



This review method
is ESG compliant

Quality Enhancement Review

Bangor University

Review Report
December 2024

This document is published
in both English and Welsh

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About the Quality Enhancement Review method

The QAA website explains the method for [Quality Enhancement Review \(QER\)](#) and has links to the QER handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find more information about [The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#).²

About this review

This is the report of the QER conducted by QAA at Bangor University. The review visit took place on 3-5 December 2024. The review was conducted by a team of four reviewers:

- Alison Blackburn
- Professor Alan Howard
- Dr Laura Mason
- Dr Bradley Woolridge (student reviewer).

QAA reviews are evidence-based processes. Review judgements result from the documents review teams see, the meetings they hold, and drawing upon their experience as peer reviewers and student reviewers. In advance of the review visits, the provider submitted a self-evaluative document (the self-analysis), contextual information about the nature of their provision and students, and a range of materials about the provider's arrangements for managing quality and academic standards.

In this review, the QER team makes judgements on:

- the requirements of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) Part 1 for internal quality assurance
- the relevant baseline requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

It is possible for the judgements to be expressed in three levels which indicate whether the provider meets these requirements, meets these requirements with conditions, or does not meet requirements. More detail on these categories is provided in the QER Handbook.

The QER review also makes a statement about the provider's strategic approach to enhancing the student learning experience.

About this report

The judgements for this review can be found on page four followed by any commendations, areas of ongoing development and recommendations made by the review team. This is followed by detailed findings of the review.

These reports provide an information base for the production of thematic reports that identify findings across providers in Wales.

1 About QER: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/quality-enhancement-review>.

2 About QAA: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us>.

1. Contextual information about the provider, student population and the review

Summary information about the provider, including strategic framework, organisational structure

1 Bangor University (the University) was founded in 1884. Strategy 2030 which is underpinned by three strategic pillars: 'Research Excellence', 'Transformational Education' and 'Welsh Language and Culture' provides an overview of its future direction.

2 The Council is the governing body of the University, while the Executive Board is responsible for administration and management. There are three colleges and 11 schools. Of the approximately 2,200 staff employed by the University, 47% are in academic and research roles, 14% in professional roles and 39% in administrative or technical roles.

Composition, key trends and anticipated changes in the student population, including information on retention, progression and outcomes

3 In 2023-24 there were 13,738 enrolments, consisting of 7,855 undergraduate (UG) students, 5,046 postgraduate taught students (PGT) and 837 postgraduate research students (PGR). The period 2018-19 to 2023-24 saw an increase of 18% in student numbers, primarily international PGT students.

4 Approximately 250 students currently study at the Wrexham Campus. The University also has 1,500 transnational education students. 1,345 of them are studying with MDIS, a partnership that the University is not renewing.

5 New courses such as Medicine and the growth of foundation courses/apprenticeships have mitigated recent declining numbers in other areas. Work on non-retention has also had a positive impact. Part-time numbers have grown by 16% over the last five years, predominantly due to nursing provision and work-based professional programmes.

Commentary on how the provider supports national priorities

6 The University's close alignment with national priorities can be seen through the 12 sub-strategies which underpin Strategy 2030. For example, the Welsh Language Sub-Strategy reflects the University's strong commitment to the Welsh language and bilingualism. The University has invested in developing its Welsh medium provision and is well positioned to support the Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050' target of a million Welsh speakers.

7 Widening participation is addressed through the Fee and Access Plan 2023-25 and the Widening Access Sub-Strategy, with the University investing 17% of its total UG full-time fee income in supporting equality of opportunity.

8 The civic engagement work of the University reinforces the student learning experience, as reflected in the Civic Engagement Sub-Strategy, and the wide range of volunteering opportunities available through the Students' Union (SU).

Commentary on the preparation for the review, including how provider and students worked in partnership in review preparation

9 Preparations for the review were led by the Quality Enhancement Review Group (QERG), chaired by the PVC Education and Student Experience. Informal meetings also took place on aspects of the review and a consultant was appointed to assist with specific elements of the preparations.

10 The SU decided to integrate their submission into the self-analysis (SA) to provide a joint submission with the University. The creation of the SA was brought forward to accommodate the change in SU Sabbatical Officers part way through the preparations, with continuity provided by the Vice-President Education who was then appointed as the SU President. Existing feedback mechanisms were used to gain feedback from a broad spectrum of students.

11 Updates on review preparations were provided at Teaching and Learning Committees, at Professional Services Executive Board meetings, and at University's Council meetings. Drafts of the SA were approved by the Executive Board.

Summary of the nature and rationale for the enhancement priorities identified for the review and in the self-analysis

12 Four priorities were approved by QERG following analysis of information across ten potential areas. The reason the University chose to include each priority, and its stage of development is noted here. The priorities are reviewed in detail in Section 3 of the report.

- Priority 1: Enhancing the Student Experience
An area of emphasis which is in the Evaluation stage.
- Priority 2: Enhancing Retention
An investment in change initiative which is in the Implementation stage.
- Priority 3: Enhancing the Bangor Graduate
An area of challenge which is in the Planning/Early Implementation stage.
- Priority 4: Enhancing Academic Staff Development
An example of exemplary practice which is in the Implementation/Evaluation stage.

Summary of the provider's follow-up to the previous review

13 The University received three commendations, three affirmations and no recommendations in the 2018 QAA Quality Enhancement Review (QER). QERG monitored the implementation of the post-review action plan to completion, building upon the commendations and affirmations. For example, a refresh of the Learner Analytics (LA) work and the redevelopment of the Assessment Framework, now entitled the Assessment Equivalence Framework (AEF). Through the Doctoral School a range of enhancements relating to the learning experience of research students has also been undertaken.

2. Review judgements and findings

Based on the information presented, the review team judges that:

- Bangor University **meets** the requirements of the ESG Part 1 for internal quality assurance
- Bangor University **meets** the relevant baseline regulatory requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

This is a positive judgement, which means the provider has robust arrangements for securing academic standards, managing academic quality and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Commendations

The QER has identified several commendations, which are summarised below.

- The strong relationship between the University and students, with the views and feedback of students at the forefront of initiatives/projects to enhance the student experience.
- The extent to which the Welsh language and bilingualism are deeply embedded in the culture of the University, to the clear benefit of all staff and students in terms of learning opportunities and a sense of belonging.
- The extensive and responsive support available both academically and pastorally, to help support students' needs throughout their time at the University.
- The significant value placed on staff development and the extent to which this is fully embedded across the University, which is of considerable benefit to both staff and student learning.
- The implementation of the Assessment Equivalence Framework to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment practices within and between disciplines.
- The systematic integration and use of data to inform quality assurance processes, facilitate tailored student support, and to underpin targeted enhancements.

Recommendations

The QER makes no recommendations.

Areas of ongoing development

The QER has identified one area of ongoing development, which is summarised below.

- The steps being taken to strengthen the University's approach to the management of collaborative provision.

3. Statement on the provider's strategic approach to enhancement

14 The review team explored the University's strategic approach to enhancement within the context of its overarching Strategy 2030 and its 12 sub-strategies. The Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy and the Student Experience Sub-Strategy both emphasise a deliberate approach to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

15 The University identified four specific enhancement priorities for this QER:

- Enhancing the Student Experience
- Enhancing Retention
- Enhancing the Bangor Graduate
- Enhancing Academic Staff Development.

16 Enhancement priorities were selected following a rigorous process, informed by strategic plans, critical success factors, and institutional data sources such as the Annual Enhancement Report. The priorities address key areas of focus for the University, including student satisfaction, retention, graduate outcomes, and staff development, aligning with both institutional direction and HE sector expectations.

17 Evidence of the University's enhancement work was provided through case studies, presentations, and supporting documentation, including data-driven initiatives such as the National Student Survey (NSS) Enhancement Events, the Retention Delivery Group, and the implementation of the Assessment Equivalence Framework.

18 During the review visit, the review team explored these priorities in detail through meetings with senior staff, professional services, academic staff, and students. A joint staff-student presentation was delivered to the team, providing further insight into the rationale, planning, and evaluation of enhancement initiatives, as well as the role of students as partners in shaping and informing these priorities.

19 The review team considered the deliberate steps taken by the University to enhance the student learning experience through examining the use of evidence to plan, implement and evaluate the student learning experience for the four priorities. As part of this report, the team provides commentaries on their findings of these three areas in the sections below.

20 The overall outcome of the enhancement-led approach to the review and the team's consideration of the enhancement priorities is a statement on the provider's strategic approach to enhancement of the student academic experience. The review team makes the following statement on the University's strategic approach to enhancement of the student learning experience:

21 *The University's strategic approach to enhancement is integral to its Strategy 2030, with 'Transformational Education' as one of three pillars. This is supported by critical success factors focused on teaching quality, student retention, and graduate outcomes. Sub-strategies for teaching and learning, and the student experience are data-informed in both their design and evaluation. Enhancement is deliberately embedded as a core institutional practice, reinforced through ownership, dissemination, and reward structures. A key strength is the institution's systematic integration and use of data, including student engagement and performance metrics, to inform targeted actions.*

22 *The University's enhancement activities are scrutinised through annual quality assurance and enhancement reports alongside the Integrated Performance Report. The Education and Student Experience Committee provides oversight and ensures that student feedback is consistently acted upon as part of a broader approach to monitoring quality and supporting enhancement activities.*

23 *The University is a proudly bilingual institution that highly values its Welsh heritage and language, anchoring it to its region and community. A hallmark of the University's approach is its strong partnership with the SU. Students co-create strategies, provide feedback through student representatives, and are integral to governance. Professional services, alongside the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) support innovation and continuing professional development (CPD). In summary, these approaches reflect a robust, inclusive, and data-driven framework for continuous improvement.*

Commentary on the strategic approach taken to planning enhancements to the student experience

24 The University considers the enhancement priority 'Enhancing the Bangor Graduate' to be moving from the planning to the implementation stage of the enhancement cycle as outlined in the Annual Enhancement Report under the second Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy priority: 'enable the University's students to successfully contribute to, and compete in, our regional and global graduate market'. The review team confirmed that the University's definition of the Bangor Graduate as 'someone with the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing, both in the present and for future generations' was aligned with the University's Strategy 2030.

25 The planning process and early actions include the establishment during 2024 of the Employability Delivery Group and a Work-Based Learning (WBL) Working Group. The former oversees the strategic development of careers activity across the University and shares best practice, while the latter is dedicated to reviewing and enhancing WBL activities, ensuring that all activity aligns with the diverse needs of students and the University's strategic objectives. The team learnt of the review of the arrangements for placements, including support for students and role descriptions for placement leads, undertaken by the WBL Working Group, and of the intention for the Code of Practice on WBL to outline the minimum level of support to ensure consistency across colleges. The review team also learnt of the provision of Welsh medium placement opportunities to meet the needs of the region and to strengthen students' career options.

26 Students whom the team met confirmed the value of the placement opportunities available to them in preparing them for employment, complemented by the SU's volunteering offer. Students also expressed their appreciation of the My Graduate Career Week held for the first time in October 2023, in partnership with the SU. This event featured a week-long series of workshops, lectures, and practical sessions aligned each day to one of the five graduate attributes. It incorporated a Careers and Employability Fair, which facilitated interactions between students and representatives from 89 employers and professional organisations and attracted over 1,800 students. In its planning for the next Careers Week the University has drawn on feedback from students and from the SU, and is, for example, looking to strengthen the understanding and support given to neuro-divergent students in ensuring a 'quiet time' for their attendance.

27 The University's relationships with a broad range of employers and with alumni appear strong and students report positive engagements with them through the Careers Fair, guest lectures and workshops. In addition, the review team learnt of steps taken to embed graduate

attributes in the curriculum and of work with employers to identify the skills needed by students, as well as a career readiness survey for students themselves, which feeds into a graduate actions' dashboard at school level.

28 The rationale for choosing the Bangor Graduate as an enhancement priority is to demonstrate steps being taken to improve the University's poor performance in graduate outcomes data and employability rankings. In discussions with the review team the University highlighted challenges of time-lag in measuring success in this area and to address this it is using assessments, where modules are linked to skills, and its career readiness survey, as indicator measures.

29 The review team concluded that the early Bangor Graduate enhancement initiatives are informed by the needs of students and employers, actively involve both groups, and are addressing the challenges identified in a proactive and deliberate way. These initiatives have been well received and, although not at full implementation stage, are considered to have further positive impact as the work progresses to full implementation stage.

Commentary on the actions taken to ensure effective implementation of enhancement priorities

30 In the 2018 QER the University was commended for the systematic collection and use of student engagement and performance data to inform and enhance student support and academic progress. The review team recognised this as an area that has continued to develop, with an enhancement priority focusing on 'The Impact of Learning Analytics on Enhancing Retention'. Current work in this area is identified by the University as a change initiative in the implementation phase, following a refresh of LA in Spring 2022.

31 The 'Enhancing Retention' enhancement priority has close strategic alignment with Strategy 2030 where a target for 1.5% annual improvement in retention is identified. The review team confirms that the University monitors retention as a primary outcome effectively, with student retention reports leading to a deep dive by the Retention Delivery Group where a need for intervention had been highlighted. The team heard from both staff and students how international students are welcomed and inducted to the University. It was evident that this fosters a sense of belonging and has been successfully implemented following a data-led deep dive.

32 In addition, the review team heard from both staff and students how LA is used to support students in understanding their own engagement levels, as well as to monitor overall engagement. It was emphasised that it is used as a 'key enabler' to, rather than as a replacement for, in-person conversations. Students clearly benefit from the transparency of this data and provided examples to the team of using LA to benchmark themselves against their peers.

33 The review team concluded that the 'Enhancing Retention' priority is being implemented effectively with direct benefit to students being evidenced. LA enables wellbeing and support staff as well as academic staff and students to understand engagement and to readily identify and rectify engagement issues impacting positively on retention.

34 The enhancement priority 'Enhancing Staff Development' is considered by the University to be an area of exemplary practice which is moving from the implementation to the evaluation phase. The review team confirmed the University has in place clear structures for identifying training needs and that the People and Wellbeing Sub-Strategy is aligned to the Strategy 2030 transformation theme 'Our People', demonstrating the emphasis placed on staff development across the institution. Awards such as Athena SWAN Silver and work on

the Race Equality Charter further demonstrate the commitment to developing staff.

35 The review team heard about changes to the organisational structures around staff development with CELT being brought together with the Quality Enhancement Unit to enable improved collaboration. It was evident through meetings with staff that there are effective processes in place for identifying staff training needs including a formal Professional Development Review which was completed by 91% of staff in 2023. Themes for training sessions are also identified through student representatives and module feedback. Documentary evidence submitted highlights the positive individual impact of the staff development support available.

36 The range of CPD opportunities in both Welsh and English and the support for staff to gain recognition is evident in the documentation provided, with over 40% of staff holding Advance HE Fellowship.

37 The review team concluded that the 'Enhancing Staff Development' initiatives demonstrated are extensive and while fully embedded and effectively evaluated for academic staff, are in the implementation phase for professional services staff.

Commentary on the process of evaluation and reporting on the results of enhancement priorities, and how this informs future progress and enhancement activities

38 The University considers the enhancement priority 'Enhancing the Student Experience' to be in the evaluation stage as outlined in the SA. Following the commendation of its partnership with students in the 2018 QER, the University has continued to enhance its support and provision, working closely with the student body to enhance the learning experience. Student experience is at the centre of the 'Transformational Education' pillar of Strategy 2030, with the University committing to delivering a personalised student experience.

39 The University has aligned this priority to one of the critical success factors outlined in Strategy 2030, namely NSS teaching quality greater than or equal to 85%. The priority is in the evaluation stage based on the detailed cyclical plan and the implement and evaluate approach taken in the past four years. A decrease in NSS scores in 2023 presented concerns, but subsequent enhancement activities appear to have contributed to positive increases in NSS 2024, including a 10% increase in overall satisfaction and a 5% increase in teaching quality exceeding the critical success factor (86%). A new Student Experience Sub-Strategy that sits alongside the Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy, was developed by bringing together key stakeholders, with the result being a strategy including five priorities: opportunities for students, wellbeing, inclusivity, the environment, and communication. A Student Experience Delivery Group has been created to help support the formal monitoring of the student experience and strategy. The review team confirms these developments should help the University monitor and evaluate progress successfully.

40 Hearing from student representatives and the Lead Student Representative across various meetings, it was clear that students felt they were co-creators in the development and enhancement of their experience. The review team learnt of the various forums and activities for students to input and work in partnership with the University. These include Staff Student Liaison Committees, Course Representative Councils, the 'Tell Us Tuesday' initiative, Coffee with Representatives, and a Student Forum. As a result of some of these initiatives, student insight reports have been developed on key themes to raise awareness of issues. These are a useful resource for the University when responding to ongoing challenges. The review team

considers that the multiple forums provide a holistic opportunity for students to input into their learning experience and demonstrates a comprehensive set of mechanisms to ensure the student experience is continuously being monitored and enhanced.

41 The review team concluded that the 'Enhancing the Student Experience' priority was well-developed and has been strengthened through work undertaken in recent years. There are objective measures in place that commit the University to continue to enhance the student experience and well-established means for it to work in partnership with students to adapt to the diverse and ever-changing needs of the student body.

4. Commentary on the provider's support and enhancement of the student learning experience

42 The review team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to support and enhance the student learning experience. The team considered a range of documents including the Student Experience Sub-Strategy, the Student Insight Report: Communications, the Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy, the case studies on the Enhancement Priorities as well as reports/minutes from key institutional committees/delivery groups with responsibilities for quality and academic standards, learning and teaching, and the wider student experience. In addition, the team met with staff and students.

Use of external reference points to support and enhance the student learning experience

43 Compliance with all necessary regulatory requirements are in place, such as adherence to Competition and Marketing Authority (CMA) guidelines to ensure prospective students receive accurate information.

44 Other external reference points include Medr's (Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, Wales) Fee and Access Plan and the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales. National qualifications frameworks, Degree Characteristics Statements, Subject Benchmark Statements, and mapping to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2018 (Quality Code) and the ESG feed into the University's quality processes (see Section 5).

45 The 2021 Research Excellence Framework considered 85% of the research conducted at the University to be world leading/internationally excellent. This enhances the student experience by integrating cutting-edge knowledge into the curriculum.

Views and feedback from students

46 Through both the desk-based analysis and the onsite visit, it was evident that the student perspective is considered by the University and is central to the student learning experience. The Student Insight Report: Communications demonstrates some excellent examples, such as 'Tell Us Tuesday', of how feedback is gathered from students, actioned, and reported on. The PRES and PTES scores and the postgraduate students' meeting confirmed that postgraduate students feel listened to and valued as partners in the learning experience.

47 Staff Student Liaison Committees were cited frequently as key to discussions on the student experience. The University's NSS scores declined in 2023, however, the NSS enhancement events that were developed as a result show the University's commitment to listening to the student voice and appear to have contributed towards the positive NSS 2024 outcome aligning Bangor with the average for the sector in Wales.

48 The review team **commends** the strong relationship between the University and students, with the views and feedback of students at the forefront of initiatives/projects to enhance the student experience.

Developments to enhance learning and teaching arranged through partnerships with students

49 The development of the Student Experience Sub-Strategy and the Student Experience Delivery Group demonstrate the commitment of the University to work with students as partners. The SU sabbatical officers/course representatives represent students at all levels of governance, which indicates the importance placed on student views.

50 In meetings with UG, PGT and PGR students and during the meeting on the enhancement priority 'Enhancing the Student Experience', students consistently voiced their satisfaction, expressing praise for the University's collaborative approach and its responsiveness to their feedback. Examples were provided which displayed the willingness of staff to listen to students and positively impact their learning as they worked together to action changes. The review team recognised a strong and effective partnership between students and the University.

Effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategy in improving the quality of learning opportunities

51 The Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy aligns clearly to the Strategy 2030 strategic pillar 'Transformational Education' and is underpinned by a commitment to the Bangor Graduate as demonstrated through Enhancement Priority 3. The committee and delivery group structures mean that staff at all levels are involved operationally in the effective implementation of the Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy to improve learning opportunities for students. Students commented positively on the Welsh and bilingual learning opportunities available to them, along with key initiatives such as flexible learning pathways and the ability to adapt programmes to individual aspirations. The review team **commends** the extent to which the Welsh language and bilingualism are deeply embedded in the culture of the University, to the clear benefit of all staff and students in terms of learning opportunities and a sense of belonging.

Effectiveness and evaluation of initiatives to enhance learning and teaching

52 The University has demonstrated a sustained track record of targeted initiatives to enhance learning and teaching, as reflected in a series of deep dives, 'scaffold' and 'turnaround' projects. The impact of these initiatives is effectively evaluated and links closely with the University's data-led approach to enhancement (see Section 5). The introduction of an Annual Enhancement Report and the launch of the Integrated Performance Report are good examples of this approach.

53 Operationally, annual review procedures to continuously evaluate and enhance learning and teaching are well-established with module and programme review documentation detailed and clear.

54 The review team is confident that the University has well-established and effective systems in place for evaluating enhancement initiatives. Appropriate key performance indicators, along with student feedback, are integrated effectively for a reflective and cohesive approach.

Academic, pastoral and learning support for students

55 The University has multiple well-developed structures/mechanisms to support students.

For example, one-to-one consultations, peer support, Personal/Senior Tutors, Residential Mentors, Student Services, Disability Services and a Careers and Employability Service. It was evident to the review team that the University is continuously gathering and monitoring information on the needs of its students (such as via the Peer Guide scheme) and is developing additional support. This support is recognised and well received by students.

56 The support available is tailored to the diverse student population. In particular, the review team highlights the support given to international students. For example, the international student mentors and the English Language Centre for Overseas Students offer good academic, pastoral and learning support.

57 It was evident that there is considerable support available for students. The review team **commends** the extensive and responsive support available both academically and pastorally, to help support students' needs throughout their time at the University.

Recruitment and training of staff including staff development

58 The review team found that the University has clear processes in place for recruitment and recognises that staff engagement, performance and wellbeing drive the student experience. Recently appointed staff members met by the review team described how they were effectively onboarded to the University and provided with orientation materials and mentors for both academic and overall peer support. Welsh language training is actively encouraged, with time set aside in workload allocations.

59 A wide range of CPD opportunities are available to staff through the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) and staff are encouraged to seek professional recognition for their achievements. Staff fully engage in opportunities and are encouraged to share experiences with peers through an annual CELT conference as well as through peer-to-peer processes which impact positively on teaching practice and student experience. CELT effectively capitalises on academic expertise in education and is responsive to the needs of staff and students. The review team **commends** the significant value placed on staff development and the extent to which this is fully embedded across the University, which is of considerable benefit to both staff and student learning.

Dissemination of good practice

60 Feedback from the peer observation scheme, Staff Student Liaison Committees and enhancement events feeds into professional development initiatives for staff.

61 Cross-referencing this feedback with themes from the student-led teaching awards and CPD activities evidences the use of feedback to feedforwards into future developments. Students' involvement in this process is valued and appreciated by the SU and students and staff highlighted to the review team the importance of continuously monitoring and sharing good practice for their personal development.

Summary of the arrangements for the support and enhancement of the student learning experience

62 Building on the 2018 QER, the University has been able to maintain and further develop the student learning experience. It was evident to the review team that students' view and feedback are valued and are used to drive quality assurance and enhancement initiatives. Students are represented across all necessary forums which provides them with the opportunity to work in partnership with the University to enhance their learning experience.

5. Academic standards and quality processes

63 The review team is confident that the University has effective arrangements for managing and enhancing its academic quality and standards. The team considered a range of documents including the Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy, the 2023-24 review of Regulations for Taught Programmes, the Assessment Equivalence Framework, the presentation on the 'Strategic Approach to Enhancement' and a sample of institutional reports on quality processes. In meetings, the team heard from staff and students about the effectiveness and continuing evolution and development of these arrangements.

Developments in the provider's approach to managing quality and standards

64 The review team recognises the University's strategic efforts to enhance its management of quality and standards through significant structural and procedural changes since its last QER review. The introduction of the Teaching and Learning Sub-Strategy, spanning 2021-25, has played a pivotal role in reshaping the academic landscape. Key achievements include the consolidation of the undergraduate portfolio from 650 to 250 programmes and the establishment of a new Medical School for North Wales.

65 Revisions to the regulatory framework, such as the 2023-24 review of the Regulations for Taught Programmes, demonstrate a proactive approach to maintaining quality and standards. Key updates include extended timelines for PGT programmes, expanded credit transfer pathways, and discipline-specific accreditation modifications, ensuring flexibility and compliance with professional standards.

66 The review team highlights the University's commitment to robust oversight through deep dives into specific areas, such as the development of the Assessment Equivalence Framework. The updated framework reflects an enhanced focus on fairness, consistency, and transparency in assessment practices.

67 The review team noted that planned enhancements to the Quality Enhancement Unit, including a business partner model, are expected to embed expertise at the school level, aligning quality processes with institutional critical success factors and direction, and addressing follow-up action planning challenges.

68 The development of the Doctoral School has further strengthened operational and strategic oversight of PGR studies. The introduction of structured induction and annual progress reviews ensures a consistent PGR experience across schools. Research students praised the quality of supervision, and the tailored support provided, particularly in preparation for thesis development and assessment.

The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of standards

69 The review team found that the University's regulatory framework and governance structure remain robust, providing clear oversight of academic standards. The Senate, supported by the Education and Student Experience Committee, ensures alignment with national frameworks, including the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and the Quality Code, embedded within the University's Regulations, Codes of Practice, and validation processes.

70 The review team highlights the University's continued rigorous use of external expertise in programme validation, revalidation, and monitoring and review. External examiners and industry experts contribute to maintaining the rigor, relevance, and comparability of academic provision with other sector providers. Regulations on degree classification, alongside the AEF, further ensure fairness and transparency across disciplines.

71 The updated AEF, developed in collaboration with school directors and quality assurance staff, emphasises the principle of equivalency in assessment load across modules and programmes. The well-developed framework incorporates clear guidance on the expected number, size, and weighting of assessments, at module and programme level enabling consistency and alignment with intended learning outcomes. The review team **commends** the implementation of the Assessment Equivalence Framework to ensure fairness and consistency in assessment practices within and between disciplines.

72 In summary, the review team found that the University's rigorous quality processes, strong external engagement, and robust frameworks continue to effectively uphold academic standards and ensure alignment with sector expectations.

The use of quality processes to confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of quality

73 The review team found that the University's quality processes continue to ensure that courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience, and reliably assess student achievement. Active student engagement, including representation in governance and structured feedback mechanisms, is a notable strength (see Section 4).

74 Evaluation mechanisms have matured since the last review with the introduction of the Annual Enhancement Report and Integrated Performance Report. These reports consolidate metrics on student feedback, retention and graduate outcomes, providing a comprehensive and data-driven approach to quality assurance. Critical success factors underpinning Strategy 2030 are systematically monitored, enabling effective evaluation by the Education and Student Experience Committee and Council.

75 The Annual Quality Assurance Report, alongside the Annual Enhancement Report and Degree Outcomes Report, is reviewed by Council. These documents facilitate oversight and inform approval of Medr's six quality statements under the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales.

76 The University has expanded its use of data analytics through tools like the Engagement Dashboard, integrating metrics such as attendance, VLE usage, and assessment submissions. Academic staff emphasised its value in providing tailored student support, facilitating timely interventions and supporting the University's Enhancement Priority on student retention. The review team **commends** the systematic integration and use of data to inform quality assurance processes, facilitate tailored student support, and underpin targeted enhancements.

77 The University has also addressed emerging challenges, such as the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI), through a proactive and structured approach. A guidance document for staff and students has been complemented by CPD provided by CELT. Undergraduate students demonstrated an awareness of this guidance, citing its availability on the MyBangor website and noting its inclusion in a compulsory module. Students reported diverse uses of AI across disciplines, from design and coding to discussions on ethics, bias, and appropriate applications. For example, computing students highlighted its use in assessing their understanding of code, while others emphasised its value in creative design tasks. This

nuanced engagement reflects the University's efforts to promote informed and ethical use of generative AI, tailored to specific disciplinary contexts.

78 Structured institution-wide action plans and a deep dive intervention in the School of Healthcare Sciences, led by a member of the University Executive Board, successfully addressed the decrease in NSS 2023 performance. These efforts resulted in a 10-percentage point increase in overall satisfaction in NSS 2024. The review team heard that the School of Healthcare Sciences had been a key focus of monitoring for three years due to its disproportionate impact on NSS results. Improvements highlighted by Pulse surveys conducted by the SU and broader institutional indicators suggest a further positive shift for 2025, with wider lessons drawn to inform changes across the institution.

79 In summary, the review team found that the effective implementation and operation of the University's quality processes confirm the continued effectiveness of the provider's management of quality.

The contribution of the provider's quality processes to ensure improvement and enhancement of the student learning experience

80 The University's quality processes are well-integrated into operational structures. The 'Strategic Approach to Enhancement' presentation emphasised the cycle of continuous development undertaken in quality processes at the University. Quality processes are effective in surfacing areas in need of improvement and students provided examples of direct and timely action taken in response to these to improve their learning experience.

81 The University is proactive in addressing areas of improvement highlighted by data or through student feedback. The review team found that enhancement initiatives and interventions are rapidly actioned through a network of committees and delivery groups. These are then effectively evaluated with input from, or in partnership with students, and adopted across the University where appropriate.

82 The review team confirms that the University's agile approach to quality processes embeds enhancement activity in a cycle of continuous improvement. The team learnt of a university-wide Enhancement Framework under development for 2025-2030, which will root these principles in governance, demonstrating the institution's evolving approach to enhancement.

A summary of the effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic quality and standards

83 Overall, the review team is confident that the University has robust and effective arrangements for securing academic standards. The University's comprehensive regulatory framework, underpinned by clear governance structures, provides a solid foundation for maintaining and enhancing academic quality and standards. The alignment of policies and procedures with national frameworks, including the CQFW, and FHEQ, ensures that threshold standards are consistently met across all disciplines and modes of delivery.

84 In conclusion, the review team found that the University's arrangements for securing academic standards are not only well-established but also reflective of a forward-looking institution. The University demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining excellence, addressing emerging challenges, and fostering continuous improvement. The comprehensive quality assurance framework ensures that academic standards are upheld while driving innovation and enhancing provision across the institution.

6. Collaborative provision

Information on the extent and nature of collaborative provision and plans for change (including work-based learning)

85 The University has a range of collaborative provision (CP), including validation and franchise partners, dual awards, articulation agreements, study abroad/exchange programmes, professional placements, modular arrangements, doctoral training centres and an embedded college. Information on the University's partnership arrangements is held in the Collaborative Provision Register.

86 The 2018 QER affirmed steps being taken by the University to address concerns at the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) in Tashkent and that support/controls had been put in place. Despite this, certain issues resurfaced and in 2024, following a review, the University decided to exit the MDIS collaboration. Teach out plans have been developed, with timelines in place for confirming numbers and actions each year at each site and the University is maintaining oversight at a senior level. The University also confirmed that consideration has been given to the options for any student unable to complete their award within the teach-out period, which might be an exit award, a transfer to Bangor or a transfer to another institution as appropriate to the individual case. The review team was able to view the communications with students and the future schedule of meetings with the partners in all locations and considered the approach taken to be clear, supportive and collaborative.

87 The University includes in its Widening Access Sub-Strategy the commitment to working in partnership with FE institutions in Wales. Grŵp Llandrillo Menai (GLIM) is the University's largest collaborative partner in the UK, with 828 students enrolled on the University awards in 2023-24. The range of collaborative activity in GLIM and Coleg Cambria includes degree apprenticeships, which were subject to a country-wide review in 2021.

Developments in the provider's approach to quality and standards

88 The review team learnt of ongoing developments in the approach to managing collaborative partnerships with a new Collaborative Provision Delivery Group in place, a new DVC role replacing the PVC Global Engagement, a Global Sub-Strategy under development, the job descriptions of Deans of Global Engagement under review, and internal Codes of Practice for Collaborative Provision and Work-Based Learning under development. As these were at an early stage of development the team was unable to assess their effectiveness, but accepted that, if effectively implemented, this revised approach could enhance the provider's management of quality and standards.

The use of quality processes to confirm continued effectiveness of provider's management of collaborative provision

89 The quality processes used for approval and monitoring of CP are the same as those used for on campus provision, with minor adaptations to align with local regulations where required. In July 2024, the new Collaborative Provision Delivery Group was approved for introduction in the 2024-25 academic year. It approves proposals for low-risk collaborative activity and monitors higher risk activity (previously approved by the Curriculum Strategic Approval and Monitoring Delivery Group). This was seen by the University as a strengthening of previous arrangements and the review team endorsed this view.

A summary of the effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision including arrangements for securing academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience

90 The University's approach to managing collaborative provision (CP) including arrangements for securing academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience was found by the review team to be in line, at an institutional level, with the Expectations and Core and Common Practices of the UK Quality Code (2018).

91 The review team noted, however, that the staffing changes taking place had left gaps in some operational aspects of the University's processes for managing CP. While it was understood by the team that the very recent appointment of a new DVC Global Engagement will lead to the review of policy and roles, the redevelopment of the Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision was started in 2023-24 and was not yet concluded. Delays in the approval and introduction of this Code of Practice, which had been expected to have been finalised and available for further consultation at the time of the review team's visit, have led to some misalignment between the current published Code of Practice and the arrangements currently in place, for example in the committee structures considering CP matters. The team also found a lack of clarity in how student representation works in partner institutions, in the training and support available for staff involved with CP and around expectations for liaison.

92 The review team identified as **an area of ongoing development** the steps being taken to strengthen the University's approach to the management of collaborative provision. The team would encourage early conclusion of its reviews of policies, roles and procedures related to CP.

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