

**OUTCOME OF THE SECOND CONSULTATION ON THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW:
WALES (W06/47HE)**

This Circular provides the outcome of the second consultation on changes which could be made to the Institutional Review (IR) process for Wales, as outlined in Circular W06/47HE.

At its meetings in April and July 2006, the HEFCW Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) considered amendments which had been made to the Institutional Audit (IA) process in England, as described in Circular W06/34HE. It agreed that the sector in Wales should be consulted about the amendments and whether similar changes should be incorporated into the current IR cycle in Wales (2003/04 to 2008/09). Circular W06/34HE provided the first stage of the consultation and focused on the outcome judgement. The result of this consultation was reported in Circular W06/46HE.

Circular W06/47HE provided the second stage of the consultation regarding other amendments. We received eleven responses to this consultation. The LTC considered the outcomes, as tabled in **Annex A**.

It recalled, first, that the key step in reacting to English developments had already been agreed, namely, that the confidence judgements be aligned. This meant that there would now be continued comparability of outcome judgements between Welsh and English institutions. The issues to be faced as a result of the second consultation were of lesser significance.

Next, it noted that seven responses were in favour of introducing changes during the current cycle, with four opposed, but also that four reviews would be outstanding by the time the process could be changed. This would result in a lack of comparability of reviews across the Welsh sector in the current cycle.

The LTC also recalled the commitment which had originally been made, that the arrangements for the IR would remain in place for the whole cycle. The proposed changes would run contrary to that commitment. The LTC noted that the Institutional Audit: England was on a different timescale, which could result in Wales always reacting to changes introduced to that process.

The LTC recommended that any changes to the IR should be made at the end of the cycle, but that the outcome of this consultation would be useful in evaluating the current process and identifying changes to be made for the next cycle, from 2009/10.

You are therefore advised that there will be no further changes to the institutional review process during this cycle. However, the consultation outcomes will be used as part of the evaluation process for the next Institutional Review cycle (2009/10 onwards).

The LTC also recommended that the qualitative information provided by institutions should be removed from the TQI website and that institutions should seek to make it available by other means, eg on their websites. You are therefore advised to make the TQI information available by means other than the TQI website by 2007/08.

**PHILIP GUMMETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

ANNEX A. OUTCOME OF THE SECOND CONSULTATION ON THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: WALES (W06/47HE)

Question	Yes/No	Comments
i) Should there be an increase in the emphasis given to enhancement in the Institutional Review process?	Yes - 9 No - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cautious support for this change, due to the comparatively limited funding available to Welsh institutions compared to other parts of the UK for enhancement activities. • reference to the long-term evidence of sound quality assurance and embedding of associated processes in Welsh HEIs • the anticipation that the system would also enable quality assurance to be addressed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increased emphasis on enhancement would be substantially different to the current methodology, resulting in undesirable differences between the reports produced at the beginning and the end of the current cycle. • enhancement is a natural outcome of quality assurance processes and thus change should not be needed.
ii) Should there be a separation in judgement between the management of the quality of learning opportunities available to students and the soundness of management of academic standards?	Yes – 9 No – 1 Divided - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separation of judgement could be useful • important to maintain consistent confidence judgements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separation would appear artificial due to the inter-connectedness of the judgements; it might be more appropriate to allow the panel to reflect differences in the report rather than to separate the judgements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differing views on the level of integration between quality and standards.
iii) Should there be additional commentary with an explanatory statement regarding the standards and quality of postgraduate research programmes?	Yes - 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overlap between this change and the recent QAA review of Research Degree Programmes (RDPs), highlighting the necessity to avoid duplication of efforts. • the recent completion of this review made it more appropriate to include this change in the next cycle. • this change to the IR process would reduce the need for additional reviews of RDP provision.
iv) Should there be additional commentary with an explanatory statement regarding the enhancement of quality of educational provision, both taught and by research?	Yes – 7 Tentative – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it would provide benefits for institutions and students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to discuss what the change would mean, and provide workshop briefings for HEIs if such a change were to be introduced

	Neutral - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported the change being introduced in the next cycle, agreeing that enhancement is a natural outcome of quality assurance processes. perceived enhancement as a natural outcome of quality assurance processes, and thus change should not be needed, but no objection to the inclusion of postgraduate provision in the IR. caution due to the comparatively limited funding for enhancement activities compared to the rest of the UK.
v) Should the judgement on the 'reliance that can reasonably be placed on the accuracy, integrity, completeness and frankness of the information that an institution publishes about the quality of its programmes and the standards of its awards' be replaced with a comment on this matter?	Yes - 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> believed that the current emphasis was correct, the institution would be prepared to accept the change in the next cycle.
vi) Should the Welsh qualitative TQI information continue to be published on the TQI website, or should institutions find other ways of sharing this information, e.g. by publishing it on their own websites?	TQI site – 1 Elsewhere - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> favoured standardisation in the presentation of the data.
vii) Are there any other changes in line with those made to the Institutional Audit: England and Northern Ireland or other European changes that you would like to see made to the Institutional Review: Wales?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the student submission as suggested in the IA guidelines Incorporating any best practice developed as part of the English process into the IR at this time QAA engagement regarding enhancement strategies Continuing Welsh reviewer training as an additional requirement for all reviewers in Wales in order to ensure that reviewers understand the Welsh context Providing Welsh institutions with the courtesy meeting available to institutions in England and Northern Ireland on the final day of the review Including reference to the European dimension, such as comments on how institutions are responding to the Bologna process and European Standards

