



Action Plan Response to the Quality Enhancement Review, undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency, Wales, in April 2022

Response to the QER Outcome and Technical Report

The University was delighted by the positive Outcome and Technical Report received from the QAA's QER Review Team, which found that we have 'robust arrangements in place for securing academic standards, managing academic quality, and for enhancing the student experience'. Due to the pandemic, this was a reduced review and hence there are no reported outcomes regarding enhancement of the student learning experience and of learning and teaching. The focus was on quality assurance and Aberystwyth University was awarded the highest judgment available. The University welcomed the recognition of the quality of our offering to students, both in terms of our academic standards and the wider student experience. The report reflects very positively on our provision across the board, including our approach to reaching into new areas which provide much needed skills for employment, both in our own region and in many other regions across the globe.

News of the review outcome was released to the media in a joint statement by AU and the QAA. Information was communicated internally in an all staff email alongside the NSS 2022 outcome, which placed Aberystwyth University top for student satisfaction in Wales and England and second in UK among universities featured in the latest edition of *The Times / Sunday Times Good University Guide*. Staff meetings have also included reference to the QER. Relevant stakeholders including partner bodies were also informed. The report has been submitted to our Academic Board and will be reported also to Senate and Council, as well as being referred to in our annual quality assurance and partnership monitoring reports to Council and Senate.

Response to the Commendations

Aim	Action	Notes	Responsibility	Target Date
1. The University's readily accessible and embedded support for staff teaching and assessing through Welsh language medium as well as staff and students learning Welsh that encourages engagement and participation with the language				
1.1 To build on this recognition as we continue to encourage	Use where appropriate in the roll out of the new		Professor Anwen Jones (Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Welsh medium academic	ongoing

staff and student take up of opportunities to use the Welsh language in their work and their teaching	strategy for the development of Welsh medium teaching and learning, research and staff and student education		provision) and Aberystwyth branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol	
2. The responsiveness of the University to national and regional employability needs through the development of new focused and innovative partnerships				
2.1 Seek further opportunities to work with bodies locally and across Wales to deliver courses that meet employment needs	Build on this positive feedback, utilise in discussion with potential partners as evidence of our successful track record		Professor Tim Woods (Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student Experience), University Executive, and Partnerships Office (Academic Registry)	ongoing
3. The supportive and collegiate relationships the University develops with its partners that enables them to participate as equals in the partnership				
3.1 To continue to identify and develop suitable partnerships where we believe effective and productive working relationships can deliver new learning opportunities	Emphasise in our reporting and information the quality of our existing partnerships and refer future potential partners to this		Professor Tim Woods (Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student Experience), University Executive, and Partnerships Office (Academic Registry)	ongoing
Response to the affirmations				
Aim	Action	Notes	Responsibility	Target Date

4. The programme of work the University is undertaking to develop a new digital system that will allow enhanced institutional oversight of the experience of postgraduate research students				
4.1 To move from manual processing to online workflows for all aspects of PGR management, providing greater ease of use for staff and students and clearer university oversight of key processes	Implement the Skillsforge software in stages during 2022-23, in particular providing annual progress monitoring and assessment via online workflows		Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar (Head of Graduate School) / Faculty Registrar (PG)	July 2023
5. The steps being undertaken by the University to ensure programme specifications are kept up to date				
5.1 Ensure all current programme specifications are accurate with working links	Check all existing specifications to identify any issues and update as required		Mrs Kim Bradick (Deputy Registrar - Assurance & Enhancement) / Quality Assurance Team within Academic Registry	July 2023
5.2 Put in place a new system of recording programme specifications to facilitate updating	QA team to work with Information Services to enable better recording		Mrs Kim Bradick (Deputy Registrar - Assurance & Enhancement) / Quality Assurance Team within Academic Registry / Information Services	July 2023
5.3 Install mechanism for annual updating of all programme specifications	Discuss with Faculties how best to ensure any changes to programme specifications are identified and applied		Mrs Kim Bradick (Deputy Registrar - Assurance & Enhancement) / Quality Assurance Team within Academic Registry / Academic Board	
Response to the recommendations				
Aim	Action	Notes	Responsibility	Target Date

6. Ensure effective University oversight of the uptake and engagement of staff and students with the requirements of the personal tutoring system				
6.1 Determine whether changes are required to our current approach to personal tutoring to enhance engagement with the process.	Re-focus our Working Group on Personal Tutoring to meet regularly during the 2022-23 to consider, for example, the balance between individual and group meetings and how departments might adapt a centrally produced framework to their own needs	Student views will be sought through normal representative mechanisms and students will be encouraged to raise issues around tutoring within their departments/Faculties	Dr Malte Urban (Chair of Working Group on Personal Tutoring) / Academic Board	Any changes to be implemented as soon as possible but by 2023-24 at the latest
6.2 Establish a reporting mechanism to enable monitoring of adherence to the policy	Develop and provide Information Services with a specification to work to in generating appropriate reporting	The required data are recorded within Aladdin currently and therefore the main task is to develop a report and not to record additional data	Dr Malte Urban (Chair of Working Group on Personal Tutoring) / Academic Board / Information Services	Reporting to be available for 2023-24 session
7. Implement a system that ensures institutional oversight for the approval of external examiners for research degree awards				
7.1 Remove reliance on one post-holder by	Graduate School to convene group	Graduate Schools is currently appointing a	Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar (Head of Graduate School) / Faculty Registrar (PG)	October 2022

establishing a small group to approve nominations for PGR external examiners	with Head and Deputy Head of GS plus the Faculty Registrar (PG) to comprise approval panel	Deputy Head to be in place in October 2022		
7.2 Record all appointments through the committee structure as for taught awards	Each meeting of Research Degrees Committee to receive report on new external examiners with key data and forward to Academic Board	Focus or reporting will be on compliance with the Academic Quality handbook appointment standard criteria and any approved deviations	Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar (Head of Graduate School) / Faculty Registrar (PG) / Research Degrees Committee / Academic Board	October 2022
8. Ensure all students receive timely assessment feedback in line with University requirements				
8.1 Greater awareness among staff and students of the policy to avoid any misperception and enhanced understanding by students of the mechanisms available to report issues	Departments to emphasise and explain the policy at induction events and at SSCCs with Feedback being a standing item on SSCC agendas	2022 NSS results show AU's overall satisfaction score for the timeliness of feedback is 80%, a slight increase on the 2021 score and significantly ahead of benchmark for AU and the sector average. We therefore see this as enhancing considerable success but recognise the importance of consistent, timely feedback	Heads of academic Departments / Students' Union / Academic Registry	September 2022

8.2 Enhanced monitoring of compliance with policy	Investigate with Information Services possible technical solutions and discuss with Associate Deans how to ensure consistent sampling across the Faculties	Given the reliance on external software and the limited data we believe we could extract from Turnitin, we are not confident of a technical fix but this may become feasible with new versions of software	Ms Emma Williams (Academic Registrar and chair of Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching) – regular meetings with Academic Registry / AR Quality Team / Academic Board	Ongoing
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Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor



Ash Sturrock, Students' Union President