

**To: Heads of higher education
institutions in Wales**

Reference: W06/34HE
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Institutional Review: Wales

At its meetings in April and July 2006, the Council's Learning and Teaching Committee considered amendments which have been to the institutional audit process in England. These amendments have now been incorporated into the new QAA *Handbook for institutional audit: England and Northern Ireland*, published in June 2006. A copy of the Handbook can be found at <http://qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/handbook2006>

The Committee agreed that the sector in Wales should be consulted about the amendments and whether similar changes should be incorporated into the ongoing institutional review process in Wales, 2003/04 to 2008/09. HEFCW will undertake the consultation in two stages.

The most urgent issue arising is the intention to alter the nomenclature for the judgements made by audit teams in England and Northern Ireland. Whereas the previous range of judgements available was identical to that used in the institutional review: Wales process ('broad confidence'; 'limited confidence'; and 'no confidence'), the new judgements are as follows: 'confidence'; 'limited confidence' and 'no confidence' and thus a judgement of 'broad confidence' will be replaced with 'confidence'. This judgement will be used when the new audit arrangements are introduced in England in 2006/07 (from January 2007).

The Committee took the view that the sector in Wales should be consulted on this matter. If a significant majority of the responses is positive, the intention is that the amended judgement would be introduced from autumn 2006, via a supplement to the QAA *Handbook for Institutional Review: Wales*. Judgements would not be altered retrospectively.

As a first stage, you are invited to respond to the following question by Friday, 15 September 2006.

Should the judgement 'broad confidence', available to academic reviewers in the Institutional Review Handbook: Wales, be altered to 'confidence'.

A further, more detailed consultation will be conducted in the autumn on other changes implemented in England, to gauge opinion on whether the institutional review process should be changed mid-cycle.

Please address your responses to Dr Cliona O'Neill, Senior Learning and Teaching Manager here at the Council's offices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Gummett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip Gummett