

Cylchlythyr | Circular

Quality Assessment Framework for Wales

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Other interested parties
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This consultation provides a draft framework for quality assessment in Wales, and invites responses on the underpinning processes.

If you require this document in an alternative accessible format, please telephone us on (029) 2068 2225 or email info@hefcw.ac.uk.



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Introduction

1. This consultation provides a draft framework for quality assessment in Wales, and invites responses on the underpinning processes.

Background

2. In autumn 2014 it was announced that the funding bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland planned to seek views on future approaches to the assessment of quality in higher education. The feedback would then be used to design a specification and invite tenders under a joint procurement exercise. HEFCE indicated it would be publicly tendering for the future contract to assess the quality of higher education in England. The Scottish Funding Council reported that it would review its own arrangements through a separate process, but would be keen to observe the outcomes of the HEFCE-coordinated work in the other countries.
3. HEFCE set up a Quality Assessment Review Steering Group to oversee the process. This included membership from Wales and Northern Ireland, and an observer from Scotland. Further information about the Review can be found on the [HEFCE website](#), which also links to information about the membership and work of the steering group and its meetings.
4. The review took place in two phases:
 - January – March 2015 - a listening exercise, seeking views on a range of high-level principles and issues;
 - From June 2015 – a consultation on more specific issues and options, following the May general election.
5. One of the key differences in Wales, identified in the Quality Assessment Review consultation, was the HE (Wales) Act 2015 which came into force from 1 September 2015¹. One impact of the Act is that we were unable to set out in the consultation the assurance arrangements to be adopted by HEFCW to oversee the operation of the quality assessment arrangements, as this required us to use our new powers, which were not in force at the time of publication. Arrangements for England and Northern Ireland were set out, based on current processes.
6. The consultation proposals included strengthening three key elements of the assurance arrangements already in place within the sector and institutions:
 - institutional governance arrangements;
 - the external examining system;
 - data-driven continuous improvement in learning and teaching.
7. The consultation closed on 18 September 2015 in England. Given that the consultation process in Wales was conducted under HEFCW's powers

¹ The 2015 Act will be implemented in full from 1 September 2017.

under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, the closing date for responses in Wales was 31 August 2015, as HEFCW could only consult under a single set of powers. A consultation event on the specific issues and options was held in Wales in June 2015. The [outcomes of that event](#) are available on our website.

8. In general responses in Wales were more favourable to the QAA and cyclical review than appeared to be the case in England. Attendees were moderately positive about the involvement of Governing Bodies in oversight of quality (although had some concerns about the implications of this for charters and memoranda and articles, given the respective roles of the Senate and Academic Board). They had some concerns about the impact of the introduction of new training, a register for external examiners, and standards calibration activities. Nevertheless they retained a strong commitment to being aligned with the arrangements in England and saw the value of framework arrangements which allow customisation of the arrangements to take account of the needs of Wales. A [summary of the Wales responses to the consultation](#) are available on our website.
9. HEFCE published a [revised operating model for quality assessment in England and Northern Ireland](#) in March 2016.
10. HEFCW's Council agreed the overarching quality assessment framework, which aligns with that for England and Northern Ireland, at its March 2016 meeting. HEFCW's Quality Assessment Committee subsequently advised on the underpinning detail, which is being consulted upon in this document.

Quality Assessment Framework

11. The features, principles and baseline regulatory requirements of the framework are set out below. These align with the arrangements in England and Northern Ireland².

Key features

12. The key features of the proposed framework for Wales are as follows:
 - (i) The removal of cyclical funding body-commissioned peer review visits to re-test baseline quality requirements for established providers;
 - (ii) The re-shaping of a provider's own review processes to ensure that these are focused on improving student outcomes and the student academic experience;
 - (iii) Placing greater emphasis on the role of governing bodies for providing assurances about quality and standards matters;
 - (iv) The more systematic use of student and other data by funding and regulatory bodies to monitor the performance of providers;
 - (v) The use of existing funding and regulatory body assurance mechanisms.

² www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/2016/201603/HEFCE2016_03.pdf

Principles

13. The principles of the framework are as follows. The quality assessment system:
- (i) Is based on the autonomy of higher education providers with degree awarding powers to set and maintain academic standards, and on the responsibility of all providers to determine and deliver the most appropriate academic experience for their students wherever and however they study;
 - (ii) Uses peer review and appropriate external scrutiny as a core component of quality assessment and assurance approaches;
 - (iii) Has students integrated as partners in the design, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of processes to improve the quality of their education;
 - (iv) Provides accountability, value for money, and easily understood assurance to students, and to employers, government and the public, in the areas that matter to those stakeholders, both in relation to individual providers and across the sector as a whole;
 - (v) Works well for increasingly diverse and different missions, and types of providers, and ensures that providers are able to experiment and innovate in strategic direction or in approaches to learning and teaching;
 - (vi) Adopts a risk- and evidence-based approach to co-regulation to ensure that regulatory scrutiny focuses on the areas where risk, or the potential for risk, to standards and/or to the academic experience of students or the system is greatest;
 - (vii) Intervenes early and rapidly but proportionately when things go wrong;
 - (viii) Provides support for new or less mature providers, while ensuring that the threshold for entry into the sector is set at a level sufficient for an appropriately high quality academic experience and secure degree standards;
 - (ix) Uses a robust evidence base to ensure that opportunities for continuous improvement are identified and exploited by all providers;
 - (x) Maintains, as far as is possible in a devolved system, a UK-wide approach;
 - (xi) Protects the reputation of the UK higher education system in a global context;
 - (xii) Ensures that the overall cost and burden of the quality assessment and wider assurance system is proportionate.

Baseline regulatory requirements

14. The requirements of the framework that providers are expected to meet are as follows³:
- (i) the [framework for higher education qualifications](#) (FHEQ);

³ HEFCE also includes its student protection guidance within its requirements.

- (ii) other elements of the current UK-wide [Quality Code](#)⁴;
 - (iii) [HEFCW's](#) Financial Management Code, or equivalent, and Fee and Access Plan requirements;⁵
 - (iv) the [HE Code of Governance](#), or other designated governance code
 - (v) the expectations of consumer law as expressed through the [Competition and Markets Authority \(CMA\) guidance](#);
 - (vi) Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) [good practice framework](#);
 - (vii) The provider's strategy for its higher education provision.
15. In addition, in Wales we expect to include the following as a baseline requirement:
- (viii) Alignment with the [Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales \(CQFW\)](#).
16. This will be supported by a UK-wide sector committee, drawing together representatives from across the UK HE sector, the funding bodies, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the Committee of University Chairs and the OIA. It will also include students', employers' and public, statutory and regulatory bodies' (PSRBs') voices.

Q1. Are there any other Wales-specific elements which should be included in the baseline?

Other issues

Cross-cutting issues

17. A number of cross-cutting issues were raised through the consultation, with which we broadly agree. The issues were the:
- Need to preserve the sense of a UK-wide quality system, as far as is possible in a devolved environment with increasingly diverse policy positions;
 - Need to ensure the continued compliance with international quality expectations, in particular in Europe;
 - Essential role of students as partners in the design and operation of quality assessment arrangements;
 - Design and implementation of a single coherent system which integrates the funding bodies' approach to quality assessment and the English Government's plans for a Teaching Excellence Framework.
18. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was described in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills green paper, [Fulfilling our](#)

⁴ Principally the expectations in the first instance.

⁵ In England institutions will be required to pass Financial Sustainability, Management and Governance checks. In Wales institutions will also be required to provide information on their financial viability and the organisation and management of their financial affairs, in order to access student support funding.

[potential: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice](#). Welsh Government has agreed that Wales will participate in the TEF1, but it has not yet been decided whether Wales will participate in TEF2 and beyond.

Q2. Are there any other cross-cutting issues which should be considered?

Comparability across the UK

19. The proposed quality assessment arrangements will achieve UK 'read-across' through the following shared mechanisms:
- Shared degree standards, through the UK-wide Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ);
 - The strengthened external examining system;
 - A shared approach to the quality-related elements of the Baseline Regulatory Requirements;
 - The existing [Register of Higher Education Providers](#), with discussions underway between HEFCE, HEFCW and DELNI to move towards a more UK-wide approach;
 - Participation in the TEF⁶.

Q3. Are there any other areas of comparability across the UK which should be considered?

Underpinning detail

20. The quality assessment framework needs to take account of HEFCW's statutory responsibilities in relation to education provided by and/or on behalf of regulated institutions, including that which is inadequate, or which is likely to become inadequate. We recognise the potential for duplication with existing HEFCW processes, and also with some UK-wide initiatives, eg quality assurance of transnational education. We will aim to minimise any duplication wherever possible in order to minimise the burden on institutions.
21. We propose the following elements of the quality assessment system, to sit underneath the framework:
- a. arrangements for established providers, building on established and tested approaches to data benchmarking and analysis, intelligence gathering (including from students), risk assessment, and assurance;
 - b. strengthened arrangements to secure degree standards and their reasonable comparability across the UK, led by the sector representative bodies;
 - c. tailored but rapid intervention where necessary;
 - d. protection of the international reputation of the UK higher education brand, including through the assurance of transnational education.

⁶ Should Wales opt to participate beyond TEF1.

22. In England there will be a single gateway for entry to the publicly funded HE system, and a ‘probationary’ or ‘developmental’ period of closer monitoring, engagement and scrutiny for those recent entrants, or for providers requiring this for other reasons. In Wales, the function of this will be addressed by:
- e. Arrangements for automatic and specific designation to access student support.

Risk-based review arrangements

23. We propose the following in relation to risk-based review. We will consult further on the detail of how these will operate, including the judgements arising from each element of the process.
- a. Annual assurance from governing bodies. We propose to align with the statements that HEFCE are developing in consultation with other bodies. We will initially collect this via the annual assurance returns which we require from institutions. The suggested statements are:
 - The governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the student academic experience and student outcomes, including the evidence from the institution’s own periodic review processes which fully involve students and external expert advice
 - The governing body has received the outcomes of continuous improvement activity relating to learning and teaching and challenged the executive where necessary
 - The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate
 - The governing body has received a report that confirms that the provider continues to meet the Standards of Part 1 of the ESG (2015)⁷.
- And for providers with degree awarding powers:
- The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained.

Q4. Do you have views on these statements, and the potential for aligning with the statements to be used in England and Northern Ireland?

- b. Require the governing body to obtain external assurance regarding the quality of its provision against the baseline requirements, from an agency on the [European Quality Assurance Register for higher education](#) (EQAR). This is a register of quality assurance agencies in Europe which have demonstrated their substantial compliance with a common set of principles for quality assurance in Europe, as detailed

⁷ This is expected to be via the EQAR assurance report in the case of Welsh institutions, and we will consult on this in due course.

in the [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance](#). We believe that the benefits of this are as follows:

- This assurance will take the place of other activity in England⁸ and therefore should not represent increased burden to institutions
- The governing body is likely to need external verification of quality anyway, to enable it to provide its annual assurance to HEFCW. This proposal enables them to choose their reviewer from a selection of robust providers
- EQAR assurance will enable Welsh institutions to maintain their reputation internationally
- We are working with the Home Office and discussing whether this meets the Home Office's educational oversight requirements for Tier 4 purposes.

The assurance should cover all provision delivered by or on behalf of the institution, including any branch campuses. A link to the assurance report will need to be provided in fee and access plan applications, together with evidence of how institutions have addressed any recommendations resulting from this assessment (or evidence that the external body had confirmed that the actions had been undertaken successfully). The assurance should be carried out at least every six years, and the most recent QAA review will act initially as the EQAR assurance.

Q5. HEFCW proposes to consult further on features and judgments, of this process, including ensuring that judgements align with on the HEFCE arrangements. What should this cover?

- c. Annual scrutiny of data, student views and other intelligence, and the information collected through HEFCW's annual accountability processes (including the annual accountability return), similar to that in England and Northern Ireland. We will need to look at the data for education provided by and on behalf of the regulated institution. In line with England and Northern Ireland, this includes:
- over/under-recruitment patterns;
 - non-progression rates;
 - non-completion rates;
 - NSS outcomes;
 - degree outcomes, including differential outcomes for students with different characteristics
 - employment outcomes;
 - TEF outcomes⁹

⁸ England proposes to verify the quality assessment methodology of the institution, and to carry out a re-focused five-yearly Assurance Review, which might include peers (and students) to test the basis on which a governing body is able to provide assurances about the provider's activities.

⁹ If Wales opts to participate beyond TEF1

The use of data in this way will enable issues relating to protected groups under the Equalities Act to be identified. Our Quality Assessment Committee (QAC) will consider this data for regulated institutions and provide advice on issues arising.

Q6. Are there any other areas of scrutiny which should be included for Wales?

- d. We will build quality into our triennial assurance visits¹⁰. We will also build quality matters into Council institutional visits and other visits and assurance processes.
- e. We will build this analysis into our existing institutional risk review process, advised by our QAC, and will use this information to inform the annual risk letter to the provider. The process may need to be reviewed in light of our regulatory role. It will also inform assessment of annual submissions of fee and access plans. Our engagement with institutions following this analysis will be risk-based and proportionate.

Q7. Can you suggest any particular questions which you think we should integrate into our existing assurance processes and visits?

- f. Partnership arrangements between the student body and higher education providers in Wales are well developed, as demonstrated by the [Wise Wales partnership statement](#)¹¹. We think gathering student views should be the role of the governing body, and that they must demonstrate how they have done this¹². In Wales, this will be included through:

¹⁰ HEFCE will review quality through their five yearly assurance visit

¹¹ HEFCE proposes to explore ways of gathering student views as a pilot including:

- structured meetings with course representatives in a provider
- web-based gathering of views by local student representative bodies
- open 'town hall' meetings on institutional visits
- written submissions from local student representative bodies, with varying frequency.

¹² This is different to the situation in England, which proposes to have student engagement through the following processes:

- full members of review teams undertaking visits to test a provider against the quality-related aspects of the baseline requirements when the provider seeks to enter the publicly funded sector, or at the end of its developmental period
- partners in the review processes of an individual provider, as verified by the relevant funding body
- partners to design and pilot a range of approaches to collect the views of students in each provider as a component of the Annual Provider Review (not yet clear for Wales)
- full members of the Panel reaching quality-related judgements about the ability of individual providers to meet quality assessment requirements through the Annual Provider Review process
- full members of review teams undertaking visits to a provider to investigate concerns about the quality of the academic experience

- (i) Representation of students on the governing body and relevant institutional committees;
- (ii) A report on the annual dialogue between the institution and the student body, eg via the annual quality report (AQR), which is currently supported by [Wise Wales](#). The report on the dialogue, and the AQR itself, will need to be submitted as part of the Fee and Access Plan process. It would be good practice for the student body to define within the document how it perceives quality and the reasonable needs of students;
- (iii) A requirement for every regulated institution to have a student charter;
- (iv) Confirmation that the NSS results have been scrutinised and action plans put in place in partnership with the student body;
- (v) Inclusion of students as peer reviewers in the external review commissioned by the governing body, and through engagement with the student body through the external review;
- (vi) Engagement with the student body through the HEFCW triennial assurance visits.

In addition, together with England and Northern Ireland, we propose that students are:

- (vii) members of the UK-wide Standing Committee to oversee development of baseline regulatory requirements;
- (viii) able to report concerns about an individual provider for investigation through any concerns mechanism adopted.

Student organisations will need to ensure that they represent the diverse student body, in order to ensure that the needs of all types of students are appropriately considered in their engagement with these processes.

Q8. Are any additional actions or information required to ensure the views of students are captured effectively?

Q9. How might we operate this process in order to minimise institutional burden?

24. We will be consulting further on the detail and outcomes of these processes in due course.

Degree standards

25. In line with England and Northern Ireland, we propose to do the following in relation to degree standards, working with and through sector bodies as appropriate:
- Continue to use the FHEQ to express what constitutes higher education at each of its different levels (4-8) and of the amount of learning expected for awards at different levels. It will be a component of the baseline regulatory requirements and will also continue to provide a shared approach to setting standards across the UK system at threshold level;

- Explore different approaches to the training of external examiners to ensure they are clear about their role and have the requisite technical assessment skills;
- Explore different approaches to the calibration of standards to establish a simple mechanism to bring together examiners from within a subject community to compare their students' work and to judge student achievement against the standards set in order to improve comparability and consistency;
- Careful piloting and testing, with an opportunity for review and evaluation, will take place before any future full implementation;
- The publication of guidelines for algorithms, particularly relating to the classification of degrees awarded at the pass/fail and the 2i/2ii borderline, would be helpful and would strengthen the international reputation of the sector;
- Expect the governing body to provide assurance regarding the institution's engagement with the academic standards set for, and achieved by, its students including¹³:
 - awards made to all students, including those studying through partnership arrangements, including validation and franchise arrangements, both within the UK and internationally;
 - analysis of trend data on student academic output standards, at the pass/fail borderline for all awards and also for classified awards, or Grade Point Average grades;
 - confirmation of the appointment of a suitable range of external examiners from those who have undertaken training
 - consideration of the reports of external examiners and any necessary follow-up action;
 - evidence of the involvement of internal markers and external examiners in subject-based calibration activities;
 - confirmation of the use of guidance on acceptable algorithms for calculating degree or grade classification boundaries or to confirm why these are not being followed;
 - the outcomes of external accreditation reviews by PSRBs.

The sector representative bodies will lead this work through a UK-wide, sector-wide steering group.

<p>Q10. Are there any issues which Welsh higher education providers would like us to feed into this UK-wide work?</p>
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26. The governing body of a provider with degree awarding powers will also need to provide assurances that the provider's academic governance arrangements have been effective in meeting these obligations, including via the external assurance of quality assessment. The Committee of University Chairs and the Leadership Foundation are undertaking work to support governing bodies in implementing the December 2014 [HE Code of](#)

¹³ In England it is proposed that this is an expectation of the institution, rather than the governing body. We believe the assurance should be from the governing body, although it may choose to do this through the processes of the institution. This aligns with the 2015 Act, which notes that any directions in relation to quality should be given to the governing body.

Governance, particularly its expectations for safe academic governance arrangements and oversight of the student academic experience. We will also participate in pilot work being commissioned by HEFCE, to evaluate any gaps in the capabilities of a range of governing bodies in this area, in order to design and pilot different approaches to providing additional support for governors.

Q11. Do these proposals provide sufficient support for governing bodies? If not, please indicate what else might be helpful?

Tailored but rapid intervention where necessary

27. In 2016/17 this will be undertaken via the existing QAA concerns mechanism and our intervention procedures. We intend to cover this through our extension of our Service Level Agreement with the QAA.
28. We will consider longer term approaches in consultation with regulated institutions and other interested parties at a later date. This will part of the means by which we determine whether or not provision is (likely to become) inadequate.

Protection of the international reputation of the UK higher education brand

29. HEFCE considers that it has a legitimate interest in Transnational Education (TNE), particularly as this area is perceived as representing higher risk and greater complexity than UK-based provision. HEFCE has concluded that it would be helpful to preserve a number of aspects of the current quality assessment arrangements for TNE activity. The UK funding bodies will contract with a third party organisation to undertake a number of activities in this area. We would like to participate in this work in principle.
30. The proposal is to look at:
 - the use of student outcomes data for students studying overseas to form the basis for a provider's review and continuous improvement activity;
 - the nature of the academic risk associated with a particular international activity to be fully understood and monitored by the governing body;
 - the assurances provided by the governing body explicitly to cover international programmes and students;
 - measures for investigating when things go wrong to apply to international activity;
 - for degree awarding bodies, the arrangements for academic output standards to apply also to international programmes and students.
31. ENQA accreditation is also part of the international reputation of Welsh institutions. In England, HEFCE expects to seek recognition as the named quality body required by the ESG. In Wales we propose to address this issue by the requirement for governing bodies to obtain external assurance from an agency on the EQAR.

Q12. Is anything else needed as part of our quality process, particularly regarding quality which is likely to become inadequate?

32. **Annex A** sets out sets out the high level summary of how the framework might work in practice.

Q13. Are there any other issues which should be considered within Annex A?

33. **Annex B** indicates the proposed draft timetable, and how the quality assessment arrangements fit with the requirements of the 2015 Act.

Q14. Are there any other areas which should be built into the timetable?

Further information / responses to

34. For further information, contact Dr Cliona O'Neill (tel 029 2068 2283; email cliona.oneill@hefcw.ac.uk).

Assessing the impact of our policies

35. The Equality Act 2010 requires universities that receive funding under section 65 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, universities that are regulated institutions, Higher Education Corporations and Further Education Corporations to make arrangements in order to assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on its ability to comply with 'the general duty', as well as the impact of any policy or practice that an authority has decided to review or any proposed revision to a policy or practice. These bodies are also required to publish a Strategic Equality Plan. This must contain a statement setting out a description of the provider, their equality objectives, details of the steps they have taken or intend to take to in order to fulfil their objectives, how long it will take in order to fulfil their objectives, and details of arrangements that have been made or are intended to be made to comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
36. In addition, HEFCW has duties under the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) (Future Generations Act). It is good practice for providers to be aware of and consider the sustainable development and well-being duties contained in the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015.
37. As an organisation HEFCW is committed to providing a high standard of service to the public in Welsh and English, in accordance with the principle of treating the Welsh and English languages equally. Our standards of

service are consistent with our [Welsh Language Scheme](#). Further information is available on our website.

38. We have carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA) screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality. We also considered the impact of policies on the Welsh language, and Welsh language provision within the HE sector in Wales, and implications relating to the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015. Contact equality@hefcw.ac.uk for more information about EIAs.

Annex A

Quality Assessment arrangements in practice – draft for consultation 22/04/16

Automatic Designation (for student support purposes)	
Pre-entry	Preparing for application to HEFCW for fee and access plan
Charitable Status	Apply for charitable status (if required).
Institutional Designation	Application to WG for institutional designation (if required)
Quality requirement	Evidence of higher education quality from QAA
	[may need to reconsider this requirement in light of HEFCE-commissioned work on gateway into the HE sector].
Financial viability/organisation and management of financial affairs requirement	Appropriate evidence may have been assessed by QAA as part of the relevant quality process. Require this in addition to be submitted/assessed as part of fee and access application (see below)
Gateway	Fee and Access Plan application to HEFCW
Fee and Access Plan application: criteria	Must be an institution, in Wales, providing HE, which is a charity.
	Institution provides information on quality, financial viability and organisation and management of financial affairs. Currently regulated institutions may provide links to information already held by HEFCW or other bodies. Updates to be provided by regulated institutions in subsequent years.
Fee and Access Plan general requirements	Consideration and approval of contents of fee and access plan
	Fee plan approved for following year.
Ongoing Quality Assurance process	[may need to consider later involvement in HEFCE-commissioned verification of a provider's approach to its own review processes?]
	Quality Assessment Framework: (with the following components (a) – (f))
	<p>(a) Annual assurance on quality from Governing Bodies of Regulated Institutions to HEFCW (statement to include new questions on quality in alignment with HEFCE, currently):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GB has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the student academic experience and student outcomes including the evidence from the institution's own review processes which fully involve students and external expert advice • The GB has received the outcomes of continuous improvement activity in relation to learning and teaching

	<p>and challenged the executive where necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate; • The GB has received a report that confirms that the provider continues to meet the Standards of Part 1 of the ESG (2015) (see below) <p>And for providers with degree awarding powers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained. <p>To support these assurances, regulated institutions in Wales also submit on a six year cycle a report from an EQAR agency on the quality of its provision against the baseline requirements (see b below); and a report of the annual dialogue between the institution and its student body (eg the annual quality report) (see f below):</p>
	<p>(b) Governing Bodies of Regulated Institutions obtain external assurance on a cyclical basis (on a six year cycle) regarding the quality of its provision against the baseline requirements from an agency on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).</p> <p>This will replace the verification of a providers methodology required by HEFCE and enable Welsh institutions to maintain their reputation internationally. The most recent QAA Review will act until the EQAR review is commissioned (within six years of the institution's last QAA review).</p>
	<p>(c) HEFCW's annual review of data on student outcomes, student views and other information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over/under-recruitment patterns • Non-progression rates • Non-completion rates • NSS outcomes • Degree outcomes, including differential outcomes for students with different characteristics; • Employment outcomes • Any other Wales specific data • TEF outcomes when available [dependent upon Wales' involvement] <p>Analysis of data will inform HEFCW's institutional risk review process (see below), taking account of advice from the Quality Assessment Committee. Institutions will be expected to consider similar data sets to inform their</p>

	assurance.
	<p>(d) HEFCW Triennial Assurance Visits</p> <p>Additional quality component to be added to assurance visits, together with appropriate expert team member(s). Quality issues also to be raised at triennial Council visits to all regulated institutions and other visits and assurance processes.</p>
	<p>(e) HEFCW Institutional Risk Review (all regulated institutions)</p> <p>This will take account of assessments of analysis of above data, quality, fee and access plan monitoring, financial viability, organisation and management of financial affairs, etc. Process will inform assessment of annual submissions of fee and access plans. Processes may need to be reviewed in light of HEFCW's regulatory role</p>
	<p>(f) Evidence that partnership arrangements between the student body and HE providers in Wales are well developed.</p> <p>The Governing Body of each regulated institution will report on the annual dialogue between the institution and the student body, eg via the annual quality report, which is currently supported through Wise Wales. Expectations in relation to partnership include a requirement for each regulated institution to have a student charter.</p>
Other elements of framework (with other funders)	<p>Support for Governing Bodies in their responsibilities for academic governance (new contract with HEFCE and DELNI); Exploration of approaches to the training provided at UK level for external examiners and on calibration of degree standards (new contract with HEFCE, DELNI and SFC overseen and managed by sector representative bodies) Work commissioned at UK level on the promotion and quality assurance of international activity (new contract with HEFCE, DELNI and SFC).</p>
Intervention where quality is inadequate or likely to become inadequate	<p>Inadequate Quality Procedure – currently QAA Causes for Concern processes - which leads into the HEFCW Statement of Intervention</p> <p>(may need to reconsider in light of HEFCE-commissioned work on unsatisfactory quality investigations)</p>

Elements highlighted in yellow refer to the elements of the tender for Quality Assessment Services published by HEFCE.

Annex B. Timetable for quality developments – Wales (as of April 2016)

Year	QA Consultation and implementation	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)	HE (Wales) Act – other	Old timetable for QAA HERW Review
2014/15 and 2015/16	<p>EWNI Development and phase 1/phase 2 consultation 2014/15</p> <p>Funding Councils publish outcome of consultation Nov 2015</p> <p>Process development and consideration of tendering implications.</p> <p>HEFCW consultation on criteria for quality (Quality code, HERW method and QAA concerns) Jan 2016</p> <p>HEFCW consultation on partnership arrangements, Feb 2016 following legal advice.</p> <p>Tendering process commences 18 March 2016. Six lots, HEFCW to be involved in three with options to enter others from August 2017.</p> <p>Council March 2016, agreement to high level QA</p>	<p>Development – 2015/16.</p> <p>Green paper November 2015: consultation closed 15 January 2016</p> <p>(Legislation taken forward 2016)</p> <p>Ministerial approval of Wales' involvement in TEF 1</p> <p>HEFCE remitted to take responsibility for delivering the TEF in year 2.</p> <p>UK Government response Spring 2016</p> <p>Technical consultation on the detail of the TEF Spring 2016</p>	<p>1 September 2015 – quality assessment arrangements in 1992 FHE Act repealed and new quality powers commence.</p> <p>Consultation and publication of transitional statement of intervention which includes interventions in relation to inadequate quality or quality likely to become inadequate.</p> <p>Guidance for fee and access plans consulted on in February and published April 2016.</p> <p>Fee and access plans for 2017/18 submitted and considered by HEFCW by July/Aug 2016 with expectations re quality.</p> <p>Arrangements put in place with QAA to allow new providers to gain access to HERW and quality evidence</p> <p>Email consultation to apply</p>	<p><u>2014/15</u></p> <p>USW (April 15)</p> <p>UWTSD (June 15)</p> <p>Mid process student focussed engagement (MSE) Aberystwyth and Bangor (June 2015)</p> <p><u>2015/16</u></p> <p>Aberystwyth (April 16)</p> <p>Coleg Llandrillo (March 16)</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot College (March 16)</p> <p>Gower College Swansea (May 16)</p> <p>MSE Glyndŵr (June 16)</p>

Year	QA Consultation and implementation	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)	HE (Wales) Act – other	Old timetable for QAA HERW Review
	<p>framework for Wales.</p> <p>QAC, March 2016, recommendations on underpinning detail for QA Framework.</p>		<p>quality powers to part-time only providers through funding powers.</p>	
2016/17	<p>SLA with QAA to be extended to cover 2016/17, including complaints re inadequate quality.</p> <p>Piloting of new QA arrangements in England, Wales and NI. HEFCW to take part, as appropriate.</p> <p>Training and development activity (External Examiners/Governing Body members)</p> <p>New arrangements with QAA for provision of HERW to charitable HE providers in Wales wishing to apply for a fee and access plan.</p>	<p>Further development of TEF including new measures.</p> <p>Initial TEF implemented based on QAA outcomes (UK-wide?)</p> <p>Minister to determine whether/when TEF outcomes will impact on fee levels in Wales</p>	<p>Full statement of intervention published following development and consultation, including provision that is inadequate or likely to become inadequate (15/16 and onwards).</p> <p>Financial Management Code published following development and consultation, to underpin risk assessment (15/16 and onwards).</p> <p>Fee and access plans for 2018/19 submitted and considered, May 17 [to include new elements in relation to quality assurance process?]</p>	2016/17 Development year.

Year	QA Consultation and implementation	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)	HE (Wales) Act – other	Old timetable for QAA HERW Review
2017/18	Implementation of new QA arrangements in England. Transitional year in Wales. Series of activities with regulated institutions to ensure they are engaged with the changes to QA. Regulated institution to commission review by EQAR listed body.	Potential for institutions in England to apply for inflationary rise to FTUG tuition fees if they pass TEF. Development of TEF continues.	Full implementation of HE (Wales) Act (1 Sept 17). Fee and access plans for 2019/20 submitted and considered (May 18).	2017/18 Bangor
2018/19 onwards	Full implementation of new QA process in Wales. Potential for TEF to be integrated with QA? Regulated institution to commission review by EQAR listed body.	Potential for higher levels of TEF to be available, including new data sources. Rolling cycle with differentiated levels by institution/department? Potential for TEF to be integrated with QA arrangements?	Fee and access plans for 2020/21 submitted and considered, to include quality expectations arising from new QA framework.	2018/19 Glyndŵr
	Regulated institutions to commission review by EQAR listed body.		Fee and access plans for 2021/22 submitted and considered to include quality expectations arising from new QA framework.	2019/20 Cardiff Swansea Cardiff Met