



Gateway Quality Review: Wales

Coleg Gwent

November 2019

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Coleg Gwent

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Coleg Gwent.

- **There can be confidence that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable.**
- **There can be confidence that the quality of the student academic experience meets 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 Coleg Gwent. The review team advises Coleg Gwent to:

- promote more clearly opportunities for accreditation of prior certificated and experiential learning in materials for applicants and to staff involved in the admissions process (Quality Code)
- articulate more clearly its expectations for higher education level teaching, learning and assessment in relevant strategies and associated guidance to staff (Quality Code)
- formalise in the annual monitoring process at school and College level reporting on progress against actions identified in previous reports (Quality Code)
- establish a formal procedure that ensures all marketing materials are updated in a timely fashion to reflect external changes as they arise outside the annual updating process (Consumer Protection).

Specified improvements

The review team did not identify any specified improvements.

About this review

The review visit took place from 26 to 27 November 2019 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Richard Alderman (student reviewer)
- Dr Mark Atlay
- Mrs Alison Jones.

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

- provide the relevant funding body 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 Coleg Gwent

Coleg Gwent delivers further and higher education, along with vocational education and training, across the former county of Gwent, South Wales. It operates from five main campuses at Newport, Pontypool, Usk, Crosskeys and Ebbw Vale. The College aspires to be the college of choice with the mission to enhance life chances through educational excellence for all. It aims to be one of the largest providers of HE in FE in Wales working through partnerships with its awarding bodies and other stakeholders to deliver high quality, sustainable provision that meets the needs of employers and supports student progression.

The College's higher education provision is delivered on behalf of four awarding bodies; Aberystwyth University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, University of South Wales (USW) and University of Worcester. The College also delivers Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications. The programmes cover a broad range of subject areas including business and management, construction, equine and animal health, creative industries and public health and care. The College offers a range of awards including Foundation Degrees, Bachelor's degrees and top-up programmes for Bachelor's degrees. At the time of the review, the College had 852 higher education students.

retention, completion and pass rates, rigour and integrity within the assessment process, management and integrity of the recruitment process, and outcomes from external reviews.

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13 The College makes effective use of its resources and ensures that the quality of its provision is maintained and improved.

Judgement area: Quality of the student academic experience

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

17 The College is responsible for student recruitment and for the admission of students

concluded that, in order to meet its strategic objectives and to support the dissemination of appropriate higher education practice, the College might more clearly articulate its expectations of higher education teaching, learning and assessment, drawing on its internal expertise. The team advises the College to articulate more clearly its expectations for higher education teaching, learning and assessment in relevant strategies and associated guidance to staff, identifying this as an **area for development**.

24 The College has recently reviewed and revised its procedures for continuous and annual monitoring of learning, drawing on the views of staff, students and external examiners. School reports draw on module and course-level monitoring and are considered by the HE Committee. This informs the SAR and its associated QDP for consideration by the Curriculum and Quality SCelon by thelommstye.

into work is more difficult and senior staff reported that they were looking at more effective ways of gathering information. The Student Written Submission identified aspects of employability as an area for improvement, while students who met the team believed that they were appropriately supported.

30 The College keeps its core practices under review in order to enhance the educational experience of its students. Strategic priorities and annual monitoring are the main drivers for change. Recent changes to the committee structures and new posts focusing on progression and support were designed to provide more of a focus on higher education students. This had been further supported through the provision of new learning environments at many campuses and further investment in the College's VLE.

31 The College uses external expertise to manage quality and support the learning experience. As well as its use of external examiners, feedback from employers and links with relevant professional bodies, the College draws on its contacts with awarding universities to improve and augment its processes including, for example, in course design, supporting staff to Fellowship status through the LEEP programme at USW, and adapting student support processes from the University of Worcester.

the review team reported that they were confident in accessing support and reporting issues through scheduled support time with programme staff.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure consumer protection obligations are met (Competition and Markets Authority guidance)

37 The College is responsible for the marketing of its higher education programmes, supported by a jointly produced marketing brochure with USW. The College Higher Education Guide is available to download from the website. The higher education webpages include relevant information for prospective students, including how to apply, fees and financial information and learning support, together with the Student Charter, Terms and Conditions, Complaints and Appeals, and related policies.

38 Course information leaflets are published on the College website and are updated annually by course leaders and Heads of School prior to sign off by the Head of Higher Education. The leaflets include additional requirements for consideration by prospective students prior to making an application, including additional costs. The review team found an example where there was no reference to a recently introduced additional cost. This related to the Foundation Degree Veterinary Nursing where the regulator now requires DBS checks to be put in place for students from September 2020, which the College confirmed would be an additional cost to students. In addition, the leaflet included other costs relating to 2018. The review team considers as an **area for development** that the College establish a formal procedure that ensures all marketing materials are updated in a timely fashion to reflect external changes as they arise outside the annual updating process.

39 The College's HE Admissions Policy, approved by the College Management Team, sets out its approach to admissions to ensure that procedures are consistently and fairly applied. The College's responsibility for admissions (including setting of admissions criteria) varies across the awarding bodies and is clearly set out in a detailed flowchart for each awarding body which is managed by the Admissions Office. The(H)2.6 (E)1.9 (A)2 (dm)-5.9 (i)2procedur t v

44 The College confirmed that it has not closed any programmes of higher education study to date and consequently does not have a separate course closure policy. In view of small cohort sizes and impact on programme viability, the College undertakes detailed monitoring of higher education course applications and makes decisions on course delivery in April/May. When a decision is made not to run a programme, students are supported to study an alternative programme and/or study at an alternative campus, or defer where a course is to be suspended in the forthcoming academic year.

45 The College has a HE Student Complaints Policy and Procedure and Guidance Note which details the stages of complaint handling and resolution and entitlements to refer to the awarding body or Of

Commentary: Welsh Language Standards

49 The five local authorities in the College's catchment area are among those in Wales with the lowest level of Welsh speakers. Data from enrolment for 2019-20 indicates that 262 of students consider themselves to be Welsh speakers and/or have attended Welsh medium schooling and only 0.4% of students stated that their preferred language for correspondence is Welsh. Among staff, 6.8% indicate they have advanced or fluent skills in Welsh.

50 The College has recently approved its Bilingual Strategy to meet its responsibilities as identified in the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy. Each Faculty has its own action plan and an additional plan covers functional departments. Implementation of the strategy is monitored by the College's Welsh Language Steering Group reporting to the SMT. Governors receive updates on progress from the Welsh Language Manager and compliance with requirements features in the corporate risk register.

51 The College has in place a range of structures, activities and resources to support the Welsh language including a Welsh Language Centre, Welsh Clubs, and Welsh buddying systems. Staff are encouraged to learn Welsh free of charge and there is induction into expectations for Welsh language use and support.

52 Prospective students are made aware of Welsh medium provision at open days, freshers fairs and in letters and mairiedare m9(i1)7 irt open