

The Gateway Quality Review Process for Wales

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Noddir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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The Gateway Review process

1. The following gateway review process will apply to all providers of undergraduate higher education and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (QTS – Qualified Teacher Status) student support provision in Wales, which are not currently regulated, that wish to apply for a Fee and Access Plan in order to become automatically designated for the purposes of student support.
2. An institution (as [designated by Welsh Government](#)) will need to:
 - i. provide written confirmation to HEFCW of its intention to apply for a gateway review of its undergraduate provision.
 - ii. commission a gateway review by a body specified by HEFCW, currently the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Regulated and unregulated institutions are expected to bear the costs of external reviews and thus the costs of the gateway review will be met by the institution applying for review. Upon successfully completing this first review, an institution would be expected to comply with the QAA's annual monitoring processes, demonstrating ongoing, positive performance.
 - iii. commission a second gateway review four years later. A successful second review, without amended judgements, will demonstrate that the institution had met HEFCW's quality assurance requirements prior to applying for a Fee and Access Plan. This would provide assurance to HEFCW that the HE provision was sustainable, evidenced by a clear track record (see para 6-9 below), and met UK baseline standards for higher education quality.¹
3. In applying for a Fee and Access Plan, the institution would need to evidence its status as a charity, in Wales, providing higher education mainly or wholly within Wales. A Fee and Access Plan application should also provide information in relation to an institution's objectives, provision and investment to support equality of opportunity and the promotion of higher education. Further information is available on our [website](#). In addition, the institution would require a financial check. This would give an indication of the institution's ability to meet the financial requirements of a Fee and Access Plan application. This financial check would ensure that:
 - the institution would be deemed at low risk of failure on financial grounds over the medium term;
 - financial management was sound and was managed and governed effectively, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for academic responsibilities.

We advise institutions to approach HEFCW for this check prior to commissioning a second gateway review, to avoid review costs where institutions do not meet the financial requirements. In the event of an institution failing this financial check, HEFCW would provide feedback to the institution,

¹ The new method is required for all institutions seeking automatic designation through a Fee and Access Plan and as such, a minimum of one QAA gateway review will be necessary for all institutions which are not currently regulated which seek automatic designation

requesting an action plan to address key issues. The institution would need to provide satisfactory evidence to HEFCW that these issues had been addressed prior to apply for automatic designation.

4. Where an institution is able to provide evidence of a recent, successful QAA review of its HE provision, where specific designation is not currently in place, then HEFCW would determine, through a risk-based approach, whether this would satisfy the requirements of the first gateway review. HEFCW would subsequently confirm the timing of the second review.
5. The following table outlines how the gateway review process would apply to institutions at different stages of quality review. The table outlines how institutions would meet HEFCW's quality requirements in order to seek automatic designation through a Fee and Access Plan application. Institutions with specific designation (in England or in Wales) fall within the categories for unregulated institutions in the table.

Category	Type of review undertaken to date	Action to meet quality threshold
Regulated institution by December 2017.	HER Wales.	Apply for a fee and access plan.
Unregulated institution (which may or may not already have specific designation) with two consecutive successful reviews and no unsuccessful reviews within a four year period.	HER Wales, Educational Oversight, Gateway Review.	Apply for a fee and access plan.
Unregulated institution with one successful review.	HER Wales, Educational Oversight, Gateway Review.	Apply to have a second gateway review. Arrange for monitoring by the QAA.
Unregulated institution where last review was successful following action plan from an unsuccessful review (even if had a successful review prior to the unsuccessful review).	HER Wales, Educational Oversight, Gateway Review.	Apply to have a second gateway review. Arrange for monitoring by the QAA.

Unregulated institution where last review was unsuccessful.	HER Wales, Educational Oversight, Gateway Review.	Undertake action plan.
Unregulated institution with zero reviews.	n/a.	Apply to have a first gateway Review.

Track record of HE provision

6. The gateway review process will determine whether an institution has a satisfactory track record of HE provision in order to demonstrate that it would be at low risk of failure on financial grounds and offer high quality provision for its students.
7. A track record of HE delivery, assessed through the gateway review, could be comprised of a range of undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational provision, including degree apprenticeships, higher apprenticeships and other undergraduate provision such as Higher National Diplomas, Certificates and Foundation degrees. Evidence of successful external review of higher education through other bodies, such as Estyn, would be taken into consideration during the gateway review process as evidence of HE delivery.
8. Additional evidence to support a successful track record could include: non-continuation and non-completion rates, degree outcomes, graduate employment outcomes, student satisfaction outcomes and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation reports.
9. We will liaise with Welsh Government and partner organisations with whom we have established MoUs (such as Estyn), where it is appropriate, in order to obtain information on quality which is pertinent to the gateway review process.
10. Institutions wishing to apply for a Fee and Access Plan should contact regulationadvice@hefcw.ac.uk in the first instance.