taught partnerships and programmes

Oversight of taught collaborative partnerships is by the Programme and Partner Standing Panel, reporting to the ASQC. The Standing Panel ensure that decisions on collaborative provision proposals can be taken more holistically, and in light of wider learning, teaching and student experience consideration, rather than in isolation. This ensures an integrated approach and appropriate academic and strategic consideration of any collaborative provision proposals, including study abroad and placement learning.

Moderator reports for taught collaborative programmes

All taught collaborative partnerships have a Moderator appointed by ASQC. The Moderator will normally be a senior academic from a different College with a tenure for the lifetime of the agreement.

The Moderator makes an annual visit to the partner organisation and provides a report for each year of the programme or arrangement. The Moderator acts on behalf of the University and the report is considered by the appropriate Board of Studies/School Board before submission to the Programme and Partner Standing Panel reporting to ASQC. Through the report, each Moderator will provide an analysis of:

- the quality of programmes and standards achieved by students at the partner institution are commensurate with those within the University.
- effectiveness of communications, management and operational arrangements that underpin the provision.
- any additional support needed for the partner institution in implementing and maintaining Cardiff University's quality assurance and enhancement requirements.

Each year, the moderator will produce a report covering the previous academic session and the School is required to provide a response to the report in line with similar processes, such as those for External Examiners. The actions agreed by the School in response to a Moderator's report must be reported through the Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE) process. In addition, our Examining Boards receive external examiner reports to confirm the standard of awards.

Details of all formal collaborative taught agreements are recorded on our Collaborative Provision Register, which is published on our public information webpages with each arrangement identifying its associated status, type of collaboration and risk. This is updated annually on receipt of the moderator report.

Placements and Study Abroad

The Placement Learning and Study Abroad policies standardise our approach for the set-up, management and monitoring of credit-bearing placement and study abroad activity

Both policies have been developed to ensure appropriate levels of due diligence are conducted to protect academic standards and ensure that students have a good experience. They uphold the overarching principles outlined in the Collaborative Provision policy and have been mapped against the UK Quality Code expectations and core and common practices alongside the supporting advice and guidance on [Course Design and Development](#), [Partnerships](#), [Research Degrees](#), [Monitoring and Evaluation](#) and [Assessment](#), [Enabling Student Achievement](#), and [Student Engagement](#) as appropriate.

Both policies aim to ensure:

- clarity of responsibility for brokering the arrangements with partners (for study abroad partners this is done via the Global Opportunities team).
- a risk-based approach, meaning that before any placement and study abroad activity can proceed, each partner is risk assessed for its capacity to deliver the educational objectives and any broader risk(s) to either the student or the University.
- all new Study Abroad partner proposals (and renewals) are considered by the Programme and Partner Standing Panel through the Study Abroad Partner Risk Assessment process.
- all academic Placement and Study Abroad programmes considered through the Standing Panel as part of the programme approval process.
- requirements for an individual Student Learning Agreement outlining the specific arrangements of the placement/study abroad curriculum (and grade conversion where appropriate) that is agreed with students before they leave for their placement/study abroad activity.

The Global Opportunities team is responsible for brokering and monitoring the arrangements with the study abroad partner however it is each individual School that is responsible for ensuring the expectations and practices set out in the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education are implemented and operationalised.

The Global Opportunities team is responsible for keeping a register of study abroad partnerships that is reviewed and updated each academic year and approved by the Programme and Partner Standing Panel and reported to ASQC.

Visiting Study Abroad Partner Organisations

This is a key part of the process for the approval and ongoing management of Institutional Study Abroad partnerships, both as part of building the relationship with partner organisations and in supporting the University to assess and monitor any risks associated with the partnership. As such, it is an expectation that a recent and appropriate site visit has been completed before a partnership is approved. Thereafter, partner organisations are re-visited at least once every 5 years. Global Opportunities support Schools in coordinating visits and providing guidance on what evidences should be captured during visits.

Institutional oversight of placements and study abroad activity

The Academic Standards and Quality Committee maintains the institutional oversight of placement and study abroad activity however, Schools must ensure that there is a clear, effective and confidential way for students to provide feedback whilst they are at a placement/study abroad partner to protect the student experience. Feedback is monitored and evaluated through each Board of Studies and to the University via the Annual Review and Enhancement Process. This includes information summarising:

- student numbers and achievements whilst on placement/study abroad;
- any impact of increased student numbers on the resources available to support students;
- feedback from all stakeholders;
- reflection on any new programmes/partners added, plus comments on any proposed changes to improve placement/study abroad activity in future years;
- reflection of any equality and diversity issues that have been raised;
- any other comments, including key points summarising any aspects of good practice that were considered to be particularly effective.

The Academic Standards and Quality Committee receive College ARE reports in addition to reports from the Programme and Partner Standing Panel on areas of strength and areas that require further development in the [Annual Quality Report](#) that is submitted to Senate and Council

Section 6: Student involvement in monitoring and review

We are proud of our level of engagement with our student body, giving students the opportunity to share their opinions and to participate as our partners in our decision-making processes. It is an important element of our academic governance and quality system and fulfils expectations outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, highlighting that “providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience”.

Students are established members of our key governance committees, including: Council; Senate; ASQC, and its sub-committees. Students also play a key role in our quality assurance processes, being actively involved in ARE, Revalidation, and the Programme and Partner Standing Panel.

The student academic representative system is mature and embedded, and ensures that students are also able to provide input at School level, via Student-Staff Panels. Student academic representatives are trained and supported by the Students’ Union.

The active contribution made by our students to the enhancement of learning and teaching and our academic quality system ensures that it is informed by and reflects the student perspective. We value the contributions made by our students which supports us to develop and deliver innovative and high-quality programmes.

Section 7: External Reference Points

External Examiners

[External examining](#) provides a key role in maintaining our academic standards and are an essential regulatory requirement when providing externality as part of our monitoring and review processes.

Those appointed as external examiners are experts in their field, drawn from higher education, industry, or professional bodies and provide valuable independent oversight and advice. They are also able to offer an informed view of how our standards compare with the same or similar awards at other universities. The primary way in which external examiners provide assurance of the quality and standards of our taught and research provision is via the submission of annual written reports.

Our External Examiners for taught programmes are required to comment on the stretch of assessment and comparability of standards between modules of the same FHEQ level with other providers in the sector. Many External Examiner reports highlight how we consistently exceed the benchmark statements showing that our modules and programmes meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework and is in line with sector-recognised standards.

Issues raised by External Examiners are quickly and effectively handled at the appropriate level and this can be evidenced in the high volume of positive reports received and published on our public information webpages. A written response is made to all External Examiners addressing any issues raised in their report and is sent as an institutional response. Any issues identified by External Examiners are discussed through each School Board of Studies in addition to a more holistic review through the Annual Review and Monitoring process.

In the case of research degrees, we appoint external examiners to provide an impartial and independent assessment of theses submitted for examination, and to comment on the comparability of the quality and standards of the University's research degree programme in relation to other UK providers, with whom the examiner should normally have experience. External Examiners are also asked to comment on areas of good practice and make recommendations for enhancement. The reports are reviewed by a dedicated postgraduate research team in the Registry, and any notable comments or apparent trends are reported to the relevant College Postgraduate Dean.

Accreditation

We have a range of taught and research degrees that are accredited by external bodies and as a consequence we are required to evidence that our programmes meet the accrediting body's standards and criteria to ensure that the graduating students are of the appropriate competency to go on in their chosen profession.

Accreditation has a dual focus; one to assure the academic standards and alignment with the appropriate benchmark standards and qualifications framework and the other to ensure all professional standards are met. For many accredited programmes, a review of the programme is completed on a cyclical basis which ensures that the programme remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of the academic and professional body requirements. The use of additional external expertise compliments our robust programme development process to ensure assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. This is also addressed through our External Examiner Reports with specific reference to accrediting body standards.

All programmes that receive accreditation through a professional statutory or regulatory body have a clear schedule for review and are listed on our [public information website](#).

Institutional oversight

The review and monitoring of all External Examiner and accreditation reports are undertaken by the Board of Studies. Any issues and areas of good practice are highlighted in the ARE process particularly in relation to degree outcomes and the academic standards of our modules/programmes.

The use of external reference points in our multi-layered, interconnected approach to monitoring and review lead to the continuous improvement of our programmes that achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students.

Action plans developed through the Annual Review and Enhancement process provide the School, College and University with a comprehensive overview of the strengths and areas for improvement in each School and these are used as focus points for structured development.