

Summary of responses to the consultation on the gateway review process, to enable institutions to seek automatic designation

Number of respondents: 13

The respondents are listed at **Annex B**

General:

- Welcomed the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Key points:

- The approach would be reasonable and robust given the requirement to ensure new providers are delivering high quality provision;
- The process would be sufficiently flexible so as to adapt to the changing regulatory context in Wales, including the establishment of a new body with oversight for post-compulsory education and training (PCET);
- The current review process by the Quality Assurance Agency was found to be beneficial, supportive and robust, though care would need to be taken to ensure the review was proportionate to the amount of HE provision offered, particularly in the Further Education setting;
- Briefing events for the sector would be welcomed;
- Clarity over the routes to designation would be welcomed in the final guidance;
- Providers who have secured specific or automatic designation will become a member of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's complaints scheme, which will contribute to an improved student experience within designated providers in Wales;
- Institutions seeking to access public funding must undergo a process that provides the necessary assurances that the higher education provision being delivered meets UK standards;
- Institutions applying for a gateway review should evidence a commitment to the principles of student engagement.

Question 1: Will the proposed process provide sufficient assurance to HEFCW and Welsh Government in terms of the quality of higher education in Wales? (8 respondents)

Agree (including with caveats): 8

Disagree: 0

Inconclusive: 0

Points raised:

- The process would begin to recognise the HE in FE landscape in Wales;
- The review should be applicable for all HE provision, including the delivery of other undergraduate courses (such as HNCs);

- The second gateway review should re-test baseline standards to ensure the HE provision is sustainable, evidenced by a clear track record and meets UK baseline standards for HE quality;
- The evidence-based, transparent nature of the review will assure all parties, including the wider public, of the quality of the provision.

Question 2: Are there any unintended consequences arising from the proposed gateway review process? (6 respondents)

Yes: 5

No: 1

Points raised:

- Franchise provision of HE could be the subject of multiple reviews;
- The review should recognise the different types of partnerships currently in operation within Wales;
- The process could present a barrier to current providers wishing to expand their HE provision;
- HEFCW should consider whether the extent of student engagement in the Quality Review is appropriate for Wales and whether an additional focus on enhancement should be included;
- Guidance would be welcomed on how institutions could engage with the student voice during the review process;
- The review process could lead to an unwanted expansion of provision, with duplication and saturation in some subject areas, which could pose a risk to some franchise provision in particular.

Question 3: Are there any issues you would like to raise regarding the Quality Review Visit handbook, recognising that the method will remain substantively the same as in England and Northern Ireland, but with changes to reflect the different context and statutory position in Wales? (8 respondents)

Yes: 6

No: 2

Points raised:

- Clarification would be welcomed over whether 'enhanced scrutiny' would remain as part of the Review method;
- Should there be a high volume of gateway reviews, HEFCW would need to consider whether it has the capacity and capability to adequately consider the findings of these reviews;
- The requirement for review teams to include three reviewers was welcomed.

Question 4: Do you have any additional comments on the proposed approach? (7 respondents)

Yes: 6

No: 1

Points raised:

- Reviewers would need to have a clear understanding of the context of HE in FE provision;
- HEFCW should continue to align its processes with those in England/NI;
- Clarity would be welcomed on the assurance mechanisms which would be in place during the period between reviews;
- New providers should demonstrate that they are adding to the diversity of provision and student choice on a regional or national basis.

Question 5: Do the proposals have any positive or negative impacts or unintended consequences in terms of equality and diversity, the Welsh language, sustainability or the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act? (6 respondents)

Yes: 3

No: 3

Points raised:

- The new process could lead to an increased availability of local provision meeting the needs of the community and employers;
- The process could have a negative impact on a new provider's ability to deliver provision through the medium of Welsh;
- The process could have a positive impact on students where an institution had engaged with the diverse student body;
- The process could enable providers to extend college-based HE and thereby play a role in widening access to HE within local communities.

Respondents

Aberystwyth University

Bridgend College

Cardiff University

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Coleg Cambria

Gower College Swansea

NUS Wales

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Swansea University

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Universities Wales

Wrexham Glyndŵr University