Quality Enhancement Review

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Technical Report

March 2022

About the Quality Enhancement Review method

The QAA website explains the method for [Quality Enhancement Review (QER)](#) and has links to the QER handbook and other informative documents.[1] For 2021-22, the scope of QERs focused on quality assurance in line with HEFCW's changes to external quality assurance requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, QAA published an addendum to accompany the QER handbook which explains the adaptations to the method delivery. For 2021-22, providers have the opportunity to engage with QAA separately on quality enhancement. You can also find more information about the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)](#).[2]

About this review

This is the Technical Report of the QER conducted by QAA at University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The review visit took place online between 21 and 24 March 2022. The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers:

- Professor Diane Meehan
- Dr Katie Thirlaway
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer).

In advance of the review visits, the provider submitted a self-evaluative document (the self-evaluative analysis), and a Prior Information Pack, comprising a range of materials about the provider's arrangements for managing quality and academic standards.

About this report

In this report, the QER team makes judgements on:

- the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) Part 1 for internal quality assurance
- the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

The judgements can be found on page 2, followed by the detailed findings of the review given in numbered paragraphs.

Technical Reports set out the QER team's view under each of the report headings. A shorter Outcome Report sets out the main findings of the QER for a wider audience. The [Outcome Report](#) for this review is on the QAA website.[3]

QER Technical Reports are intended primarily for the provider reviewed, and to provide an information base for the production of thematic reports that identify findings across several providers.

---

[1] About QER: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/quality-enhancement-review
[2] About QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us
[3] Outcome Report: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/quality-assurance-reports/University-of-Wales-Trinity-Saint-David

Overarching judgement about University of Wales Trinity Saint David

University of Wales Trinity Saint David **meets** the requirements of the ESG Part 1 for internal quality assurance.

University of Wales Trinity Saint David **meets** the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

This is a positive judgement, which means the provider has robust arrangements for securing academic standards, managing academic quality and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

1 Contextual information about the provider, student population and the review

1.1 Summary information about the provider, including strategic framework, organisational structure

1   The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD; 'the University') was formed on 18 November 2010 through the merger of the University of Wales, Lampeter and Trinity University College, Carmarthen, under Lampeter's Royal Charter of 1828. In 2013, Swansea Metropolitan University (SMU) became part of UWTSD, and Coleg Sir Gâr (CSG) in 2013-14 and Coleg Ceredigion (CC) in 2014-15 became dual-sector partners, forming the UWTSD Group. Since 2014, UWTSD has been awarding its own awards, rather than those of the University of Wales. In addition, the University is licensed by Pearson to offer Higher National qualifications and works with a small number of other awarding bodies, mainly in relation to professional qualifications. The University's mission is 'Transforming Education; Transforming Lives'. Its vision, values and strategic priorities are set out in its Strategic Plan 2017-2022. This vision is to be a University for Wales, with a commitment to the wellbeing and heritage of the nation at the heart of all that the University does.

1.2 Composition, key trends and anticipated changes in the student population, including information on retention, progression and outcomes

2   The University has campuses in Birmingham, Carmarthen, Lampeter, London and Swansea, each with their own distinct identities; it also has learning centres in Cardiff. Through its dual-sector partners and through outreach facilities, it also offers provision at a range of other locations in South Wales. There is no single 'main' campus and all institutes work across at least two locations. To safeguard the distinctiveness of each campus experience, three Provosts were appointed in 2019: London/Birmingham, Carmarthen/Lampeter, and Swansea/Cardiff.

3   In the academic year 2020-21, the University had enrolled a total of 22,884 students of which 5,153 were studying at its collaborative partner institutions and its constituent colleges. Among these, 9,483 students (42%) are first degree undergraduates with 8,075 students (35%) following other undergraduate courses, 4,272 students (19%) were studying taught postgraduate degrees and 852 (4%) were following postgraduate research. Overall, 4,802 students are studying on a part-time basis. Clusters of academic provision are offered through four institutes: Institute of Education and Humanities, Institute of Inner City Learning, Institute of Management and Health, Wales Institute of Science and Art. The institutes have formal links with the constituent colleges in the UWTSD group and with the University's collaborative partner institutions through the framework for collaborative provision.

1.3 Commentary on the preparation for the review, including how the provider and students worked in partnership in review preparation

4   The University prepared for the review by establishing a small working group to coordinate its submission. The working group, which included representation from the Students' Union (SU), provided regular reports to Academic Standards Committee and Senate. The initial draft of the Self-Evaluative Analysis Document (SEAD) was produced by the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic Experience and the Director of Academic Experience (DAE). The draft drew upon a detailed analysis of the University's adherence to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

5   The institution carried out consultation through a series of weekly meetings with the working group drawing additional representation from across academic and professional units and the Students' Union. Consultation was also held with a number of other groups, including key senior staff. The comments received through these various channels informed the preparation of the final document, which was formally approved by Senate on 24 November 2021 and Council on 25 November 2021.

1.4 Summary of the provider's follow-up to the previous review

6   The previous QAA Higher Education Review (HER) took place in 2015; the University met UK expectations in relation to academic standards, quality of the student learning experience, information, and enhancement. The resulting report made four recommendations, four affirmations and identified three features of good practice. The report was considered at the relevant committees and action plans were produced, tracked to completion, and approved by Senate. The University has built on the good practice and taken appropriate action in relation to the recommendations and affirmations.

7   The four recommendations and associated actions were to: clarify the membership, attendance, remit and reporting requirements of each of the boards within the University's examination board structure, now clearly set out in the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH); adopt a consistent approach to ensuring that all students are provided with clear grading criteria which enable them to understand what is required to achieve a particular grade, achieved through the adoption of university-wide marking criteria; ensure that assessment feedback is provided in line with university requirements, addressed through implementation of a feedback tracking system; and strengthen the reporting arrangements for external examining across collaborative provision, addressed through requiring external examiners assigned to programmes delivered through collaborative partners to provide separate reports for each partner.

8   Since the 2015 HER, QAA has undertaken several other reviews of different parts of the University's provision, including the Transnational Education (TNE) reviews of collaborative provision at IBAT College, Dublin in 2017 and the Malvern International Academy, Kuala Lumpur in 2019; a partial review of the provision in Birmingham in 2019; a developmental review of Welsh Government-funded apprenticeship provision in 2021; and a thematic review of digital learning in 2021, all with positive outcomes overall. Following the thematic and developmental reviews, action plans were produced and tracked to completion and for the most recent reviews are currently being tracked.

9   The partial review of the Birmingham campus in 2019 judged that the University meets the requirements of the ESG Part 1 for internal quality assurance and the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales. The review resulted in two commendations, three recommendations and two affirmations and the

review team can confirm that the University has taken, and continues to take, appropriate action to address the issues raised in the report.

10   The three recommendations were that the University puts in place mechanisms to strengthen the assurance that the academic standards of awards at different sites are comparable; ensures greater clarity of information provided in future to students about the availability and nature of the Certificate in Higher Education in International Hotel Management programme; and introduces a comprehensive system to collect and analyse student satisfaction data at module and programme level at the Birmingham Learning Centre.

11   To address the first recommendation, the University has introduced an additional multi-campus programme board that brings together programme teams from across its various sites and seeks to ensure parity of experience and student outcomes across all locations of delivery. In 2020-21, the University also appointed an external programme reviewer to compare performance across sites and to introduce an element of additional externality; this approach was replaced in 2021-22 by an additional Annual Programme Review (APR) report to allow comparison of standards across sites. The effectiveness of this revised approach will be assessed as part of the 2022 annual ASC APR meeting.

12   To address the second recommendation, revised marketing information was produced and - in relation to the third recommendation - development of online module questionnaires has enhanced the engagement of students with the feedback systems. The University has also enhanced its processes for the appointment of full-time staff and student pre-induction and induction and provides additional support for the development of English Language skills. In addition, the University has substantially revised its Academic Misconduct Policy and from 2021-22 made sessions on Academic Integrity mandatory for all academic staff in the Institute of Inner City Learning and produces an annual report on Academic Integrity for Senate and Council.

1.5   Details of the provider's responsibilities for the higher education it provides on behalf of the degree-awarding body/ies it works with

13   Since 2014, the University has awarded its own degrees rather than those of the University of Wales (UW). A small number of postgraduate research students are still completing UW awards, including students who were enrolled prior to 2014 who elected to stay on a UW award, students who were enrolled at Greenwich School of Management (GSM) London through UW who are now being supervised to completion on UW awards by the University, and students enrolled on UW awards with the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS) which became part of the University in 2019. These students are monitored by the University's Research Degrees Committee (RDC) as well as the UW RDC. The Chair of the University's RDC sits on the UW board and the University produces an annual monitoring report on UW research degree students for this board.

14   The University also delivers Higher National Qualifications under licence from Pearson. No significant issues were identified in the Pearson Institutional Review Report for 2019-20.

2 Academic standards and quality processes

2.1 Key features of the provider's approach to managing quality and how students are involved in contributing to the management of the quality of learning

15 The first of the University's four key priorities is 'Putting Learners First'. Responsibility for quality, standards of learning and awards of taught programmes ultimately lies with Senate who report to the Council. Senate delegates detailed oversight of quality and standards for taught awards to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). Central oversight and management of quality is shared by two professional units: The Academic Office (AO) and the Collaborative Partnership Office (CPO). The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Experience) oversees the AO and the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) oversees the CPO. The review team was assured that this separation of oversight of home and collaborative provision did not result in any inconsistency.

16 Responsibility for the management of quality is shared between central services and the four institutes. During the period since the previous review more responsibility has been devolved to institutes to allow them to respond appropriately to their specific portfolios (for example, degree apprenticeships) and different student groups (for example, mature students). The University enhanced the institutes' leadership of quality assurance through the appointment of Assistant Deans with responsibility for quality. The Assistant Deans sit on the ASC and the review team was told this enabled them to ensure consistency in quality assurance across all four institutes.

17 The review team noted that the University, in line with the sector, was moving towards a risk-based approach to quality assurance and that in synergy with that approach the Academic Quality Handbook working group was moving from a process-based to a principle-based regulatory framework and associated policies. This change in ethos further supports the devolution of the operational management of quality to the institutes. The review team was assured that these changes were enabling quality enhancement.

18 The University is committed to working in partnership with its students and with the Students' Union which is recognised as the voice of students. The relationship between students enrolled at the University and those enrolled at collaborative partner institutions is outlined in the Student Charter. Students are represented at all levels of university decision making and the team was assured this was in place across all four institutes and in collaborative partners. However, the review team noted that students did not always feel enabled to participate fully. For example, committee papers were sometimes too late to read in full. It is important that student representatives are fully supported to be able to carry out their duties on key decision-making committees to enable good policy in student representation to be codified into good practice across the institutions.

19 The Academic Quality Handbook states that students contribute at all key quality assurances stages in relation to their programmes of study: development, assurance, and enhancement. The student submission highlighted students were unhappy with the generic Graduate Attributes modules introduced to all programmes in 2020 to support students with the increased reliance on technology for teaching, in the workplace and to prepare them for the world of work. Students questioned both their relevance and mode of assessment. The review team was assured by the student submission and from review team meetings that students believe their feedback is being heard and acted upon.

2.2 Key features of the approach to setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards

20   The University has a robust framework for setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards. The comprehensive Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) sets out its academic, deliberative and quality assurance structures, academic regulations and, as confirmed in meetings, provides staff with a key reference point for the setting and maintenance of academic standards. The AQH is available on the University's website in Welsh and English, and through the Student Hwb, and is updated annually. The University has moved from a process-based to a principle-based AQH, providing some flexibility in approach while ensuring consistency of outcomes.

21   The University's committee structure supports effective oversight of standards. Senate, the senior academic committee, has overall responsibility for ensuring academic standards are maintained and devolves oversight of academic standards to Academic Standards Committee (ASC). Minutes of ASC demonstrate it discharges its responsibilities diligently, with regular reporting upwards to Senate. Senate retains oversight of collaborative provision (see Section 3) through ASC and the International Affairs and Collaborative Partnership Committee (IACPC) who share responsibility for the monitoring of academic standards and quality of the collaborative partner student experience.

22   The Doctoral College, established in 2021 to coordinate postgraduate research (PGR) student experience across the University, aims to ensure comparability of experience and development of the research culture. PGR students who met the review team confirmed considerable variability of experience and reliance on strong relationships with supervisory teams rather than their institutes or wider University. They were, however, clear about the role of the new Doctoral College and spoke positively about the support it offers. Therefore, **the review team affirms the work being undertaken by the Doctoral College to ensure comparability of student experience across the multi-campus locations and modes of study.** Doctoral College Board, reporting to Research Committee, oversees research development, environment and recruitment, while Research Degrees Committee (RDC), reporting to ASC, appropriately retains responsibility for the standards of postgraduate research awards.

23   The University has a range of processes that ensure standards are set and maintained in line with sector expectations. Programme standards are set during programme development and approval, the University having refined its approach since the previous review. The two-stage process involves initial scrutiny of programme proposals followed by programme validation. The validation process involves a single 'event' and although largely documentation based, a risk-based validation meeting may be held and is required for all collaborative programmes. External advisers scrutinise validation documentation and the review team found that the process ensures programmes align with a range of external reference points. ASC is responsible for final approval of programmes.

24   Assessment regulations, marking principles and processes articulated in the AQH ensure robust and effective assessment practices including the moderation of all assessments contributing to a final award. External examiners play a key role in the maintenance of standards and their role is set out in the AQH and the External Expertise Protocol. The University utilises procedural external examiners to ensure examination boards apply regulations consistently, as well as module external examiners. Where possible, a single external examiner is appointed for programmes with the same title and content taught across different sites who, from 2021, is required to provide reports for each partner. External examiners comment explicitly on the standards of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by students in relation to national or professional body standards and the comparability of standards to those of similar institutions. As part of

the annual monitoring process, comprehensive external examiner overview reports are produced for ASC and Senate.

25   The Annual Programme Review (APR) process ensures that programmes are well designed, effective assessment mechanisms and appropriate support systems are in place, and that quality and standards are maintained. The process is thorough, operating at programme cluster level, academic discipline level and institute level. Collaborative partners provide a partnership overview report, reflecting on several additional areas, such as complaints. ASC's annual monitoring meeting considers consistency of quality, standards, and achievement across the University, allows for good practice to be shared and for institutional-level issues to be identified and addressed. RDC monitors the progress of research students through several milestones, concentrated in their first year and all PGRs also undergo an appropriate progress monitoring process, at least annually. To ensure institutional oversight of the standards of research awards, the chair of RDC provides a report to ASC on the progress and achievement of PGRs as part of the annual monitoring process.

2.3   Use of external reference points in quality processes

26   The University uses a range of relevant external reference points in quality processes and the development of policies. Quality policies, procedures and practices have been comprehensively mapped against the UK Quality Code demonstrating how the University meets the expectations for quality and standards and the core and common practices, and against the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), providing evidence of alignment. Key reference points used in programme development are set out in the AQH and include the ESG, UK Quality Code, FHEQ/CQFW, Degree Characteristics Statements, and Subject Benchmark Statements together with programme-specific requirements for Pearson Higher National awards, professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements, with a number of the University's programmes having PSRB accreditation, Estyn requirements and the apprenticeship frameworks and standards. Alignment with these reference points is checked through the programme validation process.

27   Sector benchmarks are routinely used to monitor University attainment and performance, for example, as part of the APR process and in relation to the analysis of survey, retention, and degree outcomes. Externality is incorporated into a range of key quality processes and the University's expectations for the use of external examiners and external advisers in these processes are clearly set out in the External Expertise Protocol. External advisers are required to write a written report as part of the programme approval process, are appointed to the ASC annual monitoring meeting, sit on partnership approval and reviews, and are part of the RPEL and Accreditation Board and academic misconduct and fitness to practise boards.

28   The University makes appropriate use of external examiners for all taught and research awards (see Section 2.2). Nominations for external examiners for taught awards are approved through ASC and for research degrees through RDC. Responsibilities of external examiners in respect of taught awards are specified in the AQH and for research awards in the Code of Practice (Research Degrees). Programme teams respond to external examiner comments and an annual external examiner overview report and annual partner external examiner overview report are prepared as part of the annual monitoring process. Appropriate processes are in place to enable external examiners to raise serious concerns (see Section 2.7).

2.4 Commentary on action taken since the previous review and identification of matters arising from the Prior Information Pack not otherwise explored

29   As noted in Section 1.4, the University has taken appropriate action in response to previous reviews including the 2015 HER and 2019 partial review of its Birmingham Campus.

30   The University's degree algorithm, last revised in 2015-16, is normally reviewed every five years in line with HEFCW requirements. Following UKSCQA's statement of intent in 2019 and publication of UUK's guidance on degree algorithms, the University set up a working group in 2021-22, slightly delayed because of the pandemic, to consult on the degree algorithms used across the University, to propose any required changes and produce an implementation plan. This group is expected, and is on track, to make recommendations on any revisions to the current algorithm to Senate by June 2022.

31   In response to the pandemic, and following lockdown in March 2020, the University reviewed its regulations for awarding degrees as part of its approach to providing contingency support, and ensuring that there was no detriment, to students. Changes to regulations were led by the Academic Office, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the Assistant Deans Quality and the SU, and all changes were approved by ASC and Senate. Following consultation with staff and students, the decision was made that where the University was unable to deliver elements of programmes or students could not complete work due to recognised extenuating circumstances, modification would be made to the existing degree algorithm based on the University's regulations for awarding credit based on lost work.

32   In January 2021, when the majority of teaching on campus in Wales was suspended, the University re-reviewed its regulations and implemented new contingency regulations which required students to complete all assessments but considered fewer total credits within the degree algorithm. In the case of both the 2020 and 2021 amendments to regulations, the University liaised with relevant PSRBs to ensure that the changes met their requirements, and in instances where changes were not deemed appropriate the contingency regulations were adapted or not applied. The University also moved to online delivery of teaching and assessment, made changes to extenuating circumstances regulations and placements, and additional support was provided to partners through the CPO. Research degree regulations were not changed during the pandemic although in 2020, PGRs close to completion were given an extra six months, and viva examinations held online; PGRs were also not precluded from applying for extensions in the normal way.

33   Changes were communicated to staff through a series of webinars; the AO and the University also produced a series of helpful videos to explain to students the changes made. The University also informed external examiners about the changes. Students expressed satisfaction overall for the support provided to students in response to the pandemic.

34   Between 2014-15 and 2019-20 the University's percentage of good honours degrees rose from 50.2% to 75%, initially due to changes to the algorithm. In 2019-20, as a result of the contingency regulations, the percentage of good honours degrees rose 1% from 74% in 2018-19 to 75%, compared with a UK HE sector-wide increase of 5% and a Welsh sector increase of 6%. In 2020-21 the rise in good honours as a result of the revised approach was greater at 83%, albeit the overall percentage is in line with the sector average (also 83%). In discussion with the review team about these outcomes, the University noted that it has seen an increase in mature students who in turn were performing significantly above the sector average in relation to degree outcomes, that generally it was satisfied that the mitigating actions taken in response to the pandemic were appropriate and outcomes

remained in line with the sector. The University also confirmed that it has and will continue to monitor the impact of changes made, which the review team would encourage the University to do.

2.5 Approach to using data to inform decision-making and evaluation

35   As a result of the mergers undertaken in the previous review period, the University has reviewed its data structures and merged two separate student record systems. This is now complete, and the University has embarked on a strategic programme of embedding data and data intelligence across university processes and decision-making procedures. The establishment of a data governance group, whose membership includes Informational Technology & Systems, Academic Office, Registry, Marketing and HR to maintain strategic oversight of the use of data and to develop, deliver and enhance the communication of data across the institution, and the establishment of a HESA data working group have resulted in consistent improvements in data quality, data presentation and consequently the use of data for quality assurance and enhancement.

36   The review team saw a demonstration of the new data dashboards that give the University, institutes and programme teams increased access to data and increased functionality that allow them to interrogate the data and monitor quality in line with the ambitions of the 2021-23 Digital Strategy. The data dashboards enable programme teams to consider issues such as performance of students with protected characteristics or entry tariffs and for institutes to easily evaluate performance across their portfolios. The data allows the University to monitor retention, progression, attainment and outcomes across its institutes and programmes. The review team saw evidence that data provided through dashboards, the overview reports and the monitoring of performance over time was being used to drive strategic developments. Academic staff reported that they trust the data presented through the dashboards in a way they did not previously. This has enhanced decision-making at all levels of the quality assurance process.

37   **Therefore, the review team commends the University for the data dashboard which provides staff with a wide range of accurate, useful and accessible data, enabling the University to monitor its performance comprehensively and effectively in relation to the standards of its awards and the quality of the student learning experience.** The next step for the University is to bring the same benefits to the oversight and enhancement of research degrees. The data dashboards are 'live' which has given increased confidence about the validity of the data and enables the institutes and their programmes to identify issues that could impact negatively on quality as they emerge.

38   The review team was assured that the data dashboards were being used to enhance learning and teaching and assure quality. Student feedback and the strategic desire to enhance communication with students has informed the development of the Student Hwb and a shift towards continual feedback rather than set feedback periods. This change correlates with an improvement in NSS scores on feedback. The University has accelerated its development of an employer-led curriculum in response to its low percentage of students moving into highly skilled professional employment after graduating.

2.6 Effectiveness of how approaches to quality are used to improve and enhance learning and teaching

39   The University assesses the effectiveness of its approaches to enhancing learning and teaching through quantitative and qualitative data including feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and the Student Experience Committee (SEC) both review and reflect on the data and associated working

groups lead on the development of initiatives to improve quality and enhance teaching and learning.

40   In 2019-20, the Student Hwb was created as a central contact point for students. The development of Hwb has been supported by student focus groups which has led to continual enhancements of features. It was evident to the review team that the Hwb was valued by students as an effective and welcoming gateway to the University. During the COVID pandemic, the Hwb coordinated communication to students on regulatory changes in response to the pandemic using videos developed in partnership with the Students' Union. **The review team commends the University on the Student Hwb which provides students with a comprehensive and accessible electronic contact and information point that effectively supports their learning experience**.

41   The review team heard that the NEXUS online training packages for staff had been particularly beneficial and had allowed all staff across all campuses to benefit from training and seminars increasing attendance significantly.

42   The Digital Framework - Blended Learning outlines the University's continued emphasis on hybrid and flexible learning. The ethos 'People by default, Technology by Design' is supported by a set of Digital Teaching and Learning Standards. In 2020, the University created the Digital Services Directorate. To support blended learning two new units within Library and Learning Resources were established. The Digital Creativity and Learning Unit has supported staff to deliver pedagogically informed online teaching and the Digital Skills Team provides enhanced support for students to engage with these new pedagogies. **The review team commends the University on the wide range and impactful use of digital training, pedagogy and support developed during the pandemic which continues to enhance staff and student experience**.

43   The University states that key systems at institutional level for maintaining standards are its staff development framework, external examiner framework and annual monitoring processes. Staff confirmed in meetings with the review team that they are supported to undertake programme development and annual monitoring processes and spoke very positively about the NEXUS Learning and Teaching Framework, the annual NEXUS Plus Learning and Teaching conference and Welsh language support. The University offers four accredited routes towards HEA Fellowship, currently due for reaccreditation; although still relatively low in relation to the sector; the number of staff who are HEA Fellows has increased from 19% in 2015-16 to 34% in 2020-21 with a target of 55% to be achieved by 2025-26. In discussion with PGRs and staff, the review team confirmed that currently no formal training scheme is in place for PGRs who deliver or support teaching, although the University intends to reinstate its Graduate Teaching Assistant scheme and associated training in 2022-23. While the University expressed the view that currently no PGRs regularly undertake teaching but may give guest lectures supported by their supervisors, PGRs described delivering both guest lectures and elements of the curriculum to taught students. **The review team recommends that the University develops a robust system that ensures all current and future postgraduate research students undertaking or supporting teaching undergo appropriate training**.

2.7   Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards

44   The University has effective arrangements in place for securing academic standards. Standards are set through robust programme (re)validation processes and an annual validation overview report considers the efficacy of these processes. The annual programme review process (APR) provides an overview of academic performance and benchmarking against standards across the University; ASC's annual monitoring meeting considers the effectiveness of the process and makes recommendations for improvement.

Appropriate mechanisms are also in place for securing and monitoring the standards of the University's research degrees. The accessibility and quality of data used as part of these, and other monitoring and review processes, have been significantly enhanced since the previous review.

45   External examiners play a key role in the oversight of standards (see Section 2.2) and, if necessary, can raise urgent concerns through their reports. Concerns are followed up by the designated role-holder who varies according to the nature of the concern raised. External examiners are also able to raise concerns directly with the Vice-Chancellor. Issues raised by external examiners are monitored through the annual external examiner overview reports prepared by the Head of the Academic Office. The University's new External Examiner Dashboard, being piloted in 2021-22, supports identification of any serious issues highlighted in module external examiner reports and will also support central oversight of themes arising from these reports.

46   The University produces a number of annual reports to ensure that the arrangements for securing academic standards are effective. These include the comprehensive Senate Annual Report, the development of which is informed by several annual overview reports providing analysis and recommendations on particular areas including validation, examinations and examining boards, external examiners, research degrees, student cases, surveys and league tables, degree outcomes, equality and diversity, and retention. Council receives regular reports from Senate including its annual report.

2.8   Effectiveness of the provider's approach to self-evaluation, including the effective use of data to inform decision-making

47   Following the mergers prior to the current review period, the University focused on creating consistency of processes and practice. As consistency has been embedded the University has moved to self-evaluation where processes and procedures are examined for efficacy and best practice. The review team could see evidence of a partnership approach to self-evaluation. For example, the development of the Academic Quality Handbook Working Group to holistically review the regulatory framework in collaboration with the SU resulted in the redrafting of the University's approach to student engagement and effective communication of regulatory changes to students through the Hwb.

48   It was apparent that the development of data dashboards has enhanced the ability of programme teams, institutes and the University to reflect on the efficacy of current practice. The use of data is triangulated with qualitative feedback from students and externals to develop initiatives to enhance quality and monitor the impact. For example, the development of a campaign to help students understand academic misconduct and avoid it, resulted in the collaborative production of a video 'DON'T DO IT'.

49   Highly-skilled professional employment remains a metric where the University performs below the sector. However, unlike other key performance areas such as retention, a clear strategic approach to improving student outcomes was not evident. The review team was not assured that the University has a clear strategic approach to improving graduate outcomes. **Consequently, the review team recommends that the University develops a cohesive strategic approach to improve highly-skilled professional employability outcomes across all programmes**.

3   Collaborative provision

3.1   Key features of the provider's strategic approach (to include collaborative activity, online and distance learning where delivered with others, and work-based learning)

50   The University's Strategic Plan 2017-22 sets out clear priorities in relation to collaborative provision, which focus on global citizenship, international partnerships and work with further education institutions and employers. The University informed the team that as it constructs its next strategic plan it intends to continue to grow and develop its collaborative partnerships, with a particular focus on its response to the Welsh Government's strategic aim of greater integration of tertiary education. It also intends to include a focus on developing deeper relationships with existing partners, as opposed to significant growth in new partnerships. The University sees continued collaboration among the UWTSD Dual Sector Group as key to its intention to support the Government's objective to develop such integration. In particular, the University sees this partnership as central to establishing progression routes for apprentices studying at Levels 2 and 3.

51   The University has recently approved its Global Education Strategy 2022-27, which sets out its strategic approach to internationalisation. Strategic priorities set out in the plan include expanding the number of international partnerships and the number of international students who undertake a course of study overseas, growing global visibility for UWTSD in international markets and improving the international student experience. Part of the strategy has seen the evolution and transformation of the Wales Global Academy (WGA), which commenced as a collaboration between the University of Wales and University of Wales Trinity Saint David, into the main structure of UWTSD to take the best of Welsh higher education into the world and vice-versa. The strategy is overseen by the International Affairs and Collaborative Partnership Committee (IACPC), with each strategic objective subject to an action plan. The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement also meets with Assistant Deans to discuss international strategic priorities and operational delivery.

52   In order to provide appropriate support to meet its strategic objectives for collaborative provision, the University established two central units - the Apprenticeship Unit (AU) in 2017 and the Collaborative Provision Office (CPO) in 2018. A wide range of apprenticeships have been created since the establishment of the Apprenticeship Unit including: Professional Policing; Human Resource Management; Ordnance, Munitions and Explosives; Quantity Surveying; Construction Management; Engineering; Advanced Manufacturing; Computing; and Archaeology.

53   Structures for the management of collaborative partnerships vary slightly across the institutions. Institutes with a significant number of partnerships employ an Assistant Dean for International and Domestic Partnerships, which is equivalent to the role of Assistant Dean Quality, for UWTSD provision. Where the range of partnerships is smaller, an Assistant Dean with existing, primary portfolio oversees collaborative provision. Another slight variation in the management of collaborative provision involves Partnership Team Leaders (PTLs) who are appointed to act as a primary liaison point for each partnership programme. Where a cluster of programmes exists, Executive Partnership Team Leaders (EPTLs) are appointed, with assessment PTLs reporting to them. PTL appointments are confirmed by the CPO which also determines the format and level of reporting they must carry out for the partnership. PTL and EPTL role descriptions and responsibilities were updated in 2020-21 and refresher training was held in October 2021.

54   While the team found that the University's management structure for collaborative provision is relatively complex, it determined that this reflects the breadth, depth and varied models of collaborative provision across the institution. The team also found that staff have a

detailed understanding of relevant structures and their roles and the roles of their colleagues in relation to the management of collaborative provision. This understanding is aided by a comprehensive Academic Quality Handbook covering collaborative provision, work-based learning activity, including placements, and international mobility. The University informed the team that significant development of Chapters 10 (Short Courses, Professional Practice Framework, Contributing Partners and Accreditation) and 11 (Working With Others) has taken place to reflect the changing nature and scale of provision in those areas. The University reported further work to enhance consistency in the management and oversight of collaborative provision, including the development of Terms of Reference for Institute Partnership Working Groups, CPO membership on these groups and work conducted in partnership with the Students' Union to establish effective student engagement structures reflective of the full diversity of provision.

3.2 Information on the extent and nature of collaborative provision and plans for change

55 At the time of the review, the University had 5,153 students studying at collaborative partner institutions. The University has also witnessed a substantial growth in 'Other Undergraduate Courses', moving from 3,996 students in 2016-17 to 8,075 in 2020-21. These courses are particularly focused on skills or professional development. The University commenced delivery of Degree Apprenticeships in October 2018 for 102 apprentices across eight programmes. Since that time, the provision has grown and at the time of the review there were over a thousand apprentices across all UWTSD apprenticeship provision with approximately 30% of them following the Welsh Government-funded Digital Degree and Engineering & Advanced Manufacturing Degree Apprenticeship Frameworks.

56 The University has a wide range of formal arrangements in place designed to support work with employers and industry; in addition to Degree Apprenticeships, the institutions makes use of work placements, accredited programmes and the Professional Practice Framework, as well as operating the Construction Wales Innovation Centre (CWIC), Blue Light Academy, Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP) and Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research (WAPPAR). The University informed the team that all of these initiatives emerged from close links between the University and government, regional policies, and industry collaboration.

57 The University also delivers programmes through an arrangement that it terms 'Contributing Partnership'. This is the name used for relationships where third parties are responsible for delivering some aspect of validated provision. These are subject to formal agreements, examples of which were viewed by the team.

58 The University conducted a review of partnerships in 2020-21 which was considered by Senate, the result of which is that four partnerships are currently being closed. Where the University decides to withdraw from a partnership, an Exit Memorandum of Agreement is drafted and signed which addresses the enrolment of future cohorts, data protection, student awards and financial obligations.

59 The University is partnered with the International University of Malaya-Wales (IUMW), a joint venture between the University of Wales and University of Malaya. The partnership was designed to deliver a number of dual awards that the University informed the team were, owing to ongoing internal changes at IUMW and within Malaysian higher education, unlikely to continue to be delivered. However, during the course of the review visit the University informed the team that there had been further policy changes in Malaysia that may now see these programmes continue to be delivered. The University is also exploring similar delivery opportunities in China.

3.3 Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision including arrangements for securing academic standards and improvement and enhancement of the student learning experience

60   The governance structure for managing collaborative provision is appropriate and effective. Senate maintains oversight of quality and standards for collaborative provision through the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and the International Affairs and Collaborative Partnership Committee (IACPC). The Procedural Framework for Collaborative Provision forms the basis for this approach. ASC is responsible for overseeing the validation, monitoring and review of collaborative programmes. IACPC is responsible for development of the Global Education Strategy, ensuring suitable memoranda of agreement are in place, UKVI compliance and making recommendations for the termination of partnerships. To assist with this work, the Partnership Overview Group meets quarterly and reports to IACPC. Within institutes, Partnership Working Groups are being used effectively to ensure collaborative provision is conducted in accordance with institutional requirements. These working groups serve as fora for PTLs to interact with senior institute managers and staff from the CPO.

61   The Collaborative Partnerships Office is central to liaising with partner institutions, including for international provision, to ensure implementation of the Collaborative Partnership Framework. This includes work to ensure approval, validation, monitoring and review processes are adhered to across the partner network. Approval is comprised of initial consideration of the business case and completion of the Institutional Profile Document, which are considered, together with the outcomes of due diligence carried out, by the Due Diligence Standing Group and approved by the Academic Planning Team. A partner approval visit is then conducted for consideration by ASC. All partners are required to submit Annual Programme Monitoring Reports. Institutes must confirm, through submission of a template report, that partner APRs have been completed. The CPO produces an annual report on effectiveness of the APR process for partners. Formal review of partnerships is conducted through Partnership Periodic and Interim Reviews.

62   CPO webpages provide partners and UWTSD staff with a wide range of relevant information including operations manuals and other guidance. The team found numerous examples of benefits brought about by the introduction of the CPO. These include institutes and partners having central points of contact and dedicated, named support provided by the CPO for each partnership, as well as the standardisation of training, including for PTLs, and increased opportunities to share good practice, facilitated by the CPO. PTLs themselves play a significant role in providing support to partners and monitoring provision. PTLs complete two monitoring reports each academic year and work closely with programme leaders to enhance delivery and cascade changes relating to policies and procedures. **The review team therefore commends the comprehensive and accessible support provided, in particular by the Collaborative Partnerships Office and the Partnership Team Leaders, to collaborative partner institutions that effectively assists partners in understanding and implementing UWTSD requirements**.

63   The team found that effective arrangements are in place, overseen by the Apprenticeship Unit, to support apprentices. Implementation and monitoring of these arrangements is primarily conducted by the Apprenticeship Unit and include the use of Apprentice Liaison Officers (ALOs) to monitor the performance of apprentices and maintain records of meetings. Police apprentices are supported by a system of workplace mentors instead of ALOs. A recent QAA review of this provision found that the comprehensive role of the Apprenticeship Unit and the Apprentice Liaison Officers constituted good practice. Since the review, the AU has published an Employer Handbook designed to improve information for organisations supporting apprentices.

64   A comprehensive and detailed Student Placements Protocol is in place. The protocol includes clear guidance and instruction about what must be done before, during and after a placement. Oversight and compliance of placement processes is effectively monitored, albeit in different ways across the institution. Registry is responsible for oversight of safeguarding and risk assessment. In addition, the Institute of Education and Humanities operates a Placement Group to ensure transparency, consistency and compliance with PSRB requirements. In other institutes, compliance is monitored through the APR process. The team also found that appropriate contingency plans were in place for placement provision during the pandemic.

65   The team determined that Exit Memoranda of Agreement used where the University has decided to terminate a partnership are appropriate. The University informed the team that, as it worked to ensure there was no disruption to the student experience, students were informed about the closure of partnerships at the stage agreed with the partner in order to aid business continuity. However, the team considered that there were risks associated with such closures including, but not limited to, possible staff attrition, managing deferrals and access to resources. Involving students at an earlier stage may help to mitigate and manage such risks. **The review team therefore recommends that the University involves students from collaborative partner institutions in the development of teach-out plans when closing courses**.

66   Students studying at partner institutions confirmed that they are satisfied with the information they receive from their providers as well as from the University. They informed the team that they benefit from equitable representative structures that ensure their voice is heard and their feedback acted upon. Students also reported that they are aware of progression routes, including to the University. A minority of students the team met highlighted issues accessing learning resources provided by the University. The team confirmed that this was due to licensing agreements and was accurately and clearly detailed in programme information provided to students.

67   The team found that the University has had success in establishing progression routes between group and regional colleges and UWTSD. Progression data shows an increase both between constituent colleges of the Dual Sector Group and UWTSD and between regional further education partners and the University. The team concurred with the University's assertion that this demonstrates the success of the seamless progression routes it has created. Overall, progression within the UWTSD Group increased by 39.3% between 2016-17 and 2019-20, from 326 to 454. Progression from regional further education partners (Pembrokeshire College, Neath Port Talbot College, and Gower College Swansea) to the University increased by 99%, from 420 to 836. The team found examples of activity designed to support these objectives, which included close collaboration between academic and support services, the development of complementary curricula, in particular postgraduate programmes, and UWTSD participation at college career and further study events. **The review team therefore commends the coherent and effective approach to improving student progression within and from collaborative partners**.