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Gateway Quality Review: Wales

St Padarn's Institute

Review Report

March 2024

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Key findings

QAA's judgements about St Padarn's Institute

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at St Padarn's Institute.

- **There can be confidence that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable with standards set and achieved in other providers in the UK.**
- **There can be confidence that the quality of the student academic experience meets relevant baseline regulatory requirements.**

Areas for development

The review team identified the following **areas for development** that have the potential to enhance quality and/or further secure the reliability and/or comparability of academic standards at St Padarn's Institute. The review team advises St Padarn's Institute to:

- work with its awarding bodies to develop a greater variety of assessment methods that will support students to achieve a wider range of academic and professional outcomes (paragraph 6)
- ensure assessment feedback to students is provided in a timely manner and supports all students in their academic and professional development (paragraph 41).

About this review

The review visit took place from 12 to 13 March 2024 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Elizabeth Shackels
- Mark Cooper
- Dr Bradley Woolridge (Student Reviewer).

The overall aim of Gateway Quality Review: Wales is to:

- provide the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales with an expert judgement about the readiness of a provider to enter, or continue to operate within, the higher education sector.

Gateway Quality Review: Wales is designed to:

- ensure that the student interest is protected
- provide expert advice to ensure that the reputation of the UK higher education system is protected, including the protection of degree standards
- identify development areas that will help a provider to progress through a developmental period and be considered 'established'.

Each review considers a provider's arrangements against relevant aspects of the baseline regulatory requirements, and in particular:

- the reliability of degree standards and their reasonable comparability with standards set and achieved by other providers
- the quality of the student academic experience, including student outcomes where the provider has a track record of delivery of higher education.

About St Padarn's Institute

St Padarn's Institute (the Institute) provides accessible education in theology for lay people, ordinands and ministers within the Church in Wales. It provides continuing support and training for ministers, those preparing for ministry and for newly licensed ministers. It is a community focused on mission-orientated formation and training, working in partnership with the six dioceses of the Church in Wales, their bishops and local church communities. It is a part of the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, is a charitable trust with the object 'to promote the mission and ministry of the Church in Wales'. The Representative Body employs all the Institute's staff and also provides support and a policy framework for functions such as Human Resources, Legal, Finance and Information Technology.

The Institute offers programmes validated by its three university partners: the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), Durham University and Cardiff University. The BTh Theology for Discipleship, Ministry and Mission - including the Certificate and Diploma of HE - and the Certificate of Higher Education in Workplace Mission & Ministry (Apprenticeship) are both validated by UWTSD. The MA Theology, Ministry and Mission - including the Postgraduate (PG) Certificate and PG Diploma; and MA Chaplaincy Studies - including the PG Certificate and PG Diploma - are validated by Durham University. The MTh Chaplaincy Studies is franchised from Cardiff University and is currently in teach out.

Judgement area: Reliability and comparability of academic standards

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)

1 The Institute has partnerships with three awarding universities, each of which retains ultimate responsibility for the setting of academic standards, with the Institute responsible for the maintenance of academic standards as outlined in memoranda of agreement to ensure that academic standards meet or exceed UK threshold standards set out by the FHEQ.

2 The Institute recognises its responsibility to maintain standards through assessment, including assessing whether students have achieved the learning outcomes of modules contributing to an award. It has effective quality assurance structures and processes in place that ensure threshold standards are maintained and is involved in the review of existing awards leading to revalidation and modification of programmes. Programme specification accurately reflect the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statement.

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)

3 Higher education providers in Wales are required to use the CQFW in aligning qualifications and allocating credit. The Institute has embedded the eight principles of the CQFW in policy and practice - for example, it has devised an Assessment Guide that makes clear how alignment through different forms of assessment should achieve this aim in achieving learning outcomes, gaining credits and awarding qualifications at the appropriate level to threshold standards.

4 Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all modules clearly state the links between credits and learning aims. Programme specifications, module descriptors and handbooks outline how learning outcomes have been modelled against CQFW principles which are available for staff on the virtual learning environment. Staff met by the team articulated how the CQFW is applied in the maintenance of academic standards. To support staff in their understanding and application of the CQFW, the All-Staff-Meetings, which are held three times per year for two days, provide meaningful opportunity for updates on aspects such as academic and formational business, workshops and training events.

The Core and Common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Core practice: The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

5 The Institute is responsible for the day-to-day running of the student academic experience. A three-tier structure is in place to support the delivery of its academic programmes. The Academic Board is the senior academic decision-making body as outlined in the Terms of Reference and is supported by Programme Boards. The Academic Board is responsible for overseeing quality assurance, enhancement, strategic development, admissions, student engagement and regulations. For the purposes of Common Awards, the Academic Board also acts as the Management Committee. The newly established Quality and Standards Panel is appointed by the Bench of Bishops and is responsible for academic governance, quality and standards and continuous improvement. Other non-academic meetings, such as the Senior Leadership weekly meetings, the quarterly Strategy Meeting

and the Executive Board, take place to discuss day-to-day matters, finance and operational activities. These arrangements enable the Institute to be aware that it is delivering the qualifications at the threshold standard and consistent with the national qualifications' standard.

Core practice: The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

6 The Institute recognises its responsibility to maintain standards through assessment, including assessing whether students have achieved the learning outcomes of modules contributing to an award. Consequently, the Institute has effective quality assurance structures and processes in place that ensure threshold standards are maintained. Comparability with other awards is confirmed by external examiners. The range of assessment methods is rather limited with most assessment in the form of written essays. The Institute's Strategic Direction 2023-28 indicates an intention to develop changing forms of assessment, but no evidence is provided of this. Given the nature of its students and their possible career destinations, the review team specified an area for development - that the Institute works with its awarding bodies to develop a greater variety of assessment methods that will support students to achieve a wider range of academic and professional outcomes.

7 The Institute's involvement with bodies such as the Durham Common Awards Partnership, their other awarding partners and ecumenical bodies, support comparability with awarded qualifications from other UK providers.

Core practice: Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

8 The Durham University programmes are part of the Common Awards Partnership between the University, the Church of England, and 16 independent Theological Education Institutions (TEIs). External examiners, appointed to programmes by the partner university, have full access to the Institute's programmes on the virtual learning environment and provide assurance that academic standards meet the threshold standard, are appropriate for the level of study, and are comparable with similar programmes of other higher education providers. The award of credit is ultimately governed by the awarding bodies and their regulations, and these arrangements enable the Institute to demonstrate the programmes are delivered to the standards set by awarding universities. Exam boards are either held internally or externally with the partner university.

Core practice: The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

9 Academic work is informed by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (revised 2018) in terms of Expectations for Standards and Quality, and Core and Common practices. The Code is used to inform the development of policies and practices, such as the use of external expertise, assessment and internal review. Some staff are involved with assessment of academic standards at other higher education establishments. Those staff use that experience to inform their practice and help to ensure the quality of the Institute's academic standards.

10 The undergraduate programmes are informed by, and mapped to, the Subject Benchmark Statement for Theology and Religious Studies; the latest version, published in

2022, is reflected directly in programme specification documents, ensuring programmes reflect current academic recommendations.

Common practice: The provider reviews its Core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

11 The Institute monitors academic standards through its own database, which is primarily used to produce annual monitoring reports, covering areas such as applications, student outcomes, academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances. At the time of the review, the Institute was in the process of further developing its database structure to facilitate Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) reporting. The recent recruitment of a Registry Administrator has provided greater opportunity for staff to analyse data relating to their student cohort and support the marketing of their programmes to prospective students.

The Expectations for Standards of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

12 The Institute's three awarding bodies have overall responsibility for setting academic standards but the institution recognises its responsibility for maintaining standards through assessment and ensuring learning outcomes are met. The Institute has embedded the eight principles of the CQFW in its policies and practices including its assessment guides. There is a clear structure for delivery of academic programmes and providing a meaningful student experience. The Institute has effective quality assurance processes to ensure threshold standards are met, which is confirmed by external examiners. Involvement with other institutions is enabled through working with partner higher education institutions and other Church of England institutions. The Institution's databases are being further developed to improve monitoring and reporting.

Judgement

13 In reaching the following judgement, the review team explored a wide range of documentary evidence, including a self-evaluation document and a student submission with supporting evidence provided by the Institute and awarding bodies. Meetings were held with students, senior staff, and academic and support staff on site which provided additional information and clarification to demonstrate that the academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications frameworks (*The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*; the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales*; and the Expectations, Core and Common practices for Standards as set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education); and that the qualifications awarded are in line with sector-recognised standards.

14 There can be confidence that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable with standards set and achieved in other providers in the UK.

Judgement area: Quality of the student academic experience

The Core and Common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Core practice: The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

15 The admissions policy outlines all aspects of the admissions process. There are supporting documents to help understand the process, such as the development of a student-friendly admissions guide. The admissions process is robust, fair and inclusive, aiming to attract a diverse student demographic. Support for applicants is strong, with flexibility over fees, bursaries for Church members and additional assistance for ministerial candidates. Annual reviews and reports of the admission processes are also conducted. Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled applicants and this ethos continues throughout study. A particular strength in the admissions process is the flexibility of consideration for applicants who may not meet the standard entry criteria - who are given opportunities such as producing a written assessment or participating in the undergraduate induction module, to demonstrate their readiness for study. This enables otherwise capable students, who might lack formal qualifications, to be admitted. Support continues post-admission with a range of funding options for those facing financial barriers to access. Reasonable adjustments for disabilities and responsive development of learning support resources also promote inclusivity. By considering non-standard admissions and making professional judgements on an applicant's full profile and potential, deliberate efforts are made to widen access.

16 Discussions in the student meeting supported what was outlined in the pre-visit documentation. All students were very satisfied with the admissions process. One student had completed a taster course prior to commencing their studies, which helped them transition back into higher education. The meeting with academic and support staff delineated the admissions process and the opportunity for students to declare additional learning needs. Despite this option not always initially being taken, staff make students aware of the support available once enrolled and also have a learning support email address to remove potential disclosure barriers.

Core practice: The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

17 The key committee responsible for reviewing and approving new programmes internally at the Institute is the Academic Board under guidance from the Quality Standards Panel. External validation is then done by the partner university. The awarding universities are ultimately responsible for the approval of provision at the Institute. The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) and Durham University have a range of programmes delivered at the Institute through validation agreements. These partnerships provide oversight on academic standards and quality assurance processes.

18 The Cardiff University franchised MTh Chaplaincy Studies is being taught-out and there has been no recruitment to the programme for three years. The teach-out plan for the programme with the University involves continuing the existing delivery arrangements to enable students to complete their studies. Tutorial staff have retained Honorary Lecturer status to maintain access to the partner university resources and systems. Teaching continues through residentials at the Institute with online support. Monthly meetings with the School of History, Archaeology, Religion and Education focus on the student experience during the teach-out phase. Recent examination boards have awarded degrees to

completing students, with one remaining student on track to submit their dissertation. This indicates that students were appropriately supported to achieve their qualifications during the teach-out process.

19 The Durham University Common Awards Partnership (CAP) offers over 80 validated modules from which partners build pathways appropriate to students' needs and denominational requirements, while still meeting the University's programme outcomes and structure. The T3 Programme Regulations, T4 Module Overview Table, and T5 Curriculum Mapping document are annually provided to the CAP and demonstrate how modules are effectively mapped to the University's requirements in the design and delivery of their programmes.

20 The delivery of the UWTSD BTh Theology for Discipleship, Ministry and Mission programme began in 2016 and its Certificate in Workplace Mission & Ministry (Apprenticeship) was added in 2023, providing the academic portion of a Level 4 apprenticeship scheme. The workplace learning component is delivered by Coleg Sir Gâr, which is part of the UWTSD group specialising in vocational and apprenticeship courses. UWTSD oversees both the academic and workplace elements of this new apprenticeship programme, run jointly by St Padarn's and Coleg Sir Gâr. Current apprentices commented positively on the programme in advancing their careers and the effective collaboration between both providers in the delivery of the programme.

21 The Institute engages and consults with students regarding the design and delivery of their programmes in various ways. Firstly, student views are sought formally during validation and periodic review events - for example, during meetings with the panel members. Secondly, through other routes - for example, there was a consultation with students on moving the BTh part-time programme to become fully delivered online.

Core practice: The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

22 The Institute's staff development policy identifies a clear commitment to support all staff in their role, including their skills in research, scholarship and pedagogy. The review team was informed of meaningful staff development opportunities in which staff had been or were currently involved, such as presenting at conferences, published research articles and PhD activity. All new staff follow a standard staff induction programme and are effectively supported by the Programme Leader for Theology who has been appointed as a mentor for new staff. The Institute also attends annual partner conferences with UWTSD and Durham University.

23 The Institute ensures that its staff are appropriately qualified, with all staff teaching on academic programmes holding at least a master's degree, and most holding a PhD. There are clear requirements that tutors must hold a qualification at least one level above the modules they teach. The CVs of the tutorial staff demonstrate extensive expertise and experience relevant to their teaching areas. Associates and guests may teach at each level of the programme but require approval by the Principal and their contributions are supervised by module leaders. The Institute invests in developing staff teaching capabilities with all tutorial staff holding at least Associate Fellowship of the Advance HE and new staff are supported to gain appropriate HE fellowships. In 2022, an external provider delivered development on supporting student learning and aligning with CQFW requirements. A peer review process assures quality of teaching practice.

24 The standard teaching load for a full-time tutorial staff member and the time allocated for research and scholarly activity, demonstrates that all tutorial staff are expected to contribute to the wider church through research, writing or speaking as part of their role.

The review team heard how staff are engaged in a range of research outputs, including peer-reviewed publications, monographs and conference participation. Staff can apply for focused time to undertake research. Attendance at conferences and purchase of research materials is also supported. The recently adopted Research Strategy emerged from the recommendation of the Periodic External Review. This demonstrates the Institute's commitment to facilitating staff research and scholarly activity.

25 Professional services staff also receive ongoing development, including higher education qualifications, to support their roles. The breadth of specialist expertise across the tutorial staff team, alongside the commitment to ongoing scholarly and professional development, indicates that the Institute has sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver high-quality learning and teaching.

Core practice: The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

26 The Institute has invested significantly in upgrading its learning support provision over the last four years, in response to the high proportion (around one-third) of students that declare a disability or learning difficulty. There is a dedicated learning support team that helps students through the Disabled Students' Allowance application process, develops individual learning plans, and provides specialist support - demonstrating a strong commitment to providing an inclusive academic experience. Reasonable adjustments are made based on student needs, following regular all-staff updates on the learning support policy.

27 The Institute's library and learning resources are described as 'well-resourced and efficient' in the Church of Wales' independent external quality assurance Periodic External Review process in 2022. There has been significant investment in electronic and physical library resources which led to providing extensive eBook and journal access tailored to student needs - both remotely and onsite. The expertise of the Librarian further enhances provision by supporting students in sourcing materials and research support and was highly praised by students during the review visit.

28 Detailed information and assistance is supplied to students on how to use the virtual learning environment, Office 365, email and other technologies integral to their learning. There are also appropriate mechanisms for students to provide direct feedback on resources which are acted on by the Institute.

29 Regular review of resource allocation occurs through analysis of user data, discussion at multiple boards with student membership, and, informally, via senior staff engagement with students at mealtimes. This responsiveness further demonstrates the Institute's commitment to sufficient resourcing tailored to evolving student needs and was positively referenced by students in the meeting with the review team.

30 While mostly positive, there is some potential to strengthen online module feedback response rates, particularly regarding optimal questionnaire formats. The Institute's senior team is aware of this and is actively engaged with staff and students to develop a module feedback process that is fit-for-purpose, not burdensome in its completion and will provide useful data to identify, support and drive improvement. There are also other formal and informal channels available to give feedback on modules and their student experience.

Core practice: The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

31 The student submission highlighted many positive examples whereby students have been engaged in the quality of their educational experience. Examples of changes following student feedback were: a shift from blended to online delivery for the part-time BTh; the introduction of the emotional management module for the MA Chaplaincy Studies Programme; and the introduction of a new module on theology and ecology to the MA Theology, Ministry and Mission. There are Student Representatives on the programme and academic boards and the Senior Student provides a report for each quality and standards panel meeting.

32 Both the student meeting and the academic and support staff meeting provided further examples of actively engaging students to enhance the quality of their experience. Students expressed that they felt that the student voice was well received, and they were satisfied that actions often follow. The academic/support staff meeting highlighted that a feedback group was utilised for staff to discuss feedback that is raised in a formal setting and decide the best way to act upon it.

33 Students on all accredited programmes elect Student Representatives who are provided with guidance regarding their role. In addition, students from within the full-time student body elect a Senior Student who attends Programme Board, Academic Board and Quality and Standards Panel meetings.

Core practice: The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

34 The Institute provided documentation which outlined both the complaints policy and academic appeals policy. This helped the review team to understand how these issues were handled and the partner institutions involvement in the process.

35 The student meeting confirmed that the documents existed and were well understood by students, with complaints and appeals policies addressed during their induction. The senior staff meeting helped to detail the policies and the partner universities' involvement in handling complaints and appeals. Due to the size and nature of the Institute, it appeared that issues were often able to be resolved informally. Students were fully aware of the formal procedures in place and opportunities for external consideration of complaints and appeals.

Core practice: Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.

36 This Core practice does not apply as the Institute does not offer research degrees.

Core practice: Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

37 The Institute has effective arrangements in place with its three university partners (UWTSD, Durham, Cardiff) to ensure a high-quality academic experience for students. This is demonstrated by the detailed Memoranda of Agreement which clearly outline the responsibilities of both parties in assuring and maintaining the quality of the student experience. Regular review meetings with its partners provide oversight - for example, annual monitoring by Durham and visits by UWTSD's Partnership Team Leader.

38 The Institute implements internal quality assurance processes including Programme Boards, overseen by the Academic Board. Detailed records are kept - for example, registers of approved teaching staff and invited speakers - showing attention to detail. Feedback processes also indicate a proactive approach. Student Representatives sit on key committees and consultation takes place over any proposed changes. Similarly, the Institute involves external stakeholders in improving academic quality. The Quality and Standards Panel provides external input from relevant groups such as the Strategy Meeting between the Church in Wales and the Institute. Training and sharing of good practice also occur through participation in sector bodies like the UWTSD Annual Conference and Common Awards TEI Forum.

39 Registry collects and analyses student achievement data, using metrics such as 'good honours' percentages and demographic breakdowns (gender, mode of study, disability, candidate status). This data is reported at Examination Boards, the Academic Board, the Executive Board, and the Quality and Standards Panel. Module-level achievement is also analysed to compare performance between modes of study. Anomalies prompt discussion with module leaders regarding the student experience and potential enhancements. Institution-wide data informs decision-making and evaluation of practices - for example, achievement data for students with declared disabilities suggests the effectiveness of implemented learning support processes. The Academic Board and Quality and Standards Panel provide an institution-wide perspective to disseminate best practices across programmes.

Core practice: The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

40 The self-evaluation document outlined that a number of mechanisms are in place to help students achieve academic and professional outcomes. Annual reports on student outcomes are reviewed at the internal Programme Boards and the Quality and Standards Panel. The delivery model of many programmes through residential study allows students to gain practical experience alongside their academic studies.

41 Students highlighted how they felt well supported, both academically and pastorally. Module leaders were very helpful with the academic issues and each student had a personal tutor, who was able to help with pastoral care. Students identified the support in place to help with academic achievement through support staff. Examples provided showed how the institution was able to provide individual support following induction - such as helping students get a dyslexia diagnosis or providing study skills support sessions. The Librarian was also highlighted as an excellent source of support which helped them succeed. Students met by the team expressed some criticism of feedback on their assessed work, that it is sometimes inconsistent, untimely, limited and did not provide sufficient information to improve the quality of their work. The team specified an area for development to ensure assessment feedback to students is provided in a timely manner and supports all students in their academic and professional development.

Common practice: The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

42 The Institute has established thorough and multi-layered processes for regular quality review, using outcomes to drive demonstrable enhancement. The commitment to continuous improvement is clear. Programme Boards meet each term to review programme delivery and quality. Issues identified are escalated to the Academic Board, which has oversight of academic quality across all programmes. The Quality and Standards Panel, containing internal and external expertise, also reviews quality and drives enhancement.

43 A key mechanism for review is the Annual Self-Assessment process in which Programme Leaders reflect on the previous year - evaluating strengths, weaknesses and priorities. Presenting these documents to the Quality and Standards Panel allows insightful external critique. This feeds into the Strategic Plan's commitment to continuous improvement. Another important structure is the Feedback Group which meets quarterly. Collating feedback allows the identification of patterns requiring action. Summaries are sent to the Principal who ensures follow-up. This regular processing of feedback supports quality improvement.

44 Formal review processes with university partners also facilitate ongoing enhancement. Partnership review by UWTSD occurs every five years, with interim review halfway through each cycle. University partners require annual self-evaluation and follow-up meetings. The different perspectives provided enable thoughtful reflection on practice. Student involvement is also key to the Institute's review processes with student representation on relevant bodies. Regular student feedback is gathered formally via questionnaires and reports. Student consultations, such as on proposed programme changes, provide further input. This embedded student engagement enriches ongoing review activities.

Common practice: The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.

45 The Institute proactively utilises external expertise in multiple ways to critically evaluate and enhance academic quality management. The Quality and Standards Panel which oversees academic quality, governance and enhancement is composed of senior higher education and Church leaders. The validating universities provide additional external input. University-appointed external examiners review student achievement across all programmes to ensure compatibility with awards from other providers, with the postgraduate examiner noting work was 'comparable with other institutions'. The Partnership Team Leader from UWTSD assesses maintenance of standards through an annual visit and twice-yearly reports. Durham University also reviews standards and policies through an Annual Self-Evaluation process.

46 Development of the new apprenticeship programme demonstrated use of external expertise - for example, the University appointed an external assessor to review and comment on programme development and documentation. UWTSD's Director of Academic Experience helped diversify assessments for an apprenticeship context. A Reference Group of denominational representatives also provided an ecumenical perspective. Ongoing participation in sector networks demonstrates consideration of wider external views and provides greater externality. The Principal undertakes Quality Reviews for the Ministry Development Team of the Archbishops' Council. Staff serve as external examiners at other institutions, are involved with collaborative bodies and are research-active beyond the Institute.

Common practice: The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

47 The Institute recognises the needs of its student population, with many students returning to higher education following time away from study, with additional study skills sessions developed and a student handbook for further support and guidance.

48 The self-evaluation document highlighted that having 'enhancement' as a standing item on agendas for programme/academic boards is a deliberate choice to ensure that the quality of students' educational experience is continuously reviewed. Examples of issues raised following student feedback were artificial intelligence, supporting students with

learning difficulties, and assessment and feedback issues. The Student Representative system is also well established, with each programme having at least one Student Representative who attends the Programme Boards to present their reports. Additionally, the Senior Student representative is a member of the Quality and Standards Panel and provides a report in that forum to represent the student voice.

49 Students expressed how they felt content that opportunities to provide feedback were available throughout the course and that minor changes were often quickly resolved. Module evaluations were a good example of how the Institute engaged students in the quality assurance. However, although feedback was gathered, it was noted that it sometimes took a prolonged period before change and actions followed.

The Expectations for Quality of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

50 The role and responsibilities of St Padarn's and their relationship with the validating universities is clearly documented. Programme Boards, Academic Boards and the Quality and Standards Panel represent a three-tiered structure to evaluate the quality and support required to help students benefit and succeed during their time at the Institute.

51 The Institute recognises the needs of its student population, with many returning to higher education following time away from study. Comprehensive support and additional study skills sessions have been developed and a student handbook provided for further support and guidance.

Judgement

52 In order to reach the following judgement, the review team was able to explore a wide range of documentary evidence, including a self-evaluation document and a student submission with supporting evidence provided. Additional evidence was provided in response to questions sent in advance following the team's first meeting. The review team was able to meet and have positive discussions with a wide range of staff and students, including the Institute's Principal and an awarding body representative. The evidence allowed the review team to explore the provision offered to students from the point of admission through to completion

53 The review team concludes that there can be confidence that the quality of the student academic experience meets relevant baseline regulatory requirements.

Commentary: Welsh Language Standards

54 The St Padarn's Institute website provides extensive information on its commitment to the Welsh language. All Institute information, literature, publicity and promotional materials are published bilingually in Welsh and English. The Institute's induction processes inform students of the Welsh language opportunities available as well as which staff speak Welsh. The Institute promotes the Welsh language ethos by guaranteeing that students' work will be assessed and marked in the original language and the Statement of Contribution to the Common Good reflects the Institute's commitment. Students confirmed that some lecturers provide instructions bilingually in lectures to encourage Welsh language use.

55 The Institute has developed a Welsh Language Scheme with specific actions to promote the language. An annual compliance report is produced and reviewed, and all students may submit assignments in Welsh. A key role exists to coordinate Welsh medium provision, and the Institute encourages and supports staff to develop their Welsh fluency. Enrichment activities, such as Welsh lessons during residentials and eisteddfodau, also promote the language.

56 Staff recruitment and selection processes indicate that newly recruited staff should speak Welsh. The Institute's website indicates a Welsh Resource and Communications Coordinator with responsibility for coordinating and producing Welsh mission resources, marketing, promotion and social media material. The Institute's bilingual ethos facilitates use of the Welsh language by students. The Institute ensures compliance with Standards and encourages engagement with the Welsh language and use within the overall learning experience through workshops, staff development and enrichment activities.

57 As a small provider, the Institute has attempted, where possible, to provide learning resources in the Welsh language; however, it acknowledges that this is not always possible given the specialist nature of the Institute's programmes.

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