



PRIFYSGOL  
**BANGOR**  
UNIVERSITY

## SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT

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Quality Assurance Agency

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## CONTENTS

|  | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>1. BACKGROUND, HISTORY &amp; STRUCTURE</b>  | <b>7</b>    |
| 1.1 History  | 8           |
| 1.2 The University Today   | 8           |
| 1.3 Academic Structure   | 9           |
| 1.4 Mission & Strategic Plan   | 10          |
| 1.5 Welsh Language   | 10          |
| 1.6 Cultural Affairs   | 11          |
| 1.7 Financial Position   | 11          |
| 1.8 University Estate  | 11          |
| 1.9 Management & Governance  | 12          |
| 1.10 Welsh Political Context   | 13          |
| 1.11 Response to Reconfiguration   | 14          |
| <br>   |             |
| <b>2. SETTING THE STANDARD: THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY &amp; STANDARDS</b>                             | <b>15</b>   |
| 2.1 Management of Quality Assurance  | 16          |
| 2.2 Institutional Review   | 17          |
| 2.3 Role of Colleges & Schools   | 17          |
| 2.4 Principles of Quality Assurance  | 17          |
| 2.5 Actions to address Institutional Audit 2006  | 18          |
| 2.6 Changing approach to Teaching & Learning   | 19          |
| 2.7 Quality Enhancement  | 20          |
| 2.8 Learning & Teaching & Widening Access –<br>Joint Strategy with Aberystwyth                                 | 21          |
| 2.9 Welsh Medium Provision   | 23          |
| 2.10 Relationship between teaching & research  | 23          |
| 2.11 Links with employers  | 24          |
| 2.12 Student Numbers & Admissions  | 26          |
| 2.13 Assessment of students  | 29          |
| 2.14 Student Discipline & Unfair Practice  | 31          |
| 2.15 Teaching facilities   | 32          |
| 2.16 Social learning   | 32          |
| 2.17 International Education Strategy  | 33          |
| 2.18 University Regulations  | 33          |
| 2.19 Academic Infrastructure   | 34          |
| <br>   |             |
| <b>3. ASSURING QUALITY &amp; STANDARDS: THE QA SYSTEM FOR UNDERGRADUATE &amp; TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS</b> | <b>35</b>   |
| 3.1 Programme Approval   | 36          |
| 3.2 Module Approval  | 37          |
| 3.3 Annual Review of taught programmes and modules   | 37          |
| 3.4 Internal Quality Audits  | 38          |
| 3.5 Programme Revalidation   | 40          |
| 3.6 Welsh medium provision   | 41          |
| 3.7 Accreditation by external agencies   | 41          |

|           |   |           |
|-----------|---|-----------|
| 3.8       | External examiners  | 42        |
| 3.9       | Part-time study   | 43        |
| 3.10      | Flexible & Distributed Learning                                 | 44        |
| 3.11      | Management Information  | 45        |
| 3.12      | Professional Education Programmes                               | 46        |
| 3.13      | Collaborative Provision   | 47        |
| 3.14      | Common curricula  | 52        |
| 3.15      | Erasmus & International Exchanges                               | 54        |
| 3.16      | External contributions to programmes                            | 54        |
| 3.17      | Taught Postgraduate Programmes                                  | 54        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY</b>                              | <b>57</b> |
| 4.1       | Introduction  | 58        |
| 4.2       | Institutional Framework   | 58        |
| 4.3       | Graduate Schools  | 59        |
| 4.4       | Research Environment  | 60        |
| 4.5       | Employability – KESS  | 61        |
| 4.6       | Admission & Induction   | 61        |
| 4.7       | PGr Supervision   | 62        |
| 4.8       | Monitoring & Review   | 63        |
| 4.9       | Development of Research and other skills                        | 63        |
| 4.10      | Feedback mechanisms   | 64        |
| 4.11      | Postgraduate Students' Forum                                    | 64        |
| 4.12      | Assessment  | 64        |
| 4.13      | Student representation  | 65        |
| 4.14      | Complaints & Appeals  | 65        |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>STUDENT EXPERIENCE &amp; THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>        | <b>67</b> |
| 5.1       | Student Experience Enhancement Strategy                         | 68        |
| 5.2       | Fee Plan  | 69        |
| 5.3       | Students Participation  | 69        |
| 5.4       | Feedback from students  | 71        |
| 5.5       | Student Support   | 72        |
| 5.6       | Library & Archives Service                                      | 80        |
| 5.7       | IT Facilities & Services  | 82        |
| 5.8       | Technology Enhanced Learning                                    | 83        |
| 5.9       | Complaints & Appeals  | 85        |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>ACADEMIC STAFF: QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b> | <b>87</b> |
| 6.1       | University as a Partnership                                     | 88        |
| 6.2       | Recruitment & Retention of Academic Staff                       | 88        |
| 6.3       | Probation   | 89        |
| 6.4       | Induction   | 89        |
| 6.5       | Appointments & the Language Scheme                              | 89        |
| 6.6       | Reward: Pay & Grading   | 90        |
| 6.7       | Advancement & Promotion   | 90        |
| 6.8       | Recognising Excellence  | 91        |
| 6.9       | Performance Development Review                                  | 92        |
| 6.10      | Coaching & Mentoring  | 92        |

|           |                            |           |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|
| 6.11      | Welsh Language Development | 93        |
| 6.12      | Staff Development          | 93        |
| 6.13      | Equality & Diversity       | 97        |
| 6.14      | Staff Support              | 97        |
| 6.15      | Staff Well-Being           | 97        |
| 6.16      | Organisational Development | 98        |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>CONCLUSION</b>          | <b>99</b> |

## ABBREVIATIONS

### Internal:

|       |   |  |
|-------|---|--|
| ADU   | : | Academic Development Unit                      |
| ELCOS | : | English Language Courses for Overseas Students |
| IEC   | : | International Education Centre                 |
| IQA   | : | Internal Quality Audit                         |
| PRES  | : | Postgraduate Research Experience Survey        |
| PTES  | : | Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey          |
| PGr   | : | Postgraduate Research                          |
| PGt   | : | Postgraduate Taught                            |
| PVC   | : | Pro Vice-Chancellor                            |
| QAVTG | : | Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group      |
| SU    | : | Students' Union                                |
| T&L   | : | Teaching & Learning                            |
| TOP   | : | Talent Opportunities Programme                 |

### External:

|       |   |   |
|-------|---|---|
| AGCAS | : | Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services |
| BUCS  | : | British University & Colleges Sport               |
| DSA   | : | Disabled Students Allowance                       |
| ESF   | : | European Social Fund                              |
| FE    | : | Further Education                                 |
| HEA   | : | Higher Education Academy                          |
| HEFCW | : | Higher Education Funding Council for Wales        |
| KESS  | : | Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships             |
| NSS   | : | National Student Survey                           |
| PSRB  | : | Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body         |
| UKBA  | : | UK Border Agency                                  |

## **SECTION 1**

### **BACKGROUND, HISTORY & STRUCTURE**

## 1.1 HISTORY

The University is proud of its history, and in 2009 celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation. It opened (as the 'University College of North Wales') in October 1884 in an 18<sup>th</sup> century coaching inn – the Penrhyn Arms – with 58 students and 12 staff. Funds were raised by public appeal to establish a college of university rank in Bangor, and an important feature of its foundation was the voluntary contributions made by local working men and women from their weekly wages. UCNW became a founding member of the federal University of Wales in 1893, and from that date offered University of Wales degrees. In 2007, the University was granted taught and research degree-awarding powers and 'university title' [as 'Bangor University'] by the Privy Council. The University Council took the decision to begin awarding Bangor University degrees from October 2009.

Staff and student numbers grew steadily, with substantial growth in the 1950's and 1960's when a number of new buildings were constructed, and new areas of study – including oceanography, psychology, linguistics and sociology were introduced. During the 1980s, funding restrictions led to a far-reaching rationalisation of the subjects offered in Bangor, and several departments (such as Physics, Philosophy and Classics) were closed. There has been further expansion, however, and some amalgamations: St Mary's College (1976) and Coleg Normal (1996) – both essentially teacher-training colleges, although Coleg Normal had diversified over the years. In addition previously independent colleges of nursing and midwifery, and radiography, joined the University in the early 1990s.

For an institution over 125 years old, Bangor has had remarkably few Vice-Chancellors (the title 'Principal' was used until 1995). Professor John Hughes, who took up his post in succession to Professor Merfyn Jones in October 2010, is only the seventh head of the institution. Professor Hughes was previously President of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

## 1.2 THE UNIVERSITY TODAY

In 2010/2011, the University had approximately 9200 full-time students, and a further 1980 part-time students. [HESA standard registration population]. Approximately 43% of students are from Wales, 13½% are from overseas and the remainder are from the rest of the UK and Europe.

| <b>Student Numbers 2010/11</b> |                |                 |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b><i>Full-time</i></b>        | <b>Home/EU</b> | <b>Overseas</b> |
| Undergraduate (+other)         | 6780           | 617             |
| Postgraduate (taught)          | 680            | 608             |
| Postgraduate (research)        | 330            | 185             |
| <b><i>Part-time</i></b>        |                |                 |
| Undergraduate (+other)         | 1002*          | 12              |
| Postgraduate (taught)          | 776            | 67              |
| Postgraduate (research)        | 97             | 26              |
| <b>Totals</b>                  | <b>9665</b>    | <b>1515</b>     |

\*Includes 475 lifelong learning students and 326 post-qualifying training in Healthcare Sciences

The University employs approximately 2233 staff (full-time and part-time):

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Academic & Research | 919         |
| Professional        | 315         |
| Clerical            | 535         |
| Technical           | 96          |
| Manual              | 368         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>2233</b> |

### 1.3 ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

The University currently has 23 academic Schools, grouped into six Colleges for administrative and resource purposes:

#### ***College of Arts and Humanities***

School of Creative Studies and Media  
School of English  
School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology  
School of Linguistics and English Language  
School of Modern Languages  
School of Music  
School of Theology and Religious Studies  
School of Welsh

#### ***College of Business, Social Sciences and Law***

Bangor Business School  
School of Law  
School of Social Sciences

#### ***College of Education and Lifelong Learning***

School of Education  
School of Lifelong Learning

#### ***College of Health and Behavioural Sciences***

School of Healthcare Sciences  
School of Medical Sciences  
School of Psychology  
School of Health, Sport and Exercise Sciences

#### ***College of Natural Sciences***

School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography  
School of Biological Sciences  
School of Ocean Sciences

#### ***College of Physical and Applied Sciences***

School of Chemistry  
School of Electronic Engineering  
School of Computer Science

There are also a number of research centres within Colleges, and a small number of inter-disciplinary research institutes which fall outside the departmental structure.

The College structure was introduced in 2005, essentially as a means of modernising and clarifying the University's academic management structure. Some Colleges have developed more quickly than others, and there have been structural refinements (e.g. Heads of College became member of the Executive in 2010).

Broadly the University is satisfied with the structure, but will always seek improvements.

The University offers over 450 undergraduate degree programmes (honours and joint honours) and over 120 taught postgraduate and research programmes.

#### **1.4 MISSION & STRATEGIC PLAN**

During 2010/11, following the arrival of Professor John Hughes as Vice-Chancellor, the University reviewed and revised its Strategic Plan. Its Mission states that:

*“Bangor University will be a leading research-led University with an international reputation for teaching and research, that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students and staff, provides a supportive multicultural environment, promotes widening access and inclusiveness, and supports the economic, social and cultural well-being of Wales and the wider community it serves. Bangor University will be recognised regionally, nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence for a varied portfolio of academic programmes and for the high quality of the experience it provides for its students and staff.”*

The Strategic Plan 2011-15<sup>1</sup>, which was agreed following consultation with staff and students through the Council and Senate, sets out the main aims and objectives of the University based around a number of key priority themes, which are summarised as follows:

- Access to excellent teaching & learning
- Delivery of a high quality student experience
- Strengthening the quality and quantity of research & enterprise
- Playing a leading role in Welsh Language and culture, both locally and nationally
- Positioning ourselves as a global University, with a reputation for sustainability
- Partnership with institutions in Wales to deliver “For our Future”.

It is worth noting in particular the following aspects of the strategy

- The University is committed to enriching the student experience at Bangor, and has approved a Student Experience Enhancement Strategy.
- An International Education Strategy has been formulated to emphasise the international dimension of the University’s mission, and to help develop the next generation of international entrepreneurs, scientists, leaders etc and to prepare our learners for the international market. The strategy includes some immediate steps (eg the opening of an office in Beijing), and some longer-term aims (such as the development of international partnerships). Through reorganisation, the University has created an International Education Centre, headed by a new Director of International Development
- Building on our strengths in Health & Behavioural Sciences, the University is collaborating with Cardiff and Swansea Universities and with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board for North Wales, to develop Medical Education in North Wales. The University has a Strategic Health Research & Education project (SHARE) with Cardiff University, and a B.Med.Sci. degree programme is actively under discussion.

#### **1.5 THE WELSH LANGUAGE**

Bangor University is a bilingual institution, and the Welsh and English languages have equal status as the official languages of the University. The University

complies fully with the 1993 Welsh Language Act, and has a Language Scheme which defines its policies on the Welsh Language.

Of paramount importance in implementing the University's strategy is *Canolfan Bedwyr*, a central department formed in 1996 to promote and support the institution's Welsh medium teaching provision, to facilitate the use of the Welsh language within the institution's administration and, generally, to act as a catalyst to develop Bangor University as a centre of excellence in Welsh medium education and Welsh Language services. Originally charged with responsibility for language tuition for staff and students, the centre has gradually expanded, and its remit now also includes policy development and implementation, translation services, Welsh terminology, Welsh language and speech technologies and Cymraeg Clir (the Welsh equivalent of 'Plain English').

Over the years, Canolfan Bedwyr has won national and international acclaim, not only for its innovative work in developing and promoting Bangor University's use of the Welsh language, but also for its work in facilitating the use of Welsh in the wider world. A number of the centre's current projects reflect this dual mission. For the University's internal needs, a new electronic work-flow and translation memory system has been developed for the Translation Unit as well as a 'Cymorth Cymraeg' website aimed at facilitating staff and students' use of Welsh. Externally, the centre has recently secured major contracts from the Welsh Government's Department of Education and Skills to lead the national scheme to develop the Welsh language skills of teachers and lecturers and also to develop subject-based terminology for the secondary and FE sectors.

The University takes a highly active role in the recently-established *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Welsh National College)*, a company formed by the HE sector in Wales, with Welsh Government support, to increase and broaden Welsh medium higher education. Bangor University is extremely pleased to have received funding in 2011 for 9 new academic posts from the first allocation of funds issued by the Coleg Cymraeg. Canolfan Bedwyr also provides a home for the administrative branch of the newly formed Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol at Bangor University.

## **1.6 CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

The University also makes a very significant contribution to social and cultural life in the region. It has a major collection of works of art (the total value of which exceeds £2M), significant museum collections (eg natural history, geology, musical instruments), a music concert series and a programme of Public Lectures. It also has its own resident small chamber orchestra – Ensemble Cymru – on the University campus, and the Pontio project to develop an Arts & Innovation Centre already has a flourishing arts programme – 'Stepping Stones' – prior to the construction of the new building.

## **1.7 FINANCIAL POSITION**

The University considers itself to have a strong financial base on which to face future challenges. It has an annual turnover of around £120M, and has recorded operating surpluses over the last 4 years eg £1.3M in 2010/11, £4.2M in 2009/10, £1.7M in 2008/9 and £4.2M in 2007/8. Research grant and contract income was approximately £20M in 2010/11, compared with £16M the previous year.

## **1.8 THE UNIVERSITY ESTATE**

The University has a dispersed estate. It has around 150 buildings on 20 separate sites mainly in Bangor, but also on Anglesey, in Wrexham, and research and field

stations elsewhere. It has a higher than average proportion of buildings (30%) built before 1940, and many were not originally built as University buildings. The Main University Building, dating from 1911, is a grade 1 listed building, and the University has 13 other listed buildings.

The age and nature of the estate produce challenges in terms of maintenance and appearance, and the University's existing Estates Strategy (2006) envisaged a long-term major redevelopment of the estate. Recent major construction projects include the new Environmental Centre Wales building (opened by the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown in 2008), and the renovation of ex-Coleg Normal buildings to create a new 'Management Centre'. Currently work is underway on the Pontio project - a £40M development aimed at establishing a world-class centre for innovation in science, technology and the creative industries. The Pontio (Welsh: *to bridge*) project will provide a theatre, cinema, lecture theatres, new Students Union building, innovative design facilities and social learning areas. It is due to open in 2013.

In accordance with HEFCW requirements, and to meet the University's own needs, the University will be reviewing and revising its Estates Strategy during 2011/12, with the experience of students very much in mind.

## 1.9 MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

Under the University's Charter and Statutes, the **Council** is the governing body of the University. The Council currently comprises 26 members (including 2 students) and has a lay majority. In addition to the responsibilities associated with HE governance, its primary responsibilities include the setting of the general strategic direction of the institution. The Council is assisted by a number of sub-committees, such as Resources, Audit & Risk, Strategy, Health & Safety.

Following a review of decision-making in 2004, the University established an **Executive**<sup>2</sup> (chaired by the Vice-Chancellor) which has responsibility for institutional management. The Executive is assisted by 24 Task Groups which report to it on key management or strategic themes, and it meets fortnightly. The Executive reports to the Council at each meeting. In addition to the Vice-Chancellor, the Executive comprises Pro Vice-Chancellors and Heads of College, as well as senior officers such as the Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Planning and others. It is worth noting that two new posts of Pro Vice-Chancellor have been introduced in 2011 – the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language & Civic Engagement) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students)

During the summer of 2011, a brief review<sup>3</sup> of the **Task Group** structure was undertaken. Its broad conclusion, supported by the Executive, was that the Task Groups should remain in place, and that their operational guidelines be re-issued and the membership of certain groups be refined.

Virtually all Task Groups are chaired by a member of the Executive and whilst Task Groups report to the Executive, the Chair has authority to carry out executive management subject to appropriate consultation and accountability. In this form of devolved management Task Group Chairs are expected to keep the Executive informed and up-to-date on developments and decision-making but they do not necessarily have to submit full Minutes of every Task Group meeting.

The **Senate**, in accordance with Ordinance XII, is the academic authority of the University and the 'ruling body on matters which require academic judgement'<sup>\*</sup>. The Senate, with 65 members, is broadly representative of the academic community, and it also may engage in discussion of various strategic matters affecting the academic domain. The Senate also has a number of sub-committees – Examination Boards, Prizes & Awards, Postgraduate Committee and Regulations and Special Cases – which focus on strictly academic matters (such as the progress and achievement of students, the structure of degree programmes and the academic year etc.).

In addition the University have three consultative forums, the Staff, Student and Campus Unions Forums, as well as some ad hoc groups. A full list of all groups is available.

The University places great importance on student representation across all levels of the decision-making structure in the University from School level up to Council. In 2008 the University took an initiative to include a student on the panel for Internal Quality Audits, as well as ensuring that students are represented on Task Groups.

## 1.10 WELSH POLITICAL CONTEXT

Almost from the creation of a National Assembly for Wales in 1999, the Welsh Government has had concern over the shape and size of the HE sector in Wales. Since 2002, when their *Reaching Higher* strategy was drawn up, growing emphasis has been placed on reconfiguration and collaboration between HE institutions in Wales. From 2003/4, HEFCW have had in place a Reconfiguration & Collaboration Fund to support collaborative initiatives. A further Welsh Government strategy for HE – *For Our Future*, published in 2009 – highlighted the need to 'remodel higher education in Wales and create an infrastructure' which will better respond to the Government's twin aims of supporting a buoyant economy and improving social justice. *For Our Future* advocated increased collaboration, and a greater regional dimension to the planning and delivery of HE. The Minister for Education has been explicit in his wish to see fewer HE institutions in Wales.

Responding to the strategy, HEFCW issued a statement in December 2010 advocating a structure of no more than 6 HE institutions in Wales (at that time, there were 11, including the University of Wales). In June 2011, in advice to the Minister for Education and Skills, HEFCW recommended a restructuring of the HE sector in Wales through mergers. In respect of Bangor, a plan for merger with Aberystwyth was suggested, together with a group structure in which Glyndŵr University would be led by Aberystwyth and Bangor.

On 29 November 2011, the Minister announced that, following the consultation, he wished to see a strengthening of the Aberystwyth-Bangor Partnership, but not merger at this stage. He rejected the advice from HEFCW in relation to Glyndwr University, but proposed a review of higher education in North East Wales.

The University has also developed a strategic partnership with Coleg Llandrillo, a leading FE College with reasonably substantial HE provision. A Strategic Agreement was signed in July 2011 in the presence of the Minister for Education & Skills, Leighton Andrews AM, and this has led to a number of existing and new programmes in Llandrillo being validated by Bangor University (previously validation had been

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<sup>\*</sup> The Ordinance distinguishes between decisions which reflect the day-to-day management of the institution, and decisions requiring academic judgement. It does not preclude some matters being put forward for approval by both the Executive and the Senate (e.g. the Student Experience & Enhancement Strategy in 2011).

carried out by the University of Wales) and the branding of a 'University Centre' at Coleg Llandrillo.

## **1.11 THE RESPONSE TO RECONFIGURATION**

Bangor University has responded constructively and positively to the agenda for restructuring higher education. It is committed – as is Aberystwyth – to strengthening the 'Aber-Bangor Partnership'.

### **1.11.1 The Aberystwyth-Bangor Partnership**

In 2006, HEFCW awarded Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities £11M to pursue a Research & Enterprise Partnership. This has led to the creation of four joint research centres, close collaboration in enterprise and innovation work and a small Partnership Office which supports the joint activity. The funding for the project ends in January 2012, but the two institutions are committed to maintaining the joint centres, and to retaining the Partnership Office in order to support the deepening of the alliance.

In December 2011, the Vice-Chancellors of Bangor and Aberystwyth signed a new Strategic Alliance, which aims to explore the potential for greater collaboration in teaching & learning, research & enterprise and shared services.

In fact, collaboration on a wider front is already under way. The two institutions formed successfully a 'North & Mid-Wales Centre of Teacher Education' from 2010 to provide strategic leadership for the provision of Initial Teacher Education and Training across North and mid Wales and manage and deliver a portfolio of Initial Teacher Education programmes. An 'Aber-Bangor Skills Centre' – which also received HEFCW funding – has been established to support the development of skills in the industrial and business community in the region. Significantly, the two institutions have been pursuing the possibility of 'shared services', and have so far formed 4 joint management teams in the areas of HR operations, Staff Development, Student Employability, and Welsh Language services. Several other potential joint initiatives are being explored. In addition a new joint Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy has been developed.

### **1.11.2 The North & Mid-Wales region**

Following the introduction of *For Our Future*, HEFCW defined 3 regions in Wales and requested the production of regional plans which would focus on geographical access, clearer progression routes and a higher degree of responsiveness to local needs. Bangor played a leading role in this process, and in the Autumn of 2010 (and revised in October 2011) submitted a regional strategy, 'Collaborating & Developing across Regional Networks' (CADARN) in conjunction with Aberystwyth, Glyndwr, the Open University and Coleg Llandrillo, though it also encompassed all other FE colleges in the region. CADARN reviewed provision in the region and highlighted proposals for new provision, for widening access, for increased employer engagement, and for the sharing of certain services. The regional partners submitted 24 bids for funding of new courses, of which over half were successful – including approval for 2 new degree programmes in Engineering at Bangor.

## **SECTION 2**

### **SETTING THE STANDARD: THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY & STANDARDS**

This section seeks to describe the framework for managing quality and standards and the University's approach to academic quality in learning and teaching.

## 2.1 THE MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

The University has always had an unwavering commitment to maintaining and enhancing a high-quality learning experience for students and high academic standards. This is reiterated in the current Strategic Plan for the period 2010-2015. These commitments are met, we believe, through the implementation of rigorous procedures to assure quality and standards, through the promotion of quality enhancement, and by developing innovative teaching methods and optimising the use of technology to deliver higher education. This commitment also includes a constant upward spiral of development of our policy, procedures and practices with regard to quality and standards.

At institutional level, two groups shape, oversee and monitor the management of the quality and standards of teaching and learning:

- [a] The *Teaching & Learning Task Group*<sup>4</sup> (Chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor [Teaching & Learning]). This group reports to the Executive, and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the University's Teaching & Learning Strategy. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor [T&L] is the member of the University's Executive with responsibility that includes Teaching & Learning and Widening Access.
- [b] The *Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group*<sup>5</sup>. This Task Group is responsible for ensuring that the detailed procedures for assuring quality and standards are implemented effectively; it reports through the Teaching & Learning Task Group, but has authority to take decisions on Quality Assurance matters.

Administratively, the work of both Groups is supported by staff of the Academic Registry, including:

- \* Deputy Registrar
- Chair of Quality Assurance & Validation (based in the Academic Registry)
- Assistant Registrar – Quality Assurance & Enhancement
- Senior Assistant Registrar – Admissions & Student Records
- Senior Assistant Registrar – Examinations & Assessment.
- Regulations, Appeals and Complaints Officer

In 2011, the University took the decision to strengthen its QA functions and invested in the creation of a Quality & Validation Unit in the Academic Registry, led by the Chair of Quality Assurance & Validation – a senior academic who is now primarily a member of the Academic Registry.

In addition the University established an External Partnership Scrutiny Group<sup>6</sup> chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), to consider all partnership proposals and ensure consistency in internal processes and decision making (see section 3 for further details).

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\* Since October 2009, the Deputy Registrar has had managerial responsibility for the Academic Registry, and has assumed the duties and responsibilities of the 'Academic Registrar'.

## **2.2 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

The University's preparations for the Institutional Review have been overseen, as they were for the 2006 Review, by the Institutional Review Task Group<sup>7</sup>, with wide consultation throughout the institution. This is chaired by the Registrar, reports to the Executive, and includes the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), Chair of the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group, Deputy Registrar, Director of Student Experience and SU President. It is serviced by the Senior Assistant Registrar in the Registrar's Office. This Group attempts to take a critical and reflective approach to both existing policy and provision and to new initiatives.

In this way, the University has distinguished between the operation of routine QA processes (through the Quality Assurance Task Group, supported by the Academic Registry) and a more reflective and strategic review of quality (through the Institutional Review Group, supported by the Registrar's Office).

## **2.3 THE ROLE OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

The University has 23 academic Schools, grouped for managerial and administrative purposes in 6 Colleges. Responsibility for the delivery of academic programmes of appropriate quality and standards lies with Schools.

At academic School level, both individual staff member and school responsibilities are crucial to the overall management of quality and standards.

- [a] Individual : each individual member of the academic staff has a duty to carry out allocated teaching, curriculum development and student support activity to the highest possible standards, so that ownership of quality ultimately rests with individual actions and commitments; this has been our stance since the inception of formal Quality Assurance mechanisms in the 1990's.
- [b] Schools : the Head of each academic School is answerable for the quality of the teaching and learning delivered by that School. Any programme of teaching must be provided by, or be subject to the QA processes of, an academic School.
- [c] Colleges: Heads of Schools report to the Head of the relevant College, and the Colleges are responsible for overall strategy and resource allocation and general management and administration. The Colleges will normally have Directors of Teaching & Learning or a Deputy Head of College (Teaching and Learning), who sit on the University's T&L Task Group and whose role is essentially that of co-ordination, guidance and support, including spreading best practice and harmonising policy where appropriate.

## **2.4 THE PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AT BANGOR**

The University's quality assurance procedures are underpinned by the following:

- A partnership between academic Schools and the University's central committees.
- Robust mechanisms for quality assurance in all academic Schools.
- Central committee(s) with responsibility for quality assurance.

- A commitment to a continuous upward spiral of quality with individual staff, module teams and course teams assuming responsibility for raising standards in all aspects of teaching and learning.
- A rigorous and actionable system of quality assurance.
- Regular auditing of quality assurance procedures and outcomes.
- Student satisfaction and feedback as key elements in audits, regular reviews and action plans.
- A commitment to responding to changes in the needs, interests and expectations of students, their sponsors, employers and society in general.

## 2.5 ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES OF THE 2007 INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

The last Institutional review was undertaken in 2005/06 as part of the University's application for Degree Awarding Powers. The Institutional Audit report was shared within the University with staff and students, and formally considered at the QA&V Task Group and Teaching and learning Task Groups, and the meeting of the Senate (during the period May – September 2007). The QA&V Task Group was responsible for identifying an action plan that responded to the findings, and this was completed by April 2008 and submitted to the QAA as a one year follow on report. The University was also subject to a mid-cycle follow up report to the QAA in June 2009.

The following progress has been made with regard to the action points identified by the 2007 Audit Team:

“Take steps to ensure that its committee papers and minutes are circulated in a timely manner to support informed and considered discussion in UWB's deliberative fora.

Monitor the operation of the Task Groups to confirm that the system of appointment on grounds of particular expertise does not limit the participation of students and staff in the deliberative processes of the institution.

Make the recording of planned actions, including identification of responsibilities and deadlines, explicit in the minutes of the meeting.”

In the light of these recommendations, the University Executive conducted a thorough review of the Task Groups during the summer and autumn of 2007. As a result, a number of general amendments were made to the structure. For example:

- [a] It was decided that some Task Groups would have 'constituency' representation; in particular, it was decided that the Teaching & Learning, Research Strategy and Library & IT Task Groups should have one representative from each College.
- [b] A number of additional Task Groups have also been designated as bilingual bodies (and therefore conduct their affairs bilingually, with simultaneous translation provided as necessary).
- [c] A number of Task Groups (Halls & Catering, Space Management, Sport & Recreation e.g.) were discontinued and the areas of activity incorporated within existing Task Groups. Some new Task Groups were introduced, including Cultural Affairs.
- [d] The membership of a number of other Task Groups underwent minor adjustments (a full list of changes is available if required).

In addition, in the light of the review, all Secretaries of Task Groups have been reminded to ensure that Minutes of Task Groups are put on the Intranet in a timely manner, and that details of terms of reference and membership are kept up-to-date. Secretaries were also reminded to ensure papers were circulated at least seven days beforehand and that tabled papers at meetings be kept to a minimum and used only to consider urgent matters. A standard pro-forma for the minutes of Task Groups, (which had been designed with the introduction of Task Groups in 2004/2005), that requires the recording of planned action and the identification of responsibilities was circulated as a reminder to all Secretaries.

The Task Group system is now well embedded and operating successfully; however there will be an on-going process of review of their function, with some minor amendments being made in 2011.

Recommendation: Review the approach to viva voce examinations in assessment to establish and secure consistency in the criteria for the use of such examinations.

The Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group conducted a questionnaire review on the use of *viva-voce* examinations in all Schools. This led to the introduction of an institutional policy on *viva voce* examinations from the academic year 2008/2009, which is included in the Rules and Procedures and Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students on Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes (see reference 16) and in the Code of Practice for External Examiners: Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate (see reference 39).

## **2.6 THE CHANGING APPROACH TO LEARNING & TEACHING**

In its 127 year history, the University has always sought to improve and develop its teaching and learning. Almost every member of staff, Department, School and central authority has endeavoured to enrich, develop, initiate and innovate over the last 13 decades. This is evident in terms of both strategic direction (e.g. the introduction of VLE, the standardisation of module and course validation, Welsh medium courses and modules) and the reflective approach taken by individual staff (e.g. introduction of initiatives in lecture capture, podcasting and vodcasting, the use of problem solving as a learning approach).

In the mid-1990s, this University instituted its quality assurance procedures and practices in line with the advent of formalised QA procedures across UK Universities. In the subsequent decades, those procedures and practices have been regularly refined. Generally, we have seen a move from a 'Quality Assurance Handbook' to a series of Codes of Practice reflecting QAA guidelines. Broadly we have introduced five yearly quality audits in all Schools, particularly prior to validation / revalidation, and promoted the increased use of performance indicators, benchmarking and statistical analyses of modules and courses (e.g. Arque, NSS, PTES, PRES, HEFCW requirements).

In the 2007-2011 Learning & Teaching strategy<sup>8</sup>, the University had 20 teaching and learning strategic targets that were agreed with HEFCW. While all of these concerned developing the curriculum and student experience, they tended to address the broadest spectrum of the teaching and learning, being incremental and evolutionary. In the last four years, alongside the HEFCW Teaching and Learning strategy, the University decided this was insufficient and introduced 'Enhancement Projects' (see below). The purpose was to be more interventionist, creating major changes in a particular defined areas. Whereas previously the emphasis was on securing academic standards in Schools and systems, the movement has been

towards distinctly enhancing the student experience of learning, teaching and assessment with focused projects.

In doing this, Bangor University was cognisant of the approach taken in Scotland regarding the enhancement of teaching and learning (Enhancement Themes). While quality control and quality assurance remain of great importance, and while procedures for quality assurance remain and are being continuously developed, the institution feels that it has reached a degree of maturity and confidence to increasingly accent quality enhancement.

## **2.7 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

The University uses the widely agreed definition of quality enhancement from the QAA: “the process of taking deliberate steps at institutional level to improve the quality of learning opportunities”. We would add to this that such ‘deliberate steps’ are a continuous process and embedded within university systems and structures. Since what is ‘good practice’ or ‘effective practice’ changes across ideology, contexts, politics and time, our view is that the process of enhancing quality should be defined and operated locally.

Since 2007, Bangor University has embarked on a Quality Enhancement programme. This differed from the previous decade by making quality enhancement a structurally embedded aim, process and product within the teaching and learning cycle. That is, rather than enhancement being more sporadic and spontaneous, it became an integral part of the overarching teaching and learning strategy, the annual cycle of planning and provision, and an expectation among staff in the practice of teaching and learning. At the same time, quality enhancement was seen as integrated with quality assurance, mutually reinforcing, although conceptually different and with different emphases.

### **The Quality Enhancement Programme**

The strategy (2007-11)<sup>9</sup> has been to commence one or more new Quality Enhancement Projects in each successive academic year. The ambition was to have three or four Enhancement Projects running simultaneously, albeit with different start and end dates.

Such Enhancement Projects are defined by being an explicit, major intervention in current provision and practices, affecting all, or almost all, Schools by being global across Schools rather than local, by being innovative and influential in a way that impacts the majority or all of our students.

Ideas for Enhancement Projects can derive from students, senior managers, academic and administrative staff, from Schools and various Task Groups, the Academic Development Unit (ADU - e.g. delivering training and development for all staff, PG Cert HE), Academy of Teaching Fellows, Information Services (e.g. e-learning) and are discussed and agreed by the Teaching and Learning Task Group. The role of students as initiators, consultants, evaluators and Project members is essential. Thus ideas for Projects can be ‘bottom-up’ or ‘top-down’.

Such Enhancement Projects may derive internally from, for example, an analysis of metrics and Audits of Schools, External Examiner reports, research (e.g. into bilingual teaching and learning) and the ADU, but also may derive externally from visits to other Universities in the UK and internationally, from conferences and meetings, from external expertise (e.g. HEA) and HE infrastructures (e.g. QAA, HEW).

An Enhancement Project will have links with other relevant strategies and will integrate with them. For example, an Enhancements Project may relate to widening access, employability, human resources, regionalisation, internationalism, staff development (e.g. PGCert), cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The Quality Enhancement projects undertaken so far (with leadership shown in brackets) include :

1. 2007 to 2011: Assessment and Feedback (includes e-assessment) (Chair Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group)\*
2. 2007 to 2010: Student Retention (PVC Teaching and Learning)
3. 2007 to 2009: Pastoral Care (PVC Teaching and Learning)
4. 2008 to 2010: First Year Student Experience (Academy of Teaching Fellows) which then merged into ...
5. 2010 (ongoing): Employability – the Bangor Employability Award (PVC Teaching and Learning and PVC Students)\*
6. 2010 (ongoing): Welsh Medium Curriculum Renewal (PVC Teaching and Learning and PVC Welsh Medium/ Community Engagement)\*
7. 2011 (ongoing): Enhancement of the Taught Masters Programmes (Director of PGT)\*
8. 2011 (ongoing): Internationalisation of the Curriculum (PVC Teaching and Learning)\*

(\*These Projects continue post 2011 as part of the Aberystwyth-Bangor Learning and Teaching Strategy – see below).

The Quality Enhancement Projects are currently disseminated in various ways, including cascading innovations and changes through the Project Team, actions in the Teaching and Learning Task Group and other relevant committees that in turn are disseminated to Colleges and Schools, meetings with individual Schools (e.g. when there are pilot schemes), changes to relevant Codes of Practice and Regulations.

Examples of outcomes and impact of Enhancement Projects include Guidance Notes on Feedback to Students that were produced separately for staff and students, changing the rules and procedures on categorical marking and on 'borderline' cases in degree classification, a 'Strategy to Increase the Retention of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students' that moved through two editions and was formally evaluated, a thorough revision of the Pastoral Care Code of Practice, the creation of the Bangor Employability Award, a new MPA course in Administration through the medium of Welsh, an Internationalisation of the Curriculum Audit and a subsequent University staff development event run by Oxford Brookes University Staff Development Unit.

Nevertheless, the University believes that the lessons and benefits from these projects could be more widely disseminated and promoted. It aims to do so as part of the new joint Learning & Teaching Strategy.

## **2.8 LEARNING AND TEACHING AND WIDENING ACCESS – JOINT STRATEGY WITH ABERYSTWYTH**

### **2.8.1. Introduction**

As already described, political expectations made partnership-working between North & Mid Wales HE institutions of major importance especially in seeking to deliver the Welsh Government's policies for social justice and

supporting a buoyant economy. For Bangor, this includes working with FE colleges, such as Coleg Llandrillo (which has merged with Coleg Menai), as well as with Glyndŵr University, and particularly Aberystwyth University. In this context, Aberystwyth and Bangor agreed to work on the development of a joint Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy – the first such joint strategy in Wales, not only for two institutions working in partnership but also in combining Learning and Teaching and Widening Access.

### **2.8.2. Development and Monitoring of the Joint Strategy**

The new Learning and Teaching Strategy (2011-2014) reflects Bangor University's Strategic Plan (2011) and Learning and Teaching are key elements of this Strategic plan (see section 1).

The University's Strategic Plan highlights the following priorities:

- Access to excellent teaching and learning
- Delivery of high quality student experience
- Playing a leading role in Welsh language and culture
- Partnerships with Institutions in Wales to deliver *For Our Future*

The Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Widening Access Strategy (L&T/WA) translate the Universities' overarching Strategic Plans into actions, and define targets by which strategic objectives can be measured. The aims of the T&L/WA Strategy are to:

- Create an integrated plan to enhance access, participation and students' experience of learning and teaching at the Institutions.
- Identify and disseminate effective practices across the Institutions and across their Schools/Academic Departments.
- Ensure that the Institutions' activities are informed by effective practices in the UK and elsewhere.

Working with Aberystwyth meant that a new Learning and Teaching strategy derived also from their developing strategic direction both holistically and in terms of learning and teaching. A team of four senior staff, two from each institution, led the creation of a joint strategy, with wide consultation among staff and students, followed by approval by the appropriate committees. The reality was a smooth and cooperative process, with an exchange of ambitions, practices and experiences that was both a mutually enhancing experience and revealed a remarkable congruency in aspirations and priorities. For learning and teaching, the heart of the document comprises eight Enhancement Projects that the two Universities have committed to working on in partnership from 2011: (1) Assessment and Feedback (2) Graduate Attributes / Employability (3) Welsh Medium Curriculum (4) The Curriculum design and reform of Postgraduate Taught Programmes (5) Technology Enhanced Learning (6) Internationalisation of the Curriculum (7) Student Representation and Experience (8) Recognising and Rewarding Teaching Excellence.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy was submitted to HEFCW in July 2011 with specific targets for 2011/12 and indicative mid-term targets for beyond that. The Strategy will be subject to annual monitoring by HEFCW, and the annual monitoring process provides an opportunity to review progress against targets and to set targets for successive academic years.

### **2.8.3 Responsibility for the Joint Strategy**

The implementation of the Learning and Teaching & Widening Access Strategy was the responsibility (in Bangor) of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) working closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Medium & Civic Engagement), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise), the Planning and Resources Office, the Academic Registry, Information Services, the Library Service, Students Union, the Academic Development Unit, and academic Colleges and Schools. The strategies are developed in parallel with the University's strategies for research, and for innovation and enterprise. This avoids unnecessary duplication and ensures that priorities and activities across strategies are complementary and integrated.

Responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the strategy rests at cross-institutional level with the Aber-Bangor Strategy Board (the Pro Vice-Chancellor [Teaching and Learning] is a member), and at Bangor rests with the University Executive, advised by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the Teaching and Learning Task Group.

## **2.9 WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION**

From its earliest years, the University has offered teaching through the medium of Welsh. As the leading provider of Welsh medium higher education, both in terms of volume and breadth of courses and in terms of expertise, it has a firm commitment to enhance this position by playing the lead role in the newly established Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Following recent investment in academic posts, teaching fellowships and PhD scholarships there is now a measure of Welsh medium undergraduate provision in all academic schools across the University (with the exception of English). This ranges from complete degree programmes through the medium of Welsh (in 6 Schools, specifically in arts, humanities, education and social sciences) to specified modules, Welsh language laboratory work and tutorial support on a number of courses in the sciences (in a further 13 Schools). Whilst the university recognises its long-established strengths in Welsh medium provision in subjects such as History, Music, Education and Social Sciences, it is also intent on extending and fostering Welsh medium provision in all other disciplines, particularly those in which the Welsh Language is not only culturally important, but also represents a key vocational skill for professionals practicing in Wales.

In 2010/11, a total number of 1521 students (685 fte) followed some proportion of their degree program through the medium of Welsh – an increase of 87 on 2009/10<sup>10</sup>. From 2010 a new PVC post for Welsh Medium and Civic Engagement was established to further our Welsh Language mission and help deliver our Welsh Language Scheme.

## **2.10 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH/ADVANCED SCHOLARSHIP**

As emphasised in the mission statement, the University values research-informed teaching. Throughout the University, teaching benefits considerably from the planned integration of research, scholarship and teaching. Most students are taught by staff with strong research profiles. Almost all academic staff who are researchers also teach. Evidence from internal quality audits suggests that research activity in a

School vitalizes and validates teaching, and reciprocally teaching impacts upon research through valuing that research, promoting the place of research in advancing scholarship and celebrating those whose research is outstanding. Integrating research staff into the curriculum helps motivate students to learn, to research and to aim high academically.

The integration of teaching and research is achieved by methods that include:

- Guided discovery learning and problem-solving
- Researchers teaching and supervising in their specialist areas
- Teaching discipline-based research skills.
- Ensure that students understand the research ethos and research ethics of a research-lead University.
- Ensuring curriculum content is thoroughly research based.

For those Schools engaged in vocational and professional development (e.g. Healthcare Sciences, Teacher Training), a strong link between research and advanced scholarship and teaching is encouraged among staff. Curriculum development projects, applied research, and frequent updating on recent research findings are routes to maintain high professional standards in teaching and learning. The vocational credibility of staff teaching students in these subjects has been commented upon positively by professional bodies, e.g. Health Professions Wales and Estyn.

The University is active in the HEA Research-Teaching Nexus Action Set, contributing to two consecutive conferences on this theme in 2010 and 2011. The ADU has embedded the research/teaching relationship into its programmes for academic staff development. The PGCertHE models that relationship in its emphasis on research into teaching practice as the basis for professional development.

## **2.11 LINKS WITH EMPLOYERS**

The University has always maintained a range of relationships with employers. Not surprisingly, the links have tended to be strongest in subject areas with a clear vocational flavour. But in 2007, the University encouraged academic managers to establish formal employer advisory boards (at either College or School level) to provide feedback on numerous matters, including the development of the curriculum and the employability of graduates.

This was a guideline and was not made a formal requirement, and although some very active Advisory Boards exist, their use across the institution is a little patchy and is to be reviewed in 2012.

Centrally, the Careers and Employability Service (part of Student Services) is an important point of employer contact, receiving inward enquiries from employers wishing to engage with the university in supporting the student learning experience. The Service supports this work directly through some of its activities and projects such as GO Wales, B-Enterprising and JobZone, and through shared knowledge and promotion of other projects activities such as the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP). All of the employer liaison activities are recorded on a CRM system to capture accurate data and to ensure that all contacts are professional and purposeful. Careers currently holds contact information and participation records on approximately 1,400 employers ranging from national employers to local small to medium sized employers (SMEs).

The GO Wales Programme effectively supports SMEs and final year students and graduates in Wales through structured 6 to 10 week paid work-based project placements. There is a conversion rate of approximately 65% of places into employees within the SMEs. Students and graduates can undertake 'work tasters' within an organisation or SME to gain a working insight into a role, or employment sector. There is also access for graduates to undertake a short, focussed course titled 'Graduate Academy' which is an intensive six week course that delivers key modules of ILM combined with a four week work-based placement.

Bangor has been the lead university during a three year collaborative project, Academic Champions of Enterprise (ACE), alongside Aberystwyth and Swansea Universities. ACEs have been appointed in the following Schools: Business, Creative Studies and Media, Electrical Engineering, Psychology, Product Design and Law. A small amount of annual funding has enabled the ACE's to engage in the programme of establishing enterprise activities within the curriculum, introducing students to Dynamo role models (a database of local entrepreneurs funded by the Welsh Government) and other local and national entrepreneurs. Another exciting and very successful outcome of the ACE's project is the multidisciplinary, extra curricular Enterprise by Design Programme.

There are also examples of good academic-employer relationships in other areas. For example the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) as detailed in Section 4 also provides PGR students with opportunities to carry out research projects that are relevant to the needs of the business community in the region. The Research and Innovation Office has maintained a high degree of collaboration with employers through a number of initiatives (e.g. Energy Island Programme, SEACAMS and BECON, delivering Work-Based Learning programmes to key sectors in Wales), which have resulted in long-standing relationships. Moreover, the 'Reaching Wider' programme has established Employer STEM fora in both North East and North West Wales to identify the requirements of major employers.

These are extremely valuable programmes, but the University wishes to develop stronger links between employers and academia. It intends to review this area during 2012.

### **Student Employability: "The Bangor Employability Award"**

A major initiative in 2010/11 was the introduction of the pilot Bangor Employability Award (BEA) to enhance the career prospects of Bangor University students, recognising the broadest range of employability-related experiences and providing a core programme to assist them with their career navigation. The BEA scheme operates within academic schools in conjunction with service departments, the Students' Union, employers and voluntary sector organisations. Now in its second pilot year, it is currently being developed within eight academic schools with institutional roll-out planned for 2012-13.

The Core Programme comprises workshops and online sessions to enhance students' career management skills (including CV-writing and interview skills) and their personal and professional development (through reflection and skills analyses).

In the Activities Programme, activities can be chosen from a wide-ranging menu, and the framework is flexible enough to allow students to tailor the award to their own individual experiences and aspirations. There is an in-built bilingual bonus scheme that recognises the significance of completing activities through a non-native language (which may include English for some Welsh and international students), and advantages of bilingual and multilingual communication in the workplace.

Students' co-curricular activities are also acknowledged (e.g. discipline-specific societies, vocational work experiences, guest lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences), as is the opportunity to reflect upon their curriculum in the context of tangible experiences and scenarios.

Through an emphasis on reflection and the identification of the transferability of the diverse range of university experiences, the BEA develops a holistic approach to employability based around the individual choices and interests of each student. The Student Experience Enhancement Strategy supports the BEA through the commitment to increase work experience, work placements, internship and volunteering opportunities for all our students.

The BEA has undergone continuous development and enhancement throughout its pilot phase; the utilisation of feedback from student groups and 'drop-in' surgeries in the pilot schools, along with constructive criticism from Students' Union societies, course representatives and sabbatical officers, has allowed the evolution of the BEA to remain student-focused whilst the necessary operational changes identified by school and central service staff have been implemented. Employers, alumni and external organisations have been approached to engage with and recognise the scheme, where possible offering placements and participating in the delivery of the Core Programme.

## **2.12 STUDENT NUMBERS & ADMISSIONS**

### **2.12.1 Admissions Policy**

The University's admissions policy<sup>11</sup> is designed to ensure that those who are able to benefit from higher education are permitted to do so. Of course, intakes are carefully managed to ensure that Government and Funding Council policies with regard to student numbers are adhered to, and to meet the University's academic and financial requirements.

The University contributes to the maintenance of standards through setting minimum entry requirements across all University Schools: in general, a minimum of 2 A-level passes or equivalent qualifications are required for undergraduate entry and an initial degree awarded by a recognised Higher Education Institution or equivalent for postgraduate entry. The precise entry requirements requested for a place will vary depending on the subject area.

### **2.12.2 Oversight**

The University's recruitment strategy and the admissions process is overseen by the 'Executive Recruitment and Admissions Group'<sup>12</sup>, which meets at least four times a year and reports to the University Executive. This Task Group is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), and also includes the Director of Corporate Communications & Marketing, Deputy Registrar, Director of International Development, the Head of Admissions and the Head of Student Recruitment.

Recruitment targets are monitored by the Group with the aid of statistical analysis and monitoring provided by the University's central **Planning and Resources Office**<sup>13</sup>. The Planning & Resources Office calculates target intake levels based on financial forecasts and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) maximum student numbers. Operational oversight for all admissions is the responsibility of the Central Admissions Office in the Academic Registry

The processing of admission applications is largely centralised and mainly administered either by the Central Admissions Office section of the **Academic Registry** or (in respect of some international applicants) by the admissions staff based in the **International Education Centre (IEC)**. The IEC was set up in June 2011 and has responsibility for decision-making for undergraduate and taught postgraduate international applications. All Home/EU, applications, UCAS international applications and research applications continue to be managed by the **Academic Registry**. Additionally some part-time courses are offered in the schools of Lifelong Learning and Healthcare Sciences and admission to these is administered by the respective schools.

The centralised admissions process operates at undergraduate level based on agreed intake levels, statistical data on past performance and agreed entry requirements. Applicants' examination results are checked against entry requirements by Central Admissions Office staff based both in the Academic Registry and the International Education Centre. All formal offers and confirmation of places are made centrally. Each year, entry requirements for all programmes are reviewed by Schools, in consultation with the Central Admissions Office: the latest intake's actual grades, national trends and market factors are all taken into account.

Operational policy and procedures are enshrined in the University's 'Code of Practice for Recruitment and Admissions'<sup>14</sup>. Each College has dedicated admissions staff who liaise with the Central Admissions office and the IEC via established mailing lists and targeted meetings as and when required. Undergraduate Admissions Tutor meetings are held biannually before and after the confirmation period. The Central Admissions office will liaise directly with Heads of Colleges prior to the start of each academic year to review entry requirements and update on-line information (e.g. UCAS entry profiles) and prospectus entries.

### **2.12.3 Managing Student Numbers**

From the academic year 2011/12 onwards, overall student Home/EU undergraduate numbers have been 'capped' by HEFCW. Planning for this significant change in recruitment practice (from a largely recruiting to a selective institution) commenced in 2009/10 with a 'trial run' of University enforced School based quotas taking place for 2010 entry. This informed policy and practice for the 2011 entry admissions cycle and the steps put in place to avoid under and over recruitment proved robust with the final intake figures being within a few students of the target on the chosen census date.

As part of the University's 'Business Intelligence' project, enhanced web-based management information and real-time information is widely disseminated throughout the Confirmation and Clearing period.

### **2.12.4 Widening Participation & Admissions**

At Bangor, there is a strong institutional commitment to and leadership for Widening Access. The University's Widening Access Executive Group implements, monitors and manages widening access activity. This Executive Group reports to the Teaching and Learning Task Group, which enables integration of the strategy into the larger teaching and learning strategy, is consulted on key strategic decisions, and helps communicate Widening

Access strategies to all Schools and Colleges. The link between these three groups is the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) whose remit includes Widening Participation.

The Widening Access strategy<sup>15</sup> for 2011/12 to 2013/14 is based on the following aims. In the strategy these aims have been translated into actions with associated impact measures and targets.

The overarching Widening Access aims are:

1. To raise aspirations and to improve attainment, in order to support Fair Admissions to Higher Education.
2. To maximise the effectiveness of transition and induction, and maximise retention and student success.
3. Widening access to higher level skills and employability
4. Integrating with the Universities equality and diversity agenda.
5. Fostering excellent collaboration and partnerships.
6. To support the Widening Access Strategy agenda of Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and progression to Welsh medium HE programmes and modules.
7. To articulate with the skills needs of employers in the region and aid workforce development in close collaboration with Reaching Wider.

In addition, Bangor University leads the North & Mid Wales 'Reaching Wider' Partnership – a collaboration between 8 HE and FE institutions in North and Mid-Wales, funded by HEFCW, to encourage access to HE particularly in disadvantaged geographical areas.

The University also offers a range of activities for Schools and FE Colleges with the aim of increasing awareness of HE and encouraging young people to consider the opportunities available to them. These activities are co-ordinated by the Student Recruitment Department and range from pre-application advice and guidance talks to interactive sessions. The Bangor University's Talent Opportunities Programme (TOP) is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year of operation, and is active in 13 schools across North Wales. It has had a significant role in raising the aspirations of young pupils to access Higher Education.

### **2.12.5 International Recruitment and changing government immigration policy**

The fast changing and complex UKBA HTS Tier 4 student sponsorship legislation continues to pose a considerable extra administrative burden. This together with the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) has presented an additional layer of complexity to the admissions process which has required frequent intervention in our core processes. The University recognises the importance of these changes within the context of its strategic aims (i.e. a significant increase in international recruitment) and the need, given a 'steady state', to review its current response to this challenge.

### **2.12.6 Taking account of best practice**

The University engages with national groups and initiatives to ensure that its admissions policy is consistent with sector practices and that processes are informed by 'best practice'. Admissions staff contribute to the work of the Welsh Standing Group, the Academic Registrar's Council Admissions Practitioners Group, the UCAS Change User Group and additionally attend selected SPA (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions) events. SPA best

practice papers and case studies are regularly monitored to inform evolving policy.

### **2.12.7 Current development & review**

The University recognises that the fast-changing admissions landscape (e.g. institutional priorities, UCAS Admissions Process Review, capped student numbers, ever increasing portfolio of qualification profiles, etc.) requires agile but considered responses, and is therefore in the process of developing more accessible centrally edited web-based admissions guidance resources for both staff and applicants. The University believes that this will continue to need enhancement

Although there has been a long tradition of providing useful applicant feedback in certain Schools (usually where decisions include interview e.g. Education, Nursing), it is accepted that such provision is desirable for all students whose applications have been unsuccessful. The University is currently undertaking a review of this facility with the objective of providing useful feedback, whilst avoiding disproportionate administrative burden and unnecessary tension. Currently all applicant rejections are double checked by senior central admissions staff.

Whilst average UCAS tariff point scores for full-time undergraduates are readily available, sufficiently granular qualification profiles (for awards other than A levels) are not currently in a format that allows meaningful analysis. Much preparatory work has been undertaken in the last couple of years to remedy this inconsistency and further work will be needed to allow efficient delivery and analysis of the statistics to the College recruiting teams who are charged with raising entry standards. Although f/t undergraduates are the initial focus for this exercise, there is a growing need for such management information to be available for other levels and modes of study, which have been targeted for increased recruitment in line with the University's strategic plan.

The University recognises the admissions function as making a core contribution to achieving its strategic objectives and seeks to mitigate against potential disruption by establishing robust contingency mechanisms against significant changes in recruitment patterns and/or loss of physical or human resource. A review of contingency planning is currently being undertaken.

## **2.13 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS**

### **2.13.1 Assessment**

The Rules and Regulations and Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students on Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programme<sup>16</sup> provides detailed information on the assessment of students. The Code includes sections on:

- Information that has to be provided to students
- The responsibilities of students
- Internal moderation and double marking
- Guidelines on the submission of assessed work
- Feedback to students
- Retention of assessed work

- Student attendance
- Assessment/examination arrangements for disabled students
- Setting and organising examinations
- Rules for consideration of examination results and for progression of students
- Guidelines on the use of viva voce examinations
- Classification of undergraduate degrees
- Calculating degree classifications
- Guidelines on borderline cases in undergraduate degree classification
- Role and responsibilities of Boards of examiners

The Code of Practice places emphasis on assessment as a tool to judge the achievement of students and whether they have fulfilled module and programme learning outcomes. It recognises that assessment relates students' achievements to UK national standards, credit and qualifications frameworks and standards of awards. However assessment is also seen as being formative and hence constructive, enabling students to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Whilst defining assessment principles and processes, the Code stresses the importance of Examination Board discretion, and states that "assessment is a matter of judgement, not simply of computation..... examiners may exercise discretion and judgement when details of all a student's marks are available". Achieving a balance between adherence to regulations and the exercise of discretion is challenging; however the discussions that arise are used constructively, leading where appropriate to modifications of the Code.

The Code aims to ensure that:

- Internal verification leads to fair coursework and examinations where the phrasing of questions is unambiguous, module content is appropriate to complete the assessment and the time to complete the assessment is adequate.
- External moderation ensures that coursework and examinations are consistent with national standards and subject benchmarks.
- Assessment is unbiased; all examination scripts are marked anonymously.
- Supplementary assessment is available to redeem failure and/or where there are mitigating personal circumstances.

The University aims to ensure that students are told about the assessment regulations and requirements for individual programmes of study. Students must also be informed of any relevant changes to assessment regulations that occur during their period of study at the Institution.

### **2.13.2 Assessment – Standardisation & Categorical Marking**

The University, through its Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students on Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Courses, ensures that the assessment of students and classification of awards is undertaken using a set of procedures that are common throughout the University. For example, there is a defined procedure for calculating the overall degree mark with standard weighting on final year marks, and standard procedures for dealing with borderline cases. The overall aim is to ensure that no student is either advantaged or disadvantaged because of any School-specific regulations. Any deviations from University regulations must be approved by the Chair of

the Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee, prior to programme approval.

ARQUE statistical analyses of all individual modules in the University showed that many staff mark in the 0 to 40% region, but relatively few mark beyond 75%. In what proved to be a valuable pilot project, the School of Psychology moved into categorical marking (letter grades) and found this highly successful in ensuring that students received the full range of marks. After consultation and discussion, the University decided that all Schools would use categorical marking from September 2010<sup>18</sup>.

Guidelines were prepared and circulated through the Assessment & Feedback Enhancement project and the Teaching and Learning Task Group, with changes approved to the Code of Practice regarding categorical marking by the Senate Regulations Committee on 25 May 2010<sup>19</sup>. Guidelines on categorical marking were then circulated. The Code of Practice indicates that "Marking as a percentage is only permitted where the subject or form of assessment demands and where relatively small differences in performance can be discerned with accuracy."

The rationale for moving to categorical marking was that allocating an exact percentage to an assignment suggests that any mark is accurate to the nearest percentage. In reality, a mark for an assignment is best conceived as operating within a range. This recognises that there is no perfect, true or totally accurate mark for an assignment, but that academic staff tend to be confident about an essay fitting into a particular range or category. Expressions such as 'this assignment is a top 2i' or 'a mid-range 2ii' is much more 'fit for purpose' and reasonable than a spuriously exact percentage mark. There are exceptions such as in some science assessments where answers are either right or wrong. Numerical marks are then appropriate and are used.

## **2.14 STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND UNFAIR PRACTICE**

### **2.14.1 Student Discipline**

The University's procedures for student discipline are defined by an Ordinance<sup>20</sup>. The University is able, through senior staff and its Disciplinary Officers, to resolve almost all disciplinary cases without recourse to the Board of Discipline. Based on recent experience, the Board of Discipline is usually required to consider one or two cases per year.

### **2.14.2 Unfair Practice**

The University's aim is to prevent unfair practice by students. Extensive efforts are made to inform and warn students about unfair practice and to operate formative assessment, in which inadvertent plagiarism can be addressed<sup>21</sup>.

Through its Code of Practice for Plagiarism<sup>22</sup>, the University has a central policy to prevent, detect and respond to plagiarism and to provide training to academic staff. Whilst identifying the roles of the Institution and of academic staff, the Code also emphasises the responsibility of students not to engage in unfair practice. Audits, conducted as part of the Institution's regular cycle, also consider academic Schools policies and procedures on plagiarism and the extent to which these comply with institutional guidelines.

Through its Unfair Practice Procedure<sup>23</sup>, the University has a means to deal formally with all incidents of unfair practice, including examinations and coursework. The Procedure includes clear guidance on matters that may be dealt with at School level and matters that have to be dealt with by the University's central processes (which involve a hearing by an Unfair Practice Panel). The Procedures define the penalties that may be applied by Schools to ensure fairness and consistency. In 2010 a total of 36 unfair practice hearings were held rising to 60 in 2011.

The University has reviewed its Unfair Practice Procedure and a revised version will be available for the 2012/13 session. One aim was to produce a version that was simpler to follow, for both staff and students. Another aim was to codify the penalties that may be applied by the Central Panel. It is expected that the codified penalties will ease the work of the Committee and will more clearly define, for students, the penalties that can be expected; hopefully acting as a further deterrent.

## **2.15 TEACHING FACILITIES**

The adequacy and effectiveness of teaching facilities in lecture rooms are monitored by the Teaching Facilities Sub-Group<sup>24</sup> (chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor [Teaching and Learning]) which reports to the Estates and Facilities Task Group.

The University recognises the need to maintain lecture room facilities at a high level of quality. It does not have good large-capacity lecture theatres (PJ Hall, which is not ideal, is currently in use). The Pontio project will address this issue by creating more large lecture theatres. In addition, other teaching rooms need upgrading. The Teaching Facilities Group is particularly concerned with (a) ensuring that audio-visual and e-learning resources (hardware and software) are available in all centrally timetabled rooms, (b) the resourcing of such rooms dovetails with timetabling needs (e.g. rooms where lecture capture of modules is timetabled) and (c) the prioritisation of the furnishing and refurbishment of teaching rooms. In 2011/2012 the decision was made to substantially increase the budget for teaching rooms and laboratories.

The ability to record lectures to support revision and understanding of key concepts is seen as key to future teaching and learning. In this context, after a pilot in 2010/11, a programme to rollout lecture capture software (Panopto) in lecture rooms, and to train and support staff in its use has commenced across the University. Lecture capture software is also available at staff desktop machines to give them flexibility in what and how they want to record.

Bangor it must be said, is fortunate to have a number of specialist facilities (e.g. an ocean-going ship, which supports provision in Ocean Sciences, a botanical garden, broadcasting facilities in Creative Studies). Many academic programmes also make effective use of the unrivalled natural environment in North West Wales, including industrial, archaeological and historic features as well as scientific ones.

## **2.16 SOCIAL LEARNING**

In the last 2 years 'social learning' spaces have been created in library spaces on the Main Arts and Normal sites partly in response to trends in the sector and in direct response to user feedback. The spaces, through their layout and the use of technology encourage collaborative working and offer the user different types of space to work in. The knock on effect has been positive in other traditional study spaces where for example silence levels have increased. The social learning spaces

are by their nature more informal and are facilitated with the use of technology such as led screens, smartboards, wifi and fixed computing facilities.

## **2.17 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY**

In February 2011, following the establishment of a new post of Director of International Development, the University Executive approved an International Education Strategy<sup>25</sup> which embodied the University's ambitions to be a leading international HE provider. The University feels that this is a very timely strategy developed in order to educate the next generation of leaders, scientists, engineers and artists for the global market, and to give our students the international and intercultural experience needed for the global economy. Key aims of the strategy include an increase in the number of international students in Bangor, the development of a limited number of students undertaking Bangor programmes outside the UK, and an increase in the number of international students undertaking summer schools and short courses.

In October 2011<sup>26</sup>, and in the light of its emerging International Strategy, the University Executive took a strategic decision that the University may engage in international partnerships, subject to the following conditions:

1. That the academic standing of any partner institution is such that the partnership supports the strategy and reputation of Bangor University, and demonstrates a capacity to programmes of an appropriate quality and standard.
2. That the proposal includes a sound business case, approved by the University
3. That the University follows very robust procedures with regard to QA control, monitoring and assurance, to ensure that the student learning opportunities available abroad are comparable to those experienced by students at Bangor.

## **2.18 UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS**

The University's regulatory framework is accessible via the University website<sup>27</sup>. The suite of documents available includes Regulations, Codes of Practice, Procedures and Guidelines. These documents are informed by the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Taken together, they represent the University's 'QA Manual' and are the responsibility of the Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee, chaired by the PVC (T&L). The Committee has placed emphasis on streamlining these documents wherever possible, to make it easier for staff and students to access information. A recent example is the amalgamation of several sets of Postgraduate Research regulations into one document covering all PGR programmes. The University recognises the importance of version control for all its regulations, particularly to ensure that copies of cohort-specific documents readily available. The index to regulations on the University website also includes information to define which regulations apply if changes are made that are applicable to one student cohort but not another.

A schedule of documents for which the Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee is responsible is reviewed annually. This allows the identification of documents that are due for review (according to a 5 year cycle) and those that have to be reviewed for other reasons due to external factors. The annual review of the

schedule also permits the Committee to assess progress with reviewing documents each year.

Documents under review are normally circulated to Task Groups and/or Schools depending on the extent and nature of the proposed changes. The Committee also considers requests and proposals from Task Groups and Schools to amend regulations and other documents. The Committee also responds to any changes to documents that are agreed at Senate or to matters referred to it by Senate.

The Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee reports to, and is responsible to, Senate. The Committee's minutes are reported to Senate by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (T&L), the Committee's chair.

## 2.19 ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS

The University has aligned its regulations with the different sections of the QAA UK Quality Code and the Regulations Officer and Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance), have responsibility for ensuring that they are kept up to date. Because of the diversity of the University's activities a single chapter of the QAA code will usually be reflected in more than one University regulation.

The level descriptors from the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have been incorporated into the University's Rules and Procedures and Code of Practice on Assessment of Students and the Regulations for Postgraduate Research programmes. These, along with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and the appropriate benchmark statements are used as reference points when new programmes are being considered or existing ones reviewed. Programmes requiring accreditation by a PSRB will also incorporate their requirements. Programme specifications must be completed for each programme. Any changes in University regulations are notified to Heads of School, College Directors of Teaching and Learning, Directors of Postgraduate Study and the University Administrators Forum.

| <b>SUMMARY</b>       |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Strengths:           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Quality Enhancement programme in place since 2007.</li><li>• The provision of learning opportunities through the medium of Welsh.</li><li>• The development of an International Education Strategy</li></ul>   |
| Future Developments: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programme to upgrade teaching rooms (1<sup>st</sup> phase to complete by July 2012)</li><li>• An action plan embedded in the L&amp;T Strategy to disseminate the outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Programme (implementation to begin March 2012).</li><li>• Review links with employers</li></ul> |

## **SECTION 3**

### **ASSURING QUALITY & STANDARDS: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**

The University has developed a set of procedures, which are described and analysed below, and which aim to provide assurance regarding academic quality and standards in undergraduate and taught postgraduate study.

The University's Code of Practice for Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review<sup>28</sup> outlines the process for the approval, monitoring and review of programmes. Processes make use of a specialist pool of academic staff who have experience in validation (the Validation Pool), students, external assessors and representatives of professional bodies as appropriate. The schedule for the submission and consideration of new programmes and modules is approved by the University Senate in the autumn. The schedule for internal quality audits and revalidation events is managed by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group. All taught programmes must conform to either the Regulations for Modular Undergraduate Degrees or the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Programmes, as appropriate. Professional Doctorates (i.e. research degrees that include a taught component) must also conform to the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes. This section focuses on taught programmes. Arrangements for postgraduate research students are described in section 4.

### **3.1 PROGRAMME APPROVAL**

The University has recently revised its initial processes for programme approval, in order to provide greater institutional oversight and identify any key issues at an early stage, before a School embarks on completing a full programme specification.

The initial steps require completion of a Programme Outline by the submitting School(s) and its consideration by the New Programme Scrutiny Panel. This panel, chaired by the Chair, Quality Assurance and Validation, provides an initial 'quality check' for all new submissions by monitoring key aspects including compliance with University regulations, evidence of internal and external consultation, checking that there has been scrutiny and approval of proposals at College/School level, monitoring the development of courses/modules that are similar across schools and colleges and ensuring that awards are in line with the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales.

At this stage the panel will either recommend the programme to the University Executive (with or without specific concerns) or request that the programme be reconsidered by the presenting School before being resubmitted to the panel for further scrutiny. Where appropriate, the University Executive considers the recommendations of the panel and resourcing and other issues. Only once a programme has been approved by the University Executive can it proceed to validation<sup>29</sup>.

Proposals that involve an external partner are initially approved via different procedures, following those defined in the University's Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision<sup>30</sup> or Validation Manual<sup>31</sup> as appropriate.

Once a new programme has Executive approval it can then go forward to a Validation Panel. At this stage a full proposal is required including a programme specification and module descriptions. Validation panels are chaired by the Chair of the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group or nominee and constituted so that proposals receive independent scrutiny by competent and experienced academic staff. They include a representative from the Validation Pool (not to be a member of the presenting School), the appointed External Subject Specialist, an academic staff representative from a related discipline (not to be a member of the presenting School), a professional body or employer representative, where appropriate, the

Academic Registrar (or nominee) and a Panel secretary appointed by the Academic Registrar. As part of the validation process submitting schools are required to nominate three potential external subject specialists; one of these is chosen by the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group. Current external examiners are not used as External Assessors on Validation Panels. The Validation Panel undertakes detailed scrutiny of the documentation and meets the course team to discuss the submission and seek clarification on any matters as required. Templates are provided to assist decision making, reporting and specifying any subsequent actions required. A set of 'Guidelines for members of validation panels' has recently been introduced to help ensure consistency of processes across programmes and validation events. Validation Panels are required to specifically check that the aims and outcomes of programmes are commensurate with the proposed name and level of award. They must also check that programmes meet the requirements of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales and have given due consideration to subject benchmark statements and any relevant professional body requirements. The Validation Panel will also check that the arrangements for the delivery of the programme will enable it to meet its intended outcomes by considering programme content, teaching, learning and assessment methods and any specialist requirements such as project work or placement learning. Special consideration is also given to the development of transferable skills and the accessibility of programmes to students with disabilities.

These procedures are centrally managed and coordinated by the Academic Registry. External Subject Specialists are required to complete a brief report after each Validation Event. Whilst the University will always be looking to improve its procedures, it feels that the validation process currently provides confidence that new programmes have been appropriately scrutinised and checked before their introduction.

### **3.2 MODULE APPROVAL**

All new modules have to be signed off by the Head of School (following consideration and approval at School level) and subsequently approved either at validation/revalidation or by the New Module Approval Panel. This is chaired by the Chair of Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group and includes the Director of Teaching and Learning (or nominee) from each of the Colleges, the University Timetable Officer, the Awards Administrator, the Academic Registrar (or nominee) and a Panel secretary appointed by the Academic Registrar. A template and guidance notes for completing the form, including writing learning outcomes, are available on the Academic Registry website. The Panel checks, in particular, the teaching strategy for the module, whether participants will be required to have completed CRB checks, that learning outcomes are appropriate for the level of the award, that assessment is linked to outcomes and that students are not being over or under assessed. The Panel may approve the module (fully or subject to minor modifications to be completed before it is posted into the University module gazette) or refer it back to the school.

### **3.3 ANNUAL REVIEW OF TAUGHT PROGRAMMES AND MODULES: QA1 and QA2**

The University requires that all taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and modules are reviewed annually and templates<sup>32</sup> are provided to assist the process. Monitoring processes are intended to encourage critical reflection by module and programme organisers using feedback from students, external examiners, teaching teams and data on student achievement. Module reviews (on QA2 forms) are conducted at school level. These are not submitted to the Academic Registry but are scrutinised during internal quality audits (see below).

Module review processes incorporate a degree of flexibility, so that individual schools can use those that they consider are best 'fit for purpose'. For example, some schools will use on-line and others paper-based end-of-module questionnaires. Feedback from cohort meetings, focus groups and staff-student committees all provide input into the module review process. The University also uses a powerful statistical tool - ARQUE [Assessing Results Quality in University Examinations] - to provide quantitative analysis of student performance in each module. ARQUE compares the performance of students on one module with their performance on other modules, enables identification of degree scheme effects and looks at trends over time. Guidance notes are provided to assist in the interpretation of ARQUE output. ARQUE output is provided to each school and this is also considered by module organisers during the review process. The Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group also scrutinises an institution level ARQUE report<sup>33</sup>. This enables it to identify and subsequently follow up any modules with anomalous trends, for example those with consistently high failure rates or extreme marks.

All degree programmes are reviewed annually and a template (QA1 form) is provided to assist in the process. The review incorporates consideration of progress made in implementing changes proposed in the previous year and requires the programme organiser to develop an action plan incorporating issues raised by External Examiners and students and in the reviews of individual modules. This annual process of reflection and action encourages continual programme enhancement.

All QA1 forms are submitted to the Academic Registry and considered on receipt by the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance). A summary report<sup>34</sup> of QA1 forms is provided for the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group. This highlights whether the previous year's development plan, External Examiners' comments and student evaluation are adequately addressed. Forms that do not meet these criteria are returned to the School for clarification, amplification and re-submission. Once the QA1 form for a programme has been accepted by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group the annual review cycle is closed.

Any existing taught programme that has been changed substantially since it was originally validated also has to be re-validated, irrespective of whether or not 5 years has elapsed. The sequence of events which was introduced in 2010/2011 is as follows:

1. Revalidation minus 2 years – A member of the QAVTG attends the School summer (or autumn) Examination Board as an observer, to check that the procedures followed are compliant with University regulations
2. Revalidation minus 1 year – the School undergoes an Internal Quality Audit
3. Programmes revalidated.

All events are reported to and considered by the QAVTG. Given the degree of central monitoring involved, the University believes that these review procedures are robust and that they are an important mechanism for securing quality and standards.

### **3.4 INTERNAL QUALITY AUDITS**

The University operates a quinquennial cycle of internal quality audit<sup>35</sup> and course revalidation, which it considers to be central to its system for assuring quality.

Internal quality audits provide an opportunity for Schools to assess their own progress and for the University to obtain independent feedback from students and an external subject specialist. Audits also enable the identification of any areas that

require attention in the forthcoming validation. The IQAs can include the consideration of:

- the standards of teaching and learning in modules;
- methods of assessment in their relationship to learning outcomes, course content, learning strategies and transferable skills;
- student progression
- student support & guidance in the School;
- student representation in the School;
- information available to students;
- any collaborative provision;
- Welsh Medium teaching (if applicable);
- work placements (if applicable);
- support, training, supervision and monitoring of research students;
- feedback systems including External Examiners' reports, feedback from professional or statutory bodies (if applicable);
- student module and course evaluations;
- use and implementation of Annual Review and Development Plans (QA1 forms);
- National Student Survey results; PTES. PRES (as relevant)
- induction and training, and development for staff;
- Peer Observation of teaching process.

The audit panel will also check that Schools are complying with the University's Regulations and Codes of Practice and implementing the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy.

An audit visit will typically last one full day and involves:

- [a] Inspection of a self-evaluation document, relevant committee minutes and all other documentation concerned with teaching and learning in a School.
- [b] Meeting(s) with Head of School and staff with responsibility for different aspects of teaching and learning (e.g. examinations, pastoral care, admissions).
- [c] Meeting(s) with student representatives, undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research.
- [d] Meeting(s) with other staff involved in quality assurance and/or teaching and learning (e.g. new staff members / administrators).
- [e] Meetings, where appropriate, with any relevant College level staff e.g. College Directors of Teaching and Learning, Research, Director of Graduate School.

The panel is chaired by the Chair of the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group and includes another member or previous member of the Task Group or a College Director of Teaching & Learning, one senior External Assessor, the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement). Schools are invited to nominate three people who could act as an External Assessor. This person should not be a current or recent External Examiner from within the School and should preferably have knowledge of quality assurance processes and procedures. The choice of External Assessor is made by the Chair of the audit panel. A student representative has been a full member of all audit panels since 2008. Normally this will be either the President of the Students' Union, President of the Welsh Union (UMCB) or the Vice-President Education and Welfare.

A key document in the audit process is the self-evaluation document prepared by the School.

Since autumn 2008 schools have been provided with a pro-forma<sup>36</sup> for this. Based around the QAA Quality Code and University regulations, this requires Schools to score themselves against a set of statements and to highlight areas of strength and areas where enhancements are required. The pro-forma includes sections on: academic programmes, teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, research students, student participation and experience and academic staff development. This has proved effective in ensuring that all relevant areas are addressed. The pro-forma was updated in 2011 to incorporate collaborative provision.

The audit process and schedule of meetings are tailored to fit the structure and operation of individual schools. The Audit Team are able to triangulate information in the documentation with that gathered in meetings. The audit report highlights the strengths within a school and also lists any action points for consideration by the school in relation to academic standards, quality of the learning opportunities and maintenance of quality and standards. Issues for the University to consider may also be included. The audit report is considered by the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group and copied to the Vice-Chancellor and PVC (Teaching and Learning).

Both the School and the University have 1 year to respond to the action points. The responses are considered by the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group and if they are deemed to be satisfactory the School is informed that the audit cycle is closed. Where an issue raises specific cause for concern the School may be required to respond to this within a shorter period. If, following the 12 month up-date, the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group is not satisfied with progress or implementation of the action points, it can request a further visit to the School to discuss the action points in more detail by the Chair and Secretary of the Audit Panel or that a follow up internal audit be conducted within the School between 12 and 36 months.

The University feels that this system operates effectively, that it identifies good practice as well as issues which need addressing, and that it provides reasonable assurance on a range of quality matters. However, audits, if they are robust, will identify issues to be addressed, and this is true of Bangor's system. As a consequence, the University wishes to reinforce the procedure with the introduction of mid-term reviews of Schools, which will assist in the monitoring of action plans and ensuring compliance.

### **3.5 PROGRAMME REVALIDATION**

University regulations require that all undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes are revalidated every 5 years<sup>37</sup>. Revalidation may take place earlier than this if a programme undergoes significant changes. Schools usually take this as an opportunity to revise and refresh curricula. It also ensures that the University captures any changes in courses and modules that occur as a result of 'curriculum drift'. Revalidation panels are constituted in the same way as approval panels and comprise internal staff with relevant expertise and who are independent of the submitting school and an external subject specialist. Current external examiners are not used as members of revalidation panels. Revalidation includes consideration of:

- the programme specification for each programme;
- the module descriptions of each module that is to be revalidated and any new modules;
- copies of recent QA1 forms;
- copies of recent External Examiners reports;
- copy of the most recent Internal Quality Audit applicable to the programmes;
- copies of course handbooks.

The Revalidation Panel undertakes detailed scrutiny of the documentation and meets the course team to discuss the submission and seek clarification on any matters as required. In most respects the process is identical to that of programme approval, although in this case the emphasis is more on the rationale for and basis of changes proposed, their impact on students and curricula. As with programme approval these procedures are centrally managed and coordinated by the Academic Registry. External Assessors are required to complete a brief report after each revalidation Event and these are considered by the Quality Assurance Officer – Validation. An annual report of revalidation activity, highlighting any generic or specific concerns is compiled and considered by the QAVTG.

Audits, validation and revalidation events also provide opportunities for informal discussion between staff and through this these processes are refined and enhanced. The University recognises that there is some duplication in the IQA and revalidation events and is currently investigating the possibility of combining these. As an initial trial the audit and revalidation of courses in the English Language Centre for Overseas Students were combined in 2010/11. This pilot will be repeated in the School of Music in 2011/12.

The University regards its systems for auditing, monitoring, review and revalidation as pivotal parts of its process for guaranteeing quality and standards. Their approach is evidence based, probing but supportive, rigorous but constructive. They make extensive use of external reference points and subject specialists and experienced internal staff that are independent of the submitting school. These processes also indirectly enable the University to continually appraise its systems for maintaining and enhancing quality and standards.

### **3.6 WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION**

As has been stated, the range of Welsh medium provision in the University has expanded in recent years. Guidance on assessment and moderation of students work through the medium of Welsh is included in the Code of Practice on Assessment. Approximately 200 staff teach through the medium of Welsh, following an appropriate appointment process, and Welsh medium staff are utilised in the QA processes (e.g. on approval panels, internal quality audits etc.). Since 2007 with the University gaining independent University status, it has been able to draw on External Examiners from other Higher Education Institutions in Wales, which previously when awarding University of Wales degrees was not possible.

### **3.7 ACCREDITATION BY EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Courses in Education, Health, Psychology, Law and Social Work that require accreditation<sup>38</sup> from and are scrutinised by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) are subject to additional requirements according to the professional body's schedules and procedures. The monitoring and reporting requirements of these different bodies vary, so that in some cases it is possible to hold joint validation and revalidation events, and in others not.

The PSRBs ensure that the standards and content of relevant University programmes are set at the correct level and meet professional requirements so that graduates are 'fit-to-practise' in their chosen field. The relevant bodies also provide an additional, independent and important check on quality and standards.

Reports from inspections and reviews by PSRB's are received in the Academic Registry and considered by the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group. Any

serious issues or concerns that arise are dealt with as appropriate, usually through the offices of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the Deputy Registrar or Registrar as appropriate.

Many Schools in the University have sought and obtained professional accreditation for academic programmes in order to raise standards and the employability of graduates. They are supported in the process by Academic Registry staff and any courses that are accredited are reported to the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group.

## **3.8 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

### **3.8.1 Taught Programmes**

The University believes that the external examiner system continues to play a significant part in assuring both quality and standards as detailed in the Code of Practice for External Examiners<sup>39</sup>. Appointments of external examiners are approved by the Chair of Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group, following nomination by the relevant School, and formal letters of appointment are issued by the Academic Registry.

The University's judgment is that the appointment process works effectively and in the interests of maintaining independence and impartial assessment, ensuring the appointment of experts and specialists in the particular academic subjects<sup>40</sup>. All Schools are required to abide by the rules of external examiner selection. The nomination form is completed, signed by the Head of School and then sent to the Academic Registry for processing. The questions on the nomination form constitute a checklist to determine whether or not the nominee meets the University's selection criteria. The Academic Registry also undertakes additional checks to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, for example checking the status of the nominee and verifying that there are no reciprocal appointments. These checks occasionally identify omissions or errors in the nomination form. In such cases Schools may be asked to provide additional information and the nomination would be considered by the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group.

Where it is known that the nominee does not automatically meet the selection criteria, the School is required to provide a brief CV and supporting statement from the Head of School. All such cases are considered by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group. Each year a small number of nominations are rejected.

A strength of the appointment process is that nominations are scrutinised within the Academic Registry. This is far from being a rubber-stamp exercise, and Schools are regularly challenged on issues regarding nominations.

The University holds an Induction Day for new external examiners for taught programmes in the autumn<sup>41</sup>. Attendance at this event is strongly recommended, but not mandatory. Those unable to attend are directed to the presentations from the 2009 Induction Day on the University's web site: <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/quality/inductionCD/index.htm>

Each external examiner for taught programmes is required to complete a report<sup>42</sup> (before payment is made), and all external examiners' reports are received and reviewed by the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) in the

Academic Registry. Key messages in the reports (both positive and negative) are summarised by the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) and considered by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group<sup>43</sup>. Suggestions and criticisms are taken up and acted upon. Any immediate matters of concern are passed to the Chair of QA & Validation, who raises them with the Head of School. If necessary, the concerns are also drawn to the attention of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning). Schools are expected to address any issues raised by their external examiner in the relevant Annual Review and Development Plan. For more substantive issues, the Task Group may require prompt action on the part of a School, and a response from the School together with evidence that appropriate action has been taken<sup>44</sup>.

The University is currently moving to a web-based system of dealing with External Examiner Reports<sup>45</sup>. This is partly in response to the recent UUK report on External Examining and partly in order to make internal processes more efficient. The revised form is simpler in structure and will facilitate review and reporting processes by allowing electronic transfer of information. It incorporates the guidance in Chapter B7 of the QAA Quality Code: External Examining.

The University considers it appropriate that the key elements of External Examiners' reports are made available to students, but accepts that this has not always been common practice. A new initiative to ensure that this takes place within School structures is being introduced in 2011/12.

In general, the University feels that External Examiners' comments are overwhelmingly positive, with frequent references to high academic standards, and to effective support and pastoral care for students. External examiners commonly provide constructive suggestions regarding the curriculum and assessment procedures (categorical marking etc.). The University regards their analyses as key contributions to the assurance of quality and standards.

### **3.8.2 Research Degrees**

The system for external examination for research degrees mirrors that for undergraduate and taught postgraduate degrees. External examiners for research degree students are required to complete a series of 3 result and report forms<sup>46</sup>, reporting on the thesis, the viva voce examination and result, and commenting on the overall examination process. The report forms are reviewed by the Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance) and a summary is considered by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group. In general, external examiners present a detailed analysis of candidates' work and their rationale for arriving at the result awarded. Many describe the examination process as fair, appropriate, well organised or well managed. The inclusion of a Chair at the viva voce is often highlighted by external examiners as an element of good practice.

## **3.9 PART-TIME STUDY**

The University has a commitment to supporting part time students, although the available provision is not extensive. Students are able to study part-time in most Schools at either undergraduate or postgraduate level, but only a relatively small number do so. Some Schools offer specific programmes which are tailored to the

particular needs of part-time students e.g. MA/MEd and the post registration courses in the School of Healthcare Sciences.

The School of Lifelong Learning has a particular remit for part-time provision targeted at adult learners. It offers part-time BA Honours degrees in Social Studies, Combined Studies and Fine Art, Foundation Degree in Community Development and Substance Misuse Studies and Postgraduate Programmes in Women's Studies and Community Development. Proposals are currently being developed to validate three new part-time degree programmes for 2012 - BA Humanities, BA Psychosocial Studies in Substance Use and an MA Fine Art. The School also offers a 10 or 20 credit stand-alone module at level 4. Students who successfully complete 120 credits are eligible for an Open Studies Certificate. As fee levels have risen student numbers have declined in recent years - in 2008/2009 the number registered on part-time undergraduate degrees was 173 with 141 registered in 2011/2012<sup>47</sup>.

The School's main centre is in Bangor and has 6 full time staff and a range of part-time staff offering programmes through the medium of English and Welsh, which are delivered in communities and workplaces across North Wales. Students are also able to follow a small range of on-line courses and this is an area the School is seeking to develop as part of their blended learning approach to part-time, flexible provision. Lifelong Learning also works with a number of partners including local authorities, statutory and voluntary organisations and community groups across North Wales. They also work closely with partner institutions such as Coleg Llandrillo and Glyndŵr University, as well with the Management Centre and Business School internally in the "Elevate Cymru" partnership to promote and develop courses for SMEs.

As with the University as a whole, Lifelong Learning firmly believes that supporting students throughout their time in the University is of the utmost importance. Degree students are allocated a personal tutor and students studying short modules in the community are also able to access support, help and advice via the full-time Lifelong Learning staff who are knowledgeable and empathetic to the needs of the mature student learner. Comprehensive advice on fees, funding and bursary opportunities for part-time mature students is also provided. A study skills module is offered for new undergraduate students and study skills drop in sessions for continuing students. This expertise is also shared across the University, with study skills drop-in sessions being made available to all undergraduates, and liaison with other School's to consult on the learning needs of part-time mature students.

The School conforms to the University's Codes of Practice, Rules and Regulations and is subject to the same rigorous quality procedures as other Schools in the University.

### **3.10 FLEXIBLE AND DISTRIBUTED LEARNING**

#### **3.10.1 Distance Learning Provision**

The University has only two awards that are delivered solely by distance learning, an MSc in Forestry<sup>48</sup> and the Chartered Banker MBA<sup>49</sup> in the Bangor Business School (BBS).

In each course, in general terms, teaching comprises a mix of on-line guided reading and information, together with face-to-face workshops or summer schools. Students receive feedback on formative and summative assessment. These programmes are subject to the same reporting procedures and QA processes as any other programme.

### **3.10.2 The 'London Centre'**

Responding to a need expressed by international applicants, BBS also offers Masters level programmes delivered by Bangor academics at its London Centre (LC). The London Centre is located in the Broadgate Tower on Primrose Street. The first student intake was in September 2011. BBS is currently recruiting for a second intake in January 2012. At the time of writing, there are 37 students registered, serviced by 2 London Centre staff being the Director of Studies and the Administrative Manager.

In October 2011 the ProVice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), along with the Director of Student Experience and the Head of Library and IT visited the London Centre to ensure the operation was meeting the expectations of the students registered on the courses.

In the field of distributed learning the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group intends to monitor activities. A review of the current Code of Practice will be needed to ensure that procedures are fit for purpose.

## **3.11 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**

### **3.11.1 Performance Indicators**

The Planning and Resources Office provide annually a set of QA performance indicators<sup>50</sup> which are derived from the HESA return. These performance indicators are considered by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group, and when necessary, Schools are invited to respond to anomalous statistics. The performance indicators are also included in electronic format as part of the supporting documentation for internal quality audits. The key data set includes the following elements: Recruitment Statistics, School Population Profile, UG Degree Classification.

Retention statistics have been produced and are part of the quarterly KPIs provided to the Council. Also, early in the academic year students who withdraw from the University, and their reasons, are monitored weekly and concerns are reported to the Executive. However, compiling meaningful year-on-year retention data and differentiation between students who 'drop out' during the academic year, and those who fail to progress to the next stage of their programme of study has proved challenging. The Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group views this as an important area for future development.

### **3.11.2 Key Information Sets**

The University is currently reviewing its arrangements in order that it can effectively publish a set of student information as required by the Government's 'Key Information Set' initiative to ensure that all HEI's have accessible and transparent information available to prospective students. A Steering Group has been established and has been meeting regularly. The Group is chaired by the Director of Planning and includes the Deputy Registrar, the Head of Student Recruitment, and representatives from a College, the Academic Registry, and the Planning & Resources Office. Significant progress has already been made and the Group is confident that it will deliver on the timescale required.

### **3.11.3 Recruitment Material**

The information on the website relating to study programmes is prepared and maintained by the University's Communications and Marketing department in association with the Academic Registry and Academic Schools. The information is issued for general guidance of students entering the University and does not form part of any contract and every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information published on the University Website. The University's Web team (comprising staff from Communications & Marketing and IT) takes overall responsibility for the design, layout and functionality of the website and provides a service to update content on the University website bilingually. Each Head of School takes responsibility for the content of each School's website.

The University's Communications and Marketing Department takes overall responsibility for the publication of the prospectus, in association with Academic Schools and other central University departments. Academic Schools will produce recruitment material in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing Department, with the School taking responsibility for the content relating to academic subjects of study.

## **3.12 PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**

### **3.12.1 Healthcare**

The quality assurance arrangements for all courses in healthcare sciences follow a similar pattern to other subject areas. These courses involve collaboration with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in North Wales, and some trusts in England, through which practice placements are provided for Bangor students.

These collaborative arrangements are considered to be low risk. Courses are approved following standard University procedures and validation and revalidation events are attended by a representative of the relevant statutory or regulatory body, according to their requirements. The arrangements for practice placements meet those defined in the University's Code of Practice for Placement Learning<sup>51</sup>. The partners provide work placements and their staff assess students' fitness to practice, usually by assessing their competencies against benchmarks and criteria that are defined by the relevant statutory or regulatory body. Students are supported by a mentor or clinical tutor whilst in the workplace and these staff participate in approved preparation courses and annual up-date training provided by the School of Healthcare Sciences to assist them in carrying out their roles. In each discipline there is a strong and effective working relationship between the mentors and tutors in the hospitals and the corresponding University staff.

These courses and modules are monitored following standard University procedures. There are opportunities for students to provide feedback on their placements via end of module questionnaires and the NSS. In addition these courses are also subject to annual monitoring by the statutory or regulatory bodies<sup>52</sup>, according to the procedures defined by each one. Reports from professional bodies annual monitoring reviews are tabled and discussed at school level with an action plan constructed as required. Reports are also considered by the University Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group and form part of the evidence base used during internal quality audit processes.

In addition to reviewing students' written work External Examiners are annually invited to visit placement areas and meet with a selection of students and mentor.

### **3.12.2 Social Work**

The University has provided professional training in Social Work in collaboration with local authorities social services departments (and approved by the Care Council for Wales) for more than 40 years, initially as a postgraduate DipSW/MA, and then since 2005-6, as a BA in Social Work. As in health and education, local authority social services departments have provided placements for students and assessed their fitness to practice.

Following a review in 2010, prompted by difficulties in reconciling the academic and the professional approaches within the Academic-Local Authority partnership, the University has discontinued the BA programme. It is currently working on the development of a postgraduate programme in Social Work.

Discussions are now taking place, involving the local placement providers and the Care Council for Wales, with a view to the University validating this in 2012.

### **3.12.3 Sandwich Degrees and Placements**

Apart from those in health, education and social work a number of the University's other degree programmes provide opportunities for students to gain work or other relevant experience. In the case of courses in Modern Languages this takes the form of a 'year out' in an approved overseas partner institution where students have the opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge of the language and culture of their degree subject.

Certain undergraduate degrees are available as 'sandwich' degrees, in which students spend time outside the University, usually in employment. A smaller number of programmes incorporate a 'work placement' module.

All such arrangements have to be approved when programmes are validated. They may be credit bearing. Procedures for the development and approval of individual arrangements are defined in the University's Code of Practice for Placement Learning.

## **3.13 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION**

The University has engaged in partnerships for many years in areas where it is providing professional education and training - in the fields of health, social work, clinical psychology and education. These successful arrangements, for example with NHS Health Boards, schools etc, have enabled Bangor students to undertake practice placements in local organisations and thereby meet the requirements of the relevant statutory or professional regulatory bodies. They have provided cohorts of graduates, many of whom are Welsh speaking, who now serve the communities within which they trained.

The University has also responded to Welsh Assembly Government initiatives aimed at widening access to higher education and increasing the provision of higher education in further education. In the 1990's this was achieved by setting up a small

number of franchise arrangements with local further education colleges to deliver Bangor approved HNC and HND programmes, under license from Edexcel. It was also anticipated that this sub-degree provision would be a means of widening access and encouraging student progression to University courses but in practice this has been limited, and the University does not envisage growth in this area. Most of these courses have now been terminated, and only 2 will remain active from 2012, as part of the University's strategy with regard to regionalisation.

In the past, the School of Theology and Religious Studies engaged in significant collaborative activity, via two academic centres within the school. The first, the Centre for Ministry Studies, included partnerships with diocese throughout various regions of the UK. The second, the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, included links with Mattersey Hall College, Regents Theological College and institutions in Finland, Singapore, Germany, USA and the Philippines. Following a major internal 'thematic audit' of franchised and collaborative provision in 2008/9<sup>53</sup>, the University Executive<sup>54</sup> decided that they should be terminated. Termination agreements were put in place with all these partners although all students who were registered at the time have been allowed to complete their studies. The last students on these programmes will complete their studies in 2012. In 2010, the University Council accepted (albeit reluctantly) an all-Wales proposal supported by HEFCW to discontinue degree programmes in Theology at Bangor and to consolidate undergraduate teaching in UW Trinity St David.

More recently the Welsh Government, in its strategy document 'Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales – September 2008', identified a need 'to more fully integrate the work of schools, Further Education Institutions, Higher Education Institutions and other post-16 providers to transform the ways in which education and training provision is delivered'. It also expected 'learning providers to form geographic and sectoral Learning Partnerships' – by November 2008. As has been stated, the University established links with, and has subsequently validated programmes in a local further education college, Coleg Llandrillo.

In common with others the University participates in European exchange schemes and has recently been successful in winning external funding for transnational Masters programmes with Universities in Europe and north America through the Erasmus Mundus programme. It also co-operates with a small number of local agencies whose staff deliver specialist modules on some vocational programmes. These are described below.

### **3.13.1 Approval & Monitoring of Collaborative Provision**

In the light of its earlier experiences and in response to the publication by the QAA of the expanded version of section 2 of the Code of Practice, the University has strengthened and formalised its procedures for the approval and monitoring of collaborative provision. This process included:

1. defining a taxonomy of partnership arrangements and the approval and monitoring procedures related to each one. These were incorporated into a revised version of the University's Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision and Validation Manual;
2. establishing an External Partnerships Scrutiny Group, chaired by the PVC Teaching and Learning, to consider all partnership proposals and ensure consistency in internal processes and decision making;
3. establishing two new quality assurance administrative posts to enable the University to maintain robust central oversight of its collaborative provision.

The University's procedures for the establishment and approval of collaborative programmes are described in the Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision and the Validation Manual. A list of active partnerships is included in the Register of Collaborative Provision<sup>55</sup>. Central to the revised procedures is the identification, analysis and management of risk. All Bangor University modules and all courses included in partnerships have to be approved and monitored according to the University's Code of Practice for Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review or Validation Manual and are subject to External Examining requirements.

The following sections summarise the key quality assurance arrangements that apply to different types of partnership.

### **3.13.2 Articulation Agreements**

Articulation agreements permit students who have completed a defined scheme of study in an approved partner institution to progress to level 5, and exceptionally to level 6, of a degree in the University. Under University regulations the information used to determine a student's degree classification is based on marks obtained at levels 5 and 6. Where a student progresses directly to level 6 degree classification is based on level 6 marks only. Hence the University recognises that the latter poses a relatively greater 'risk' than the former, and takes steps to minimise this by careful mapping of courses in the partner institution against the modules students would otherwise have studied in the University.

For several years articulation agreements were established on a case-by-case basis following discussion between the school concerned and the admissions section of the Academic Registry. However, this situation has been carefully reviewed as we have considered developing our international strategy, and following the publication of the expanded guidance from the QAA. This revealed some inconsistencies in the duration and specification of agreements and in the University's information on its partners and the courses students were taking in these institutions.

Following the review of existing arrangements in summer 2011, steps are being taken to enable the University to strengthen procedures and to establish a baseline and standardised set of documentation on each partnership. This includes:

1. A risk assessment and due diligence report on the partner organisation
2. Mapping of the courses that students complete in the partner against the modules they would otherwise have studied in Bangor and the programme learning outcomes
3. A standardised articulation agreement<sup>56</sup> that must be signed by the PVC Teaching and Learning. This specifies the details of the collaboration, including the names of the individuals in both institutions that are responsible for different aspects of the partnership. Associated with this agreement are descriptions of the modules followed by students in the partner institution, grading schemes and progression rules. The agreement also specifies the standard students must achieve prior to progressing, including any English language requirements.

Students entering the University under an articulation agreement arrive at the start of 'Welcome Week' and so engage in the same set of induction processes as first year students. The Business School, which has most agreements, has recently appointed an International Liaison and Support Officer to provide additional support to its overseas students. At the start of session 2011/12 the University modified its student records system to facilitate tracking of the performance of these students in Bangor and to provide management information back to staff in the school and the partners.

### **3.13.3 Dual Awards**

The University currently engages in four dual award schemes. All these schemes are of fixed duration and are associated with external grant funding that has been won competitively. All involve high-ranking partners in Europe and north America. Students complete a defined number of credits in the partner institution, which are then transferred to Bangor. The University requires approval of the partner institution and mapping of the curriculum students follow against the modules students would otherwise have completed in Bangor and the programme outcomes. The University's Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Programmes define the maximum amount of credit that can be transferred. In all these schemes Bangor University modules and the dissertation are marked by University staff and overseen by the Bangor appointed External Examiner.

### **3.13.4 Joint Awarded Degrees**

The University offers only two joint degrees, a PhD scheme involving the School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre (CATIE) in Costa Rica<sup>57</sup>, and a PhD with the University of Bologna<sup>58</sup>. Ten students have gained their doctorate under the CATIE scheme since it was first established some years ago. The programme was reviewed by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group during 2010/11. The scheme with the University of Bologna was established in the Academic Registry and currently has one registered PhD Student.

### **3.13.5 Franchise Agreements**

As has been indicated, from 2012/13 only 2 franchised programmes (with fewer than 35 students in total) remain active. In each case the programme in the partner institution is linked with a cognate academic school in the University. The link is managed by a joint programme board, which has representation from both institutions, is chaired by a senior member of the school and which reports to the school Board of Studies. Central oversight is provided by the Quality and Validation Unit. Programme approval followed normal University procedures but also incorporated a visit to the partner institution to review the facilities available to support the programme. All teaching staff in the partner institution must be approved by the Bangor school and their CVs are held on file. Programmes are delivered and monitored according to procedures defined in the University's regulations for HNC/D programmes. External Examiners are appointed by and report directly to the University. In addition, the University is required to make an annual monitoring report<sup>59</sup> to the Edexcel Chief Examiner. External Examiners' reports indicate that the standards of these awards are commensurate with those that operate nationally and have commended the pastoral support provided to students by partner staff.

Feedback from the joint programme boards and evidence gathered in internal quality audits indicates that these collaborative arrangements are generally working reasonably well, but that there is scope to improve communication between the partners and specifically between the academic School and the FE College. The appointment of a quality assurance officer in 2011 dedicated to dealing with partnerships has facilitated this and enabled the University to ensure greater central oversight of these programmes.

### **3.13.6 External Validation**

In response to the Welsh Assembly Government initiatives noted above the University has recently validated Foundation and Honours degree programmes in Coleg Llandrillo (which were previously validated by the University of Wales)<sup>60</sup>. Approval followed a two stage process, firstly of Coleg Llandrillo as an institution to award Bangor University degrees and secondly the validation of individual degree programmes.

Stage 1 included consideration of Coleg Llandrillo's governance and management and its procedures for quality assurance and enhancement, assessment of students, promotion of learning and student support (including access and progression). The review team also considered its links to academic and professional peers and resources available to support programmes. The approval process involved scrutiny of documentation and a visit to the institution. The approval panel was chaired by the Chair of the University's Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group and incorporated an external panel member. Stage 2 was the validation of individual programmes, including involvement of external assessors for each award.

At the outset of this development the University was aware that Coleg Llandrillo already had considerable experience of operating HE programmes via links with other HEI's in Wales and that this had been commended in the June 2008 QAA Developmental Review for Wales. However, it also recognised that the risks associated with external validation are greater than those in franchised programmes and credit transfer arrangements. Hence concurrent with this the University developed a 'Validation Manual'. This was approved by Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee in January 2011. The manual describes in detail the procedures under which validated programmes operate, including:

- University Management of Validated Provision
- Approval of Institutions to Deliver Validated Programmes
- Programme Validation
- Management of Validated Programmes
- Appointment and Role of Moderators
- External Examiners
- Quality Enhancement
- Quality Assurance
- Admissions, Registration and Termination of Studies
- Academic Regulations
- Assessment
- Student Support and Guidance
- Student Voice/Representation
- Awards and Certificates
- Agreement and Financial Arrangements
- Data Management and records

All programmes are overseen by University appointed Moderators and External Examiners.

In 2011, the University Executive – in a decision supported by the University Council – approved a recommendation foreshadowed in the University's International Education Strategy that proposals for the validation of programmes overseas be considered, subject to stringent conditions. These include due diligence in respect of the institution concerned, and very robust procedures for quality assurance. Before considering any proposals, the University intends to learn from those institutions which have successfully pursued 'international validation', to bear in mind UK best practice, and to strengthen validation procedures accordingly. Potential partnerships have been mooted, but no formal proposals have yet been considered.

### **3.13.7 Collaborative Provision in the Context of Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol**

Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol was founded to "increase, develop and broaden the range of Welsh medium study opportunities at universities in Wales." This is achieved by facilitating collaboration between institutions, by funding programme development, and by contributing to the training of new teaching staff. Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol does not have degree awarding powers or the authority to deliver, in its own right, credit bearing modules. The responsibility for awarding degrees and for approving courses and modules rests with the Universities in Wales. Each University retains responsibility for quality assurance of its programmes, including any provision facilitated by Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Any module offered under the auspices of Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol must be approved by each participating institution (including, where necessary the institutions' procedures for collaborative partnerships). Each University must ensure that any provision facilitated by Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is consistent with the programme learning outcomes that students must achieve. Any provision must also conform to the requirements and expectations of each University. Each University is also responsible for the wellbeing and support of its own students. Y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol provides a web-based portal ('Y Porth') through which students from several institutions can access shared learning resources but responsibility for content and quality of the materials rests with the institutions through which the modules are approved.

## **3.14 COMMON CURRICULA**

The University operates two programmes - Initial Teacher Education & Training, and a PGCert in Translation, in which a common curriculum is taught in Bangor University and another Welsh university. In each case students receive the award of the institution they register in. Because of the nature and structure of the partnership arrangements we do not consider these to be high-risk ventures.

### **3.14.1 Initial Teacher Education & Training**

The North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education was opened in September 2010. It is one of 3 such centres in Wales and is a joint initiative by Bangor and Aberystwyth Universities to manage and deliver initial teacher education on a collaborative basis across north and mid Wales. It was established in response to the Welsh Assembly Government agenda for the Reconfiguration of Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) in Wales, following the recommendations of the Furlong Review of Initial Teacher

Training in Wales (2006). It forms part of the wider strategic alliance between Aberystwyth and Bangor, with Bangor being the 'lead' institution for this particular collaboration.

The partnership involves the management and delivery of a portfolio of ITET programmes. All Primary programmes (UG & PG) together with a small cohort of UG Secondary provision is delivered in Bangor only. The Postgraduate Secondary programme (PGCE) is offered by both institutions, with all but two of the National curriculum subjects being offered at only one of the universities. Around 45% of the PGCE Secondary provision is taught in Bangor.

The PGCE Secondary programme has been jointly planned and jointly validated by both universities and so common modules are delivered by both Bangor and Aberystwyth. Although it is a collaborative venture students register at, are taught and ultimately qualify for awards of either Bangor or Aberystwyth, as appropriate. Each institution is responsible for the quality assurance and enhancement of its own programmes, and so the quality assurance procedures that apply to the Bangor award are the same as those that apply to other Bangor University programmes. However the Centre has ensured that its common QA processes satisfy the requirements of both universities, so that there are no major differences to a student's experience whether they are Bangor or Aberystwyth's students. Similarly the Centre has ensured that university rules, regulations and procedures that apply to students in Bangor are similar to those that apply to students in Aberystwyth. For example, consideration of allegations of unfair practice, student's complaints and appeals are dealt with under each institution's procedures.

Bangor and Aberystwyth retain their own External Examiners for the ITET programmes but a Joint External Examiner has recently been appointed for the joint PGCE Secondary course, to report on quality and standards across the Centre.

The Management structure of the Centre consists of a Management Board which is responsible for strategic decisions, together with various operational task groups (eg. PGCE Secondary, ICT, Marketing) which report to it. The Management Board reports internally in Bangor to the School of Education Board of Studies and the College of Education & Lifelong Learning Management Board.

A Joint Academic Board has recently been established in the Centre to monitor specifically the QA processes and to consider other academic matters across the portfolio of programmes. As the universities work in partnership with Primary and Secondary schools across the region, two Partnership Steering Committees (Primary, Secondary) have been established within the Centre to ensure that Partnership schools are involved in the planning and design of the programmes. These also report to the Centre Management Board as well as, in the case of Bangor, the School of Education's Programme Boards.

### **3.14.2 PGCert Translation**

The Postgraduate Certificate in Translation is taught jointly by the Schools of Welsh at Aberystwyth University and Bangor University. The certificate is a professional qualification for translators, and was established in response to the call (from the Welsh Language Board, employers and others) for

translators whose capabilities can be vouched for according to rigorous standards and whose standard of work can be guaranteed.

### **3.15 ERASMUS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE SCHEMES**

The University participates in ERASMUS student exchange schemes. It was awarded an 'Erasmus Extended University Charter' in 2007 and this will be renewed in 2013 when the replacement programme commences. When initiating a link with a new partner, the International Exchanges Officer undertakes a check to make sure that the partner also holds an ERASMUS University Charter. The signing of an ERASMUS agreement<sup>61</sup> is a joint effort between the Exchanges Officer and the Exchanges/International Coordinator in the relevant School, taking into account the courses a student plans to follow in the partner and the courses they would otherwise have studied in Bangor. In addition students in the School of Modern Languages are required to spend a year abroad in a European university. The options here are a Teaching Assistantship, Erasmus Placement, Work Placement (organised by the student), or a combination of all three. The University's Code of Practice for Placement Learning defines the procedures for establishing these arrangements. Students provide feedback on their exchange experiences on return to the University and this is used to inform decisions about sending students to the same institution in the future. 'Years abroad' are taken between years 2 and 3 of undergraduate programmes. Any credit accumulated as part of these exchanges is recorded on a student's transcript, but marks obtained are not included in the calculation of degree classification.

### **3.16 EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO BANGOR PROGRAMMES (one or more modules)**

The Schools of Education and Lifelong Learning operate a small number of modules that involve partnership agreements with external agencies or academic institutions, whose staff provide specialist teaching in particular subject areas.

In all cases the modules concerned are validated, monitored and quality assured through the university's normal procedures. The external teaching staff are approved and supported by named staff in the University home department. They attend course meetings and participate in staff development events. In addition, all tutors on programmes offered by the School of Lifelong Learning receive a 'tutors handbook'. Students work is initially marked by partner staff but second marked by a member of Bangor University staff and made available to the Bangor appointed External Examiner. Students provide feedback via end of module questionnaires and courses are reviewed using normal University procedures.

### **3.17 TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

The University's Strategic Plan for 2011-2015 identifies access to excellent teaching and learning as one of its six key priorities. Allied to this is the strategic aim to undertake a review of the taught postgraduate portfolio to ensure it is attractive to students and to grow taught postgraduate (PGT and PGR) numbers by 50% during the period of the plan.

The Senate Postgraduate Committee chaired by the PVC Teaching and Learning has responsibility for all postgraduate student arrangements and reports to Senate. In May 2010 a new Director of PGT post was created with the aim of developing PGT in terms of recruitment, admissions, and courses particularly for the international

market, with the new Director becoming a member of the Senate Postgraduate Committee.

During 2010 a review of PGT provision revealed:

- 1) the need for PGT strategies at University, College/School level;
- 2) the need to promote at programme level the evaluation of the PGT student experience;
- 3) the need to promote a more contemporary flexible approach to PGT design to support the internationalization of the curriculum;
- 4) many Schools did not have an academic member of staff responsible for PGT.

Consequently, a University PGT Strategy<sup>62</sup> and Action Plan for 2010-2013 was developed with seven objectives. In 2011 a University enhancement project related to curriculum design and reform of postgraduate taught programmes was initiated. This enhancement project is one of the eight enhancement strategies that form the Aber/Bangor joint strategy for learning and teaching and widening access.

The University PGT Strategy actions are progressing well. At a general level, this progress has been enhanced by the creation of the International Education Centre, the Director of Student Experience post, and the extension of the student representative system to PGT both within the Students' Union and the Postgraduate Student Research Forum. Further, in October 2011 a School Directors of PGT Forum was formally created (with student representation) to ensure that the PGT Strategy is discussed and accurate flow of information between Schools/Colleges, Task-Groups and the Academic Registry takes place.

At a specific level, indicators of progress are highlighted by 18 out of 23 schools submitting PGT strategies for the 2011 academic year, with all schools submitting strategies (either separately or within their College) in March 2012. Additionally, the University's response rate for the PTES was 29.5%; this is excellent in comparison to the National average of 17.9%, especially for the first time that the survey was administered. Results with regard to the quality of teaching and learning were strong in comparison to the National average. The full results and next steps emanating from the survey have been disseminated extensively across the University. Indeed, at the first Directors of PGT meeting detailed discussion of the results occurred with, for example, the University's guidelines on assessment and feedback being circulated. Further, discussion of College/School enhancement plans (dovetailing with College Internationalisation action plans) took place.

Being a research-led University Bangor is, we consider, at the forefront of the teaching/research nexus. The quality of this practice is highlighted by the results from the PTES related to dissertations and supervision. Further, in terms of employability students results were again considerably more favourable than the National average. This quality is driven by our "traditional" research-based masters programmes. However, the University recognises that it needs to think more flexibly about its provision. Related to this, a number of initiatives are underway, including a pilot project in the College of Health and Behavioural Sciences exploring flexible approaches to curriculum design including pre-masters certificates and diplomas that include English language modules, and MSc programmes that allow for a 20 credit elective module.

## Access to Masters (ATM)

Access to Masters (ATM) is a sister project of Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) Project (see section 4 for further details) supporting Taught Masters provision. Access to Masters (ATM) is a pan-Wales ESF Convergence project led by Swansea University and supported by the Welsh Government's West Wales and the Valleys Convergence Programme. The project aims to develop the higher level skills required to develop the knowledge economy in Wales by supporting places on Taught Masters courses aligned to the Welsh Government's priority economic sectors. Additionally, each ATM place needs to be linked with an employer based in the Convergence region of Wales to provide a month long placement element. In the last three academic years Bangor has had the following ATM places on Taught Master courses covering a wide range of disciplines including the creative industries, ICT, Biosciences and environmental studies:

2009/10 = 19

2010/11 = 49

2011/12 = 63

For the two remaining years of existing ATM support (2012/13 and 2013/14) Bangor will have 70+ places for each of those two years. We have again incorporated some training workshops where the focus is on developing the skills required to work with the company partner – highlighting the different expectations from the academic and the company context.

### SUMMARY

#### Strengths:

- A clear, systematic procedure for programme and module approval.
- An effective system of internal quality audits – particularly the involvement of a student representative on audit teams.

#### Future Developments:

- The Introduction of mid-term reviews – in between Internal Quality Audits – in order to increase monitoring of compliance (from September 2012).
- With regard to Collaborative Provision, strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking of our procedures and structures so as to continue to enhance quality (by June 2012).
- Combining of re-validation and Internal Quality Audits process which is currently being piloted in some schools (from January 2012).
- In relation to Distributed Learning, a review of the current requirements of the Code of Practice to ensure procedures are fit for purpose (by October 2012).

**SECTION 4**

**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY**

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Bangor University is an internationally recognised research-led University. A key priority within the Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 is to strengthen the quality and quantity of research and enterprise.

Currently Bangor ranks in the top 40 for UK research based on research income, and also in the top 3% of world HEIs. The 2008 RAE identified world leading research in all of the University's 19 assessed subject areas with nearly 50% given the top grading of 3\* and 4\*. Research activity is located in colleges, schools or one of the University's research centres, and may involve collaboration with another academic institution, external agency or industrial partner. However, the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes<sup>63</sup> stipulate that each postgraduate research student must have a supervisor who is a full time member of academic staff of the school or college in which he/she is registered.

Overall responsibility at Executive level for postgraduate research matters rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise). Each School has a Director of Postgraduate Studies. This section of the documents describes the arrangements in place for Postgraduate Research Programmes.

## 4.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes define the requirements for each award. Where appropriate, these general regulations are supplemented by subject-specific guidance in academic schools and colleges, for example on health and safety matters. The University's Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes<sup>64</sup> defines the procedures in place to guide the implementation of the regulations. This includes sections on the research environment; the selection and admission, supervision, monitoring and review of students; development of research and other skills; feedback mechanisms; assessment; research misconduct; ethical issues and exploitation of intellectual property rights; student representation. Provision and support for students with disabilities is described in the Code of Practice on Provision for Disabled Students. External examining requirements are defined in the University's Code of Practice for External Examining, Research Degrees. Additional guidance for collaborative research programmes is provided in the Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision.

In 2009 the University undertook a major review of Postgraduate Research regulations, in order to avoid duplication and create a single document that staff and students could reference. This review led to the creation of a single regulation that incorporated what existed previously as separate regulations for a range of Postgraduate Research programmes.

These regulations and codes of practice are made available to supervisors and students on the Academic Registry website. The same information is also available in the Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors<sup>65</sup>. Written in a more 'user-friendly' format, this is also available on the website and students are directed towards it during their induction.

The University uses a variety of mechanisms to monitor its postgraduate research students and their programmes. Reports from all student supervisory committees, which include feedback from students, are reviewed centrally and issues are reported to the Senate Postgraduate Committee<sup>66</sup>, which reports directly to the University

Senate. When there are concerns, these are followed up with individual students and Schools by the Chair of the Senate Committee, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning). The University also participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), a report of which is considered by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group and the Senate Postgraduate Committee. Response rates in the PRES are considerably lower than in the NSS and therefore the results need to be treated with a degree of caution. Notwithstanding this, the report details action points for individual schools and these will be followed up within the Colleges.

Each school is required to reflect on its postgraduate research student provision in the self-evaluation document it completes for the internal quality audit (see section 3). Audit panels also meet current research students to seek their views on the school's or colleges arrangements for their induction, training and support. The University's Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group also routinely reviews and monitors reports from postgraduate research student External Examiners. Matters of concern are pursued through the Senate Postgraduate Committee and by correspondence with specific schools. Postgraduate research procedures and regulations are reviewed by the Senate Postgraduate Committee.

### **4.3 GRADUATE SCHOOLS**

Within the regulatory framework, a Director of Postgraduate Research was appointed (from amongst senior academic staff) to co-ordinate PGR initiatives. A vacancy in this role in 2011 led to a re-evaluation. The University is aiming to strengthen the leadership of PGR activities, and is currently discussing the establishment of Graduate Schools in all Colleges and a University appointment of Head of Graduate School, who would be responsible for the co-ordination of postgraduate research student activity. As part of this development each College will establish a Graduate School and appoint a College level head who would coordinate activities within their Colleges, with the responsibility for quality and standards still remaining at the point of delivery within academic Schools. Some Colleges have already established Graduate Schools. It is expected that all Colleges will have arrangements in place later in 2012.

The aim of this new structure is to offer more coherence in the postgraduate research student experience in the University, and identify and share good practice. It is recognised that historically Schools have tended to develop arrangements for PGR students independently from each other. The requirements, and hence provisions, may differ in each College, but the expectation is that the Graduate Schools would co-ordinate skills training and the development of MRes degrees, provide specialist courses, run postgraduate conferences, develop procedures to enhance good practice in student training and supervision, and contribute to the training courses for supervisors. The University Head of Graduate School would report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and be a member of the University's Research Strategy Task Group. The Graduate School Head would also sit on the University's Senate Postgraduate Committee.

The main responsibilities of the Head of Graduate School will include:

- [1] overseeing and supporting the development of the new Graduate Schools
- [2] developing a PGR strategy within the University planning framework
- [3] managing Graduate School activity, with the College Heads of Graduate Schools, to maximize benefits, share good practice and to ensure delivery of targets and integrated provision

- [4] reporting to the PVC (Research and Enterprise) and Senate Postgraduate Committee
- [5] ensuring that the University PGR needs are identified and addressed
- [6] coordinating and managing bids for PGR funding
- [7] facilitating the improvement of PGR progression and completion
- [8] monitoring the operation of quality assurance procedures within Colleges
- [9] supporting the development of inter-disciplinary research activities
- [10] liaising with company partners to enhance collaborative opportunities
- [11] tracking PGR destinations and building alumni connections

The main aims of the Graduate Schools are to

- [1] promote graduate student training and development and to enhance the stature and recognition of PGR activity within and outside the University.
- [2] improve PGR student retention and completion rates
- [3] ensure that pastoral support systems are in place and implemented
- [4] improve the admissions, marketing, and recruitment of postgraduates,
- [5] promote the sharing of good practice in supervision and enhance supervisor practice across the Graduate Schools
- [6] ensure compliance with the Research Council Concordat on PGR support and training
- [7] explore the potential for developing common PG modules that involve interdisciplinary training
- [8] promote an active learning community (through conferences, seminars, colloquia)
- [9] in the long term, develop and strengthen synergies between research areas and collaborations between schools.

In addition, to ensure that the University is aware of the latest developments and practice emerging from the PGR and PGT community, staff from the Academic Development Unit attend events arranged by the Higher Education Academy, the contents of which then feed into seminars and training in Bangor (see section 6).

#### **4.4 THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT**

The University provides postgraduate research students with an environment which encourages high quality research. This includes access to library facilities, web-based resources, laboratories, field research sites and computing facilities. Students are supervised by qualified research active staff, often within research teams. Research proposals from potential students are scrutinised by the admitting school to ensure that there are resources to allow completion of the intended work. The University defines both the entitlements and responsibilities of postgraduate research students. These are published in the University Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes and in the Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors. The details include physical resource entitlements, expectations in terms of supervision and entitlements to representation and appeal.

'Beyond Boundaries' is an annual conference organised by and for the postgraduate research community in Bangor and beyond. It provides opportunities for researchers from arts and science schools to network and explore new perspectives and an opportunity for postgraduates at an early stage of their careers to present their work. Following the creation of the Postgraduate Students' Forum (see paragraph 4.11) it is planned that this is replaced by an inter-university, inter-disciplinary conference to be held in the spring.

#### **4.5 EMPLOYABILITY - KESS**

The Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) Project is a pan-Wales higher-level skills initiative led by Bangor University on behalf of nine Higher Education Institutions in Wales. It is part match-funded by the Welsh Government's European Social Fund (ESF) which seeks to improve the economic performance of the region through investing in skills. KESS supports collaborative research projects (Research Masters and PhD) with external partners based in the Convergence region of Wales (West Wales and the Valleys). KESS runs from May 2009 until August 2015 and will provide 420 PhD and Masters scholarships. The project has a total value of £33m and at Bangor KESS has resulted in 101 additional PhD and MRes places.

The focus of the project is the development of the higher-level skills in the region. Involvement from external enterprise partners (businesses and other organisations) provides participants with experience of carrying out research projects that are relevant to the needs of the business community in the region. KESS has enabled us to embed new and innovative approaches to PGR training, contributing to the Bangor University research environment. We envisage these pioneering approaches being mainstreamed, as they clearly address the needs of the emerging employment environment. For example, both the Research Masters and PhD elements are integrated with a high-level skills training programme, leading to a Postgraduate Skills Development Award (PSDA). This award contains a compulsory residential training component (KESS Grad School) which explores skills for collaboration, business development, social enterprise and sustainable development through scenarios which in turn enhance skills of communication, influencing, team working etc. The PSDA provides KESS postgraduates with opportunities to select training / development courses which address their individual needs. Their KESS budget allows them to explore training options with professional bodies within their discipline and through those avenues to become known as a researcher within their related context. Workshops which bring together the academic and the company supervisors, along with KESS participants, to look at good practice, issues and challenges through a series of case studies, are also offered.

Through its Research Strategy Task Group<sup>67</sup> and REF Task Group<sup>68</sup>, the University maintains an oversight of the quality of research and takes a strategic view on the allocation of resources to enhance the research environment.

#### **4.6 SELECTION, ADMISSION AND INDUCTION OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

The University Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Postgraduate Research Programmes define procedures in relation to selection, admission and induction. Admissions requirements are clearly defined on the University's website and in the Postgraduate Prospectus. Unlike undergraduate study, where there is a centralised admissions process, selection of PG research students is carried out at School level, and then centrally processed through the Academic Registry.

The University's policies ensure that students will only be admitted if they have attained appropriate qualifications before starting a postgraduate research programme. This includes consideration of academic qualifications and appropriate language skills (English or Welsh depending on the language in which the research will be completed). Evidence of academic qualifications are scrutinised carefully by the admitting department as are academic references. Normally two members of

academic staff are involved in a selection decision. These will normally be the intended supervisor and Head of School (or Director of Postgraduate Studies). Admissions staff will ensure that an applicant's qualifications are appropriate for postgraduate study and will authenticate any non-standard qualifications.

The University Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes also defines the University's policy on student orientation and induction. A centrally organised induction event is run annually to which all new research students are invited. This includes introductory addresses from the PVC Research and Enterprise and the Academic Registrar, and talks from current supervisors and students to explain how supervisory and other systems operate. The programme also incorporates introductions to the Students' Union, Student Services, the Research Students' Forum and the Early Researcher Development Programme. Feedback indicates that this event is valued highly by the participants. A possible disadvantage is that it is only held once each year, and the University is currently considering whether or not it would be beneficial to hold a similar event in January.

In parallel with its successful Peer Guide scheme for undergraduates, in spring 2010 the University launched its 'Postgraduate Ambassadors'<sup>69</sup> scheme. These are current postgraduate students, identified by Schools or Colleges, who provide support to incoming postgraduate students by helping them to orientate themselves within the University and surrounding community. Particular emphasis is placed on targeting those who are 'new to Bangor', especially international students. Central training is provided to support them in their role. The English Language Courses for Overseas Students (ELCOS) unit also provides orientation and induction sessions to incoming international students as part of its pre-session programmes. The University Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes also requires each School or College to have its own induction programme, which occurs in September each year, with informal induction to those who commence later in the year.

#### **4.7 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPERVISION**

The University Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes stipulate that supervisors of postgraduate research students must be suitably qualified and have the necessary subject-specific skills for the intended project. The scope and subject areas of projects are considered carefully during the admissions process before allocating a student to a supervisor. Students may have one or more co-supervisors as well as their main supervisor. Where more than one supervisor is required, the main supervisor is clearly identified (e.g. when a new lecturer is mentored).

All staff that are new to PhD supervision have to complete training before they become supervisors. The Academic Development Unit organises these training sessions<sup>70</sup>, which are held twice each year. In addition, it also supports the professional development of researchers through regular workshops, seminars and online resources. Staff acting as supervisors for the first time will be paired with an experienced supervisor for at least one PhD candidature before being confirmed as a main supervisor. The progress of all research students is monitored by a Supervisory Committee whose remit includes both supervision and support. Within each school there is a Director of Postgraduate Studies<sup>71</sup> who oversees the support available to students and who can be approached by the student to clarify any issues related to supervision. Students can also report difficulties directly to the Academic Registry. Any concerns about supervision raised by External Examiners are reviewed and actioned by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group.

The responsibilities of research student supervisors are communicated to supervisors and students in the University Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes and also in the Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors. The role and responsibilities of supervisors include defining the research project; providing guidance on selection of transferable skills courses or other training required; maintaining contact with the student; being accessible; giving detailed advice; setting targets for completion of work; returning work with constructive comments; arranging presentations; reviewing progress; reviewing adequacy of facilities; advising on health and safety issues; advising on nomination of External Examiner; explaining the examination process; and acting as a personal mentor where necessary.

The level of supervision is defined in the University Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes. It is the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee to ensure that adequate supervision is provided. Heads of School have a responsibility to ensure that other departmental duties assigned to supervisors do not impact negatively on the level of support provided to individual students.

#### **4.8 MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS**

The University's Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes defines the mechanisms to monitor and support student progress. These include the role of the Supervisory Committee and supervisor.

Supervisory Committees are responsible for reviewing and reporting on student progress. The committee must review progress before the end of the first year of study (pro rata for part time students) to determine whether a student can continue with the PhD or be re-graded to MPhil. The committee will undertake further annual reviews until the thesis has been submitted. Supervisory Committees report using specific forms<sup>72</sup> which document progress made since the previous review, targets to be met by the next review, details of skills or training undertaken and any issues or concerns raised by the student. The forms also document the outcome of the committee's review and include the student's confirmation of the accuracy of the report. These reports are initially scrutinised in the Academic Registry and any that highlight concerns go to one of two PhD Monitoring Committees. One of these receives reports from students in the colleges of Arts and Humanities, Business, Law and Social Sciences and Education; the other the reports from students in the colleges of Natural Sciences, Physical and Applied Sciences and Health and Behavioural Sciences. The monitoring committees are chaired by a College level Director of Graduate Studies and attended by the Directors of Postgraduate Studies from each school. Any issues or concerns identified are reported back to the student, school or Senate Postgraduate Committee as appropriate. The minutes of the Monitoring Committees are received and considered by the Senate Postgraduate Committee and reported to the Senate.

#### **4.9 DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AND OTHER SKILLS**

Following on from 'Roberts-funded' skills provision, the University has a centrally organised Early Researcher Development Programme (ERDP) that is open to all research students and provides them with opportunities to take modules and courses that will contribute to their personal and professional development. The courses and modules include inter alia research skills, IT and data handling, statistics and academic writing. It is co-ordinated by the Academic Development Unit (ADU) in the School of Education and is delivered as a partnership between the ADU and

academic Schools and Colleges. The programme recognizes that there is significant diversity in the research methods and approaches in different disciplines, and also in the prior experience of research students and their modes of attendance. Hence it is flexible and can be tailored to the needs of individual students' research projects (and ERDP provision is mapped to the Research Development Framework). To help them plan their programme and monitor their progress students can complete an on-line Training Needs Analysis and Professional Development Planner.

Colleges and Schools also provide postgraduate research students with discipline-based specific training in techniques, procedures and use of equipment as required for their research work.

#### **4.10 FEEDBACK MECHANISMS**

The University has several mechanisms by which feedback on postgraduate research programmes can be obtained. For example, results from PRES are considered by the Senate Postgraduate Committee<sup>73</sup>. Comments from academic departments on any aspects related to postgraduate research programmes can be passed, via the department's Director of Postgraduate Studies to the Senate Postgraduate Committee. This Committee can consider any such matters. Comments from postgraduate students can be conveyed, via the Chair of the Postgraduate Students Forum to the Senate Postgraduate committee. Individual students can provide feedback to the supervisor or Supervisory Committee as part of the annual monitoring process. Students are also invited to send any comments, in confidence, to the Academic Registry as part of the annual review. Comments from External Examiners are considered by the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group and any matters of concern are passed to the PVC Teaching & Learning. The PVC Teaching & Learning chairs both the Teaching and Learning Task Group and the Senate Postgraduate Committee so that issues can then be raised at whichever of these is appropriate.

#### **4.11 POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' FORUM**

Following a period of discussion and consultation the University Research Students Forum (which dealt with PGR students only) has been replaced by the Postgraduate Students Forum. This is open to all full and part-time PGR and PGT students of the University. Its aims are:

1. To create a communications bridge between postgraduate students and the senior staff of the University.
2. To create a social arena for and foster academic and social links between new and existing postgraduate students in the University.

The PGSF has two members on the Senate Postgraduate Committee and there is a standing agenda item at each meeting for them to report any issues they wish to raise.

#### **4.12 ASSESSMENT**

The University's assessment procedures for research degrees are defined in detail in the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes and its Code of Practice for Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes. These define word limits, time limits, guidelines for taught elements where appropriate, and guidelines on the preparation of the thesis. The regulations also define the expectations for research degrees, providing students with a statement about the type of work expected in terms of content and originality.

Assessment procedures define the composition of examining boards and the procedures for selection of an External Examiner. All examining boards must have a chair (Head of School/Department or nominee) in addition to the external and internal examiners. The options available to Examination Boards are included in the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes and are freely available to students. External examining requirements are defined in the University's Code of Practice for External Examining, Research Degrees. (see section 3.8 for information on external examiners for research degrees).

#### 4.13 STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Students' views on research programmes can be conveyed by the Research Students' Forum and by individual students as part of the annual monitoring process. These avenues for representation allow both general and individual concerns to be addressed. Students can also be represented on school staff-student committees or Boards of Study where school-specific issues can be raised. The Students' Union President sits on Task Groups where he/she can represent PGR students' interests.

#### 4.14 COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

The University has received very few formal complaints from research students. There were 2 formal complaints in 2010 (1 PhD, 1MPhil) and 1 in 2011. When a complaint does arise it is expected that attempts will be made to resolve it by discussion between the student and supervisor or by the Chair of the Supervisory Committee. Matters that cannot be resolved in this way are referred to the Director of Postgraduate Studies and/or Head of School. If, following these discussions, a student remains dissatisfied he/she can invoke the University's formal Grievance Procedure. In this procedure an independent person (PVC Teaching and Learning unless he/she has been associated with the case previously) will investigate the matter and determine whether a Committee of Enquiry should be convened. The rights of students to take a case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator are clearly explained in the Grievance Procedure.

The University has an appeals procedure for postgraduate research students which is described on the Regulations website<sup>74</sup>. The procedure is also identified in the Handbook.

| <b>SUMMARY</b>       |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Strengths:           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A research-active environment</li> <li>• A formal and detailed process for monitoring PGR students</li> </ul>   |
| Future Developments: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commitment to the development of Graduate Schools across the University to ensure greater consistency in the opportunities and support for postgraduate research students (including research skills training and supervision arrangements) (By March 2013).</li> </ul> |



## **SECTION 5**

### **STUDENT EXPERIENCE & THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

## 5.1 STUDENT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

Bangor University has always set great store by the quality of the student experience as a whole. The campus's relatively compact and friendly atmosphere is regarded by many as one of its attractive features: very many alumni tell us that they regard Bangor as a 'special place'. In 2010, a major initiative was introduced to review and enhance the student experience. Firstly, a new post of Director of Student Experience was created. The person appointed took up the post in October 2010 with a remit both to develop a formal Student Experience Strategy, and also to manage the University's Student Services Centre. In 2011, the University added to the emphasis on this area by establishing a further new post of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), incorporating responsibility at Executive level for the student experience, student support, residential accommodation and sport.

In the Autumn of 2011, the Student Experience & Enhancement Strategy<sup>75</sup> (see below) was approved by the Executive and by the Senate. Written in collaboration with Bangor Students' Union, following University-wide consultation, the Student Experience Enhancement Strategy builds on Bangor University's existing strengths, responds to the national context and identifies key priorities for development over the next 3 years. It takes into account key performance indicators such as the National Student Survey as well as publications such as HEFCW's *Strategic Approach to the Student Experience* and NUS' *Surfing the Wave: The Future Landscape of the Student Movement*.

At the heart of the Student Experience & Enhancement Strategy is the University's commitment to engage with its students in a collaborative approach to the development of the student experience. Among key priorities are:

- The support of students in overcoming barriers to academic progression due to variations in background or experience; in particular, a Study Skills Centre will be developed to provide advice and information on all aspects of academic practice.
- A review of the University's minimum standards regarding assessment and feedback to ensure that all students receive equitable treatment.
- A fully embedded course representative system
- A University-wide approach to the rapid dissemination of School-based innovations in teaching and learning.
- Consistency in the quality of learning resources and teaching facilities across degree programmes.
- Taking greater account of the unique challenges faced by part-time students
- A review of the experience of joint and combined honours programmes

The strategy also commits the University to developing the postgraduate experience and strengthening the postgraduate community, to supporting Welsh medium developments, to investing in the Bangor Employability Award, to a partnership approach to designing facilities and services, and to increasing assurance of equal access for all students to support services.

Bangor University's strategic approach to developing the student experience is underpinned by a commitment to partnership working between staff and students across all aspects of student-related activity. The Student Experience Enhancement Strategy was written as an outcome of a consultation process conducted in partnership with the Students' Union. Student Services and the Students' Union jointly hosted a consultation event that brought together 60 staff and students in

round table discussions to identify key enhancement themes. This collaborative event was followed by a web-based survey inviting all staff and students to share their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the Bangor student experience.

The strategy is implemented through an operational plan setting specific targets and timelines for delivery, and is complemented by the University's Student Charter. The implementation of the strategy is overseen by a steering group including four Students' Union representatives alongside ten Academic and Central Services staff, and the group reports to the University Executive through the PVC Students.

## **5.2 FEE PLAN**

Following the introduction of higher tuition fees for 2012/13 (£9,000 p.a. in Bangor's case), the University was required by HEFCW to produce a fee plan showing how 30% of the additional fee income would be utilised to support 'Equality of Opportunity' and the 'Promotion of Higher Education'. The University's fee plan includes the provision of bursaries for students from low-income backgrounds and those studying through the medium of Welsh; further investment in widening access and the 'Talent Opportunities Programme'; the development of a Study Skills Centre, enhanced student welfare support; free membership of all Students' Union sports clubs and societies; and expansion of the Bangor Employability Award and Student Volunteering.

## **5.3 STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

### **5.3.1 Students' Union**

The Students' Union is rightly and legally separate from the University, and its relationship with the University is defined in a Memorandum of Agreement, which was last reviewed and revised in August 2010. The Students' Union Task Group, which normally meets 4 times a year, has formal responsibility for managing the relationship with the Students' Union and for ensuring that the University's responsibilities under the Education Act of 1994 are discharged, but it also discusses any matters of mutual interest and concern. The University employs staff who are located in the Students' Union and line-managed by the Union Director. There is also a Students' Union Liaison Panel which meets regularly to discuss staffing issues. The Students' Union, in conjunction with University officers, is currently reviewing the structure of the Students' Union with a view to ensuring that it continues to operate efficiently and effectively as circumstances change.

There is also informal interaction between Students Union sabbatical officers and University officers – the President of the Students' Union meets frequently with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), as well as with the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and other officers, and the University regards this informal contact as wholly beneficial.

The University works actively and co-operatively with the Students' Union, which it regards as providing a vital service for students. As well as representing students in a range of ways (see below), the Union's activities underpin the social, cultural and sporting life of students. The range of interests covered in Students' Union clubs and societies is vast, and from 2012 – in accordance with Bangor's Fee Plan – membership of Students' Union societies will be free for students.

### **5.3.2 Student Forum**

Under measures agreed in 2004 to strengthen consultation processes in the University, the University operates a Student Forum<sup>76</sup> which meets 3 or 4 times a year. This Forum, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, (and contains other senior managers, such as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (T&L), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students), the Registrar, Deputy Registrar and Director of Estates) also contains Students' Union sabbatical officers but also other students representing particular groups. For example, representatives of postgraduate students, Welsh medium students, international students etc. are members. The Forum will routinely receive information about various University developments, and students have an opportunity to raise issues which concern them.

### **5.3.3 Course Representative System**

Course Representatives are a crucial part of an institution's educational provision. They can provide feedback on assessment, course structure and the general academic experience of their fellow students to staff in the Schools and Colleges and the Students' Union (SU). The involvement and support of staff at both School and College level is paramount to the success of the system. In the past it was recognised that Schools were not so good in publishing feedback to students on steps taken to improve provision.

During the academic year 2009/2010 the Students' Union in close collaboration with the University undertook a pilot project to strengthen and extend the traditional staff-student committee structure by introducing a Students' Union linked Course Representative system. In 2009 the University had only 35 official student representatives although many more existed informally within Schools; by 2010 following the project the SU recorded 225 representatives. For the academic year 2011/2012 290 new student representatives were elected by November 2011, with not all Schools having completed the nomination process. Following the pilot scheme in 2009/2010 the Vice-President Education and Welfare in the Students' Union developed this new comprehensive system which was presented and approved by the Senate in October 2011<sup>77</sup>. The University regards this as a significant enhancement, for which much credit is due to the SU Vice-President Education & Welfare.

The Students' Union provides the administrative support for the representative system and invites all students involved to SU Course Representative Training and SU Course Representative Council meetings twice a Semester. The University provided funds (Teaching & Learning funding) for a Student Representative Co-ordinator for 2011 – 2012. This new appointment will be responsible for ensuring all Schools have elected course representatives in line with the requirements of the scheme. All new student representatives are provided with training by the SU on SU structures, representation and democracy. They also offer support on their website <http://www.undeb.bangor.ac.uk/coursereps/>.

Under the system, Course Reps are elected by the student population to represent students at staff-student liaison committees. Academic Schools are responsible for conducting elections in line with the guidance issued<sup>78</sup>, and Staff/Student Liaison Committees within Schools should meet at least twice a

semester. A new requirement for college student representatives will be introduced during 2012/13.

The University fully supports this initiative led by the Students' Union and welcomes the valuable contribution this system is providing. Schools' and Colleges' compliance with the Course Representative System will be monitored as part of the University's cycle of Internal Quality Audits, reporting to the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group. Urgent problems relating to compliance with the Course Representative System that require attention outside the cycle of audits may be referred, by the Vice-President Education and Welfare, to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

#### **5.3.4 Student representation on decision-making bodies**

As a matter of routine, there are student representatives (principally Students' Union officers) on the University Council, the Senate, and on most Task Groups (eg Task Groups dealing with managerial matters such as Estates & Facilities as well as with Teaching & Learning, Library, IT, Student Services etc<sup>79</sup>). In addition, there has been a student representative on the Appointment Committee for some key senior institutional posts – such as the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) and the Director of Sport & Recreation.

### **5.4 FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS**

The University recognises that feedback from its students is a vital aspect of its quality assurance and enhancement processes. Students have a number of channels to provide feedback to the University in respect of quality assurance and enhancement.

#### **5.4.1 Feedback from the Student Body**

There is, as a matter of policy, student representation (via the Students' Union Executive) on internal quality audit panels, and the audit panel always meets a representative group of students prior to meeting any staff. Moreover, the Quality Assurance and Validation Task Group is currently considering the inclusion of a 'Student Written Submission' in the documentation required for an audit.

#### **5.4.2 Module Evaluation**

Each School is required to utilize a suitable module evaluation form, which may be hard copy or online. Module co-ordinators use this at the end of the module to elicit feedback from the students who have completed the module. Any such feedback should be addressed on the module annual review and development plan (QA2 form and feed into the QA1 form), and where appropriate discussed at the School Teaching & Learning Committee. A précis of the module evaluations for the previous academic year are considered by internal quality audit panels.

#### **5.4.3 Internal Student Survey**

In 2011, the University decided to re-instate an internal student satisfaction survey. The previous one was discontinued shortly after the National Student Survey commenced as there were concerns about overlap and duplication. The new internal survey which will be conducted towards the end of semester

2 in 2012 will be directed at undergraduate students in year one and year two, and will use the same questions as the NSS.

#### **5.4.4 National Student Survey**

The University has actively participated in the National Student Survey since its launch in 2005. The results provide valuable information about the areas in which our students are less satisfied. The University's own results are analysed in detail and reported to the Quality Assurance & Validation Task Group (QAVTG)<sup>80</sup> and Senate, a summary report is also considered by the University's Executive. A detailed report with results presented at School and programme level is also produced, and considered by the QAVTG and distributed to Heads of Schools, along with the freehand comments submitted in the Survey by their students. Schools are required to discuss the results for their School, and develop an action plan for further enhancement. The action plan is submitted to the Academic Registrar and subsequently reviewed by both the QAVTG and the Teaching & Learning Task Group.

Results for particular areas of the University, such as IT and Library resources and disability issues are also considered by the relevant University Task Group.

### **5.5 STUDENT SUPPORT**

At the same time as appointing a new post of Director of Student Experience in 2010, the University reconfigured 'Student Services'. The Careers and Employability Service together with Student Support, Disability Service and Counselling Service were brought together under the overall department of Student Services, and collectively relocated to the centrally situated Rathbone Building. A major new capital project is under way to extend this building to house the International Education Centre and the Miles Dyslexia Centre in order to create a new hub of central support services for students.

Student Services encompasses the management and provision of major support services for students. Its 'Student Support' section provides a comprehensive information service to students about the administrative processes, including financial implications, necessary to suspend or leave their studies. More importantly, they offer an impartial confidential environment in which students can divulge matters which they may feel uncomfortable about discussing with their academic school. Providing a specific advice service for students considering withdrawals is a particular strength of Bangor's support for students.

Student Support acts as a point of reference for staff who may be unsure as to how to deal with a specific student case or query, and the Head of Student Support can quickly convene an Emergency Case meeting where a student's behaviour is of particular concern. In this way, a co-ordinated approach enables timely interventions as well as ensuring consistency in approach and the sharing of best practice

Student Support utilises a range of methods to publicise its services including the web and email as well as through the Students' Union and academic schools. Online surveys and paper-based feedback forms are utilised to evaluate and develop the service. The evaluation of one-to-one advice services is currently being developed across Student Services in order to identify best practice and resolve issues relating to the appropriate method and timing for gathering feedback on services dealing with sensitive and confidential issues.

### **5.5.1 Student Induction**

Academic schools, central services and the Students' Union work collaboratively to provide an integrated student induction process that is co-ordinated through regular meetings of the Working Group on Induction and Registration<sup>81</sup> chaired by the Director of Student Experience. The Working Group reviews the induction process from pre-entry information to Welcome Week activities in order to share best practice and identify recommendations for future improvements. The University recruits well locally and provides a specific, additional induction event to support our non-residential students<sup>82</sup>. The results of the Welcome Week<sup>83</sup> student survey feed into this review and recommendations are disseminated to the Student Services Task Group which in turn reports to the University Executive. Last year's survey showed that 86% of students had a positive Welcome Week experience, with the Formal Welcome, meetings with Personal Tutors and Serendipity proving the most popular features of the week. Bangor's Welcome Week is underpinned by our Peer Guide Scheme which is described in detail below.

The Student Experience Enhancement Strategy has highlighted postgraduate induction as an area for development to ensure it has the same breadth and scope as our undergraduate induction process whilst taking into account the varying start dates for some postgraduate courses. A sub-group of the Working Group on Induction and Registration has been convened to review and develop postgraduate induction processes for 2012/13.

### **5.5.2 Peer Guides**

Bangor's Peer Guide Scheme is now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year and is embedded across all academic schools with over 500 volunteers supporting our new undergraduate students. Peer Guides are undergraduate students in their second, third and fourth year who are trained to provide a wide range of support covering all aspects of student life including both social and academic integration as well as signposting to formal support services. The main focus is to help new students to settle in to their environment during their first few months.

The scheme is organised centrally by a Peer Guide Co-ordinator, based in Student Services, who works with an institution-wide network of co-ordinators within academic schools. It is these school co-ordinators who assign all new students a Peer Guide prior to their arrival at Bangor. The scheme maintains a ratio of approximately 1 Peer Guide to every 5 new students, which allows Peer Guides to provide individual support to new students.

The scheme is evaluated each year with in-depth student surveys, which are also sent to co-ordinators in academic schools. This feedback is used in the constant development of the scheme and has led to a number of significant improvements over its lifetime.<sup>84</sup>

Internally the Peer Guides are highly valued and their activities can earn them a significant number of points towards the Bangor Employability Award. Furthermore there has been external recognition for the scheme from the wider HE community as follows:

- included as a case study and example of good practice by the STAR project emanating from the University of Ulster (2006/7)
- showcased at HEA day conferences (2006 & 2010)
- shortlisted for the Times Higher Award in the Outstanding Support for Students category (2010)
- project partner in the on-going Aston University led Pathways to Success through Peer Mentoring research which is part of the HEFCE / Paul Hamlyn funded What Works: Student Retention and Success Programme

This recognition has been based on the breadth of provision, both in terms of number of volunteers and the amount and type of support.

Over the past two years there have been pilot schemes to expand peer guiding to new postgraduate students and to train Peer Guides to be Academic Study Leaders to facilitate Peer Assisted Learning. The future emphasis will be on developing these two schemes further so they become as embedded as part of the Bangor student experience in a similar way to Peer Guiding.

### **5.5.3 Personal Tutors / Senior Tutor system**

The University's pastoral care system was reviewed in December 2007 through a Task & End Group, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Teaching & Learning. The Group which comprised relevant staff and student representatives looked at a wide range of issues which resulted in the development of Code of Practice for Pastoral Support<sup>85</sup>, in which the responsibilities of all parties are clearly set out. The code remains a working document regularly evaluated by the Senior Tutor Group to ensure it remains relevant and reflects new initiatives. (The Senior Tutor in each School is responsible for overseeing the operation of the Personal Tutor system). The University believes that generally the Personal Tutor system is well received as demonstrated in NSS results and comments made by External Examiners.

### **5.5.4 Academic Guidance**

General study support is available to all students through a combination of drop-in sessions and online bilingual study skills resources provided through the School of Lifelong Learning. The drop-in sessions provide one-to-one advice on generic study skills topics such as note-taking, essay writing and revision skills as well as support for mathematics and statistics.

The drop-in sessions are publicised to students through paper-based and electronic means as well as through introductory workshops held in Welcome Week. Anonymous records are kept on usage of the service, and the number and timing of drop-in sessions are adapted in line with feedback from students.

The development of a Study Skills Centre is planned for 2012/13 in order to centralise and extend the service provided by the School of Lifelong Learning. As outlined in the Student Experience Enhancement Strategy, the Study Skills Centre will both provide students with direct access to advice and information on all aspects of study skills and work in collaboration with academic schools to support the embedding of skills development within the curriculum. Current online provision will be further extended during 2012

through the creation of bilingual podcasts to complement the current range of study guides.

### **5.5.5 Pastoral Care in Halls of Residences**

The Warden scheme at Bangor provides advice, guidance and support to residential students on a range of issues concerned with living in Halls of Residence and generally being a student at Bangor. The scheme offers a 24-hour pastoral care service 365 days a year, supporting nearly 2500 students.

A dedicated team of trained staff work alongside and communicate with a number of other support services including - the SU, Student Support Services and Personal tutors. The team under the Head of Residences and Head Warden consists of two Assistant Head Wardens (Academic Staff), six Senior Wardens (Academic and Administrative staff) and 34 Student Wardens (Mostly Post Graduate or mature students). The Assistant Head Wardens and Senior Wardens live all year round in self-contained flats on the residential sites whilst the Student Wardens live in the Halls from September to June, with eight of them remaining for summer duties. Support can include advice and listening, covering issues such as noise and harassment, ill health, anxiety and stress, alcohol and drug abuse, mental health and self-harming, behavioural and disciplinary issues.

### **5.5.6 Careers and Employability Service**

The Careers and Employability Service (CES) is an integrated service within Student Services. It provides a wide range of bilingual advice and guidance services to students ranging from individual support and guidance, to the delivery of course-customised inputs as well as a range of central presentations and workshops open to all students.

Within academic schools, activities include course specific presentations and workshops delivered to all year groups, mock interview panels, Teaching Job Fair, a local Jobs Fair featuring part time and sessional work, voluntary work and social enterprise activities, and a wide range of enterprise engagement activities including the very successful Enterprise by Design Programme, which was runner up in the AGCAS Award – Enterprise Category. Supporting and encouraging students to become entrepreneurs and to develop their enterprise skills is an important element of CES services. Seminars, workshops and competitions are arranged on a wide range of relevant topics, ranging from 1 hour sessions to a 5 day Business Bootcamp. Students can obtain initial advice and support from staff in B-Enterprising and referral to individual mentoring support to develop business ideas.

CES is working on establishing a Delivery Agreement with academic schools that details staff partnerships and contacts within the school, and agreed delivery points for inputs into courses for each year group. The Delivery Agreement will implement a minimum threshold of employability training for all year groups and will complement the implementation of the Bangor Employability Award across all schools in 2012-13.

In support of the University's institutional roll-out of the Bangor Employability Award<sup>86</sup>, the CES has developed e-learning versions of its career management skills workshops in order to provide easier access to this core of careers skills training. The continuing development of online methods of

delivery will continue into 2012 supported by a collaborative partnership with Aberystwyth University.

### **5.5.7 Money Advice & Support**

Within Student Services, the Money Support Unit offers individual support and advice to students both prior to entry and on course, providing information on funding sources, benefits entitlement and offering budgeting advice as well as assessing student's entitlement to hardship funds. A Hardship Committee<sup>87</sup> sets general policy, and a sub-group (containing senior academics, Students' Union representatives and Student Services staff) approves allocations to students. In addition, staff give talks at University Open Days and at visits to local schools and colleges to inform intending students and their parents of the financial support available and to offer helpful advice pre-entry.

### **5.5.8 Mature Students**

Student Support has a designated "Mature Students' Adviser" who is also the named adviser for students entering the University from a 'living in care' background, and in recognition of this in March 2008 the University was awarded the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark. This Quality Mark requires the University to meet certain criteria demonstrating their commitment to supporting this group of students from pre entry information and throughout the duration of their studies, providing a constant point of reference for students who may often be vulnerable.

### **5.5.9 Bursaries & Scholarships**

The University provides a flexible bursary scheme for new undergraduate students from households with an income less than £40,000. These aim to safeguard fair access and increase retention, and to supplement the Welsh Government's package of support. Start-up bursaries are also available for those entering the University from care. The University also provides a range of merit scholarships, sports and academic scholarships as well as up to 14 Excellence Scholarships of £5000 to new students with the highest levels of attainment in relevant subject areas.

### **5.5.10 Student Housing**

Within Student Support, the Student Housing Office maintains a database of properties in the Private Rented Sector who have signed up to the **Bangor University Code for Shared Student Housing in the Private Rented Sector**<sup>88</sup>. The criteria in the Code have been chosen to reflect a balance of obligations and responsibilities between owners and tenants. In order to enhance the service it provides, the University has made a commitment to working with StudentPad, a recognised National online search facility for students looking for accommodation in the private sector. A bilingual version of the site is being developed for use at the start of 2012.

### **5.5.11 Disability Service**

The Disability Service, based in Student Services offers a wide range of advice, guidance and support to students who disclose a disability. The service is available to students throughout their time at University but is also available to students before they begin their course. In 2010/11, the service

made contact with 490 applicants who disclosed disability on their application forms and by the end of 2010/11, 400 students were registered with the Disability Service.

Current students receive personal and academic support and guidance. Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSPs) make sure students are able to access their course and University facilities and the service's Support Worker Scheme provides mentors, note takers and assistants for students. In addition, each academic school has a nominated member of staff who acts as a point of reference for disabled students and colleagues in their department.

Students are made aware of the service through the website, prospectus, open days and communications from their academic school. The service gathers feedback through annual student surveys and focus groups and this feedback is received by the Disability Working Group and relevant Task Groups for continual evaluation and improvement of the service.

One such improvement is the Cynhwysiad-Inclusion Project, which was established to integrate inclusivity into the activities of the Academic Development Unit and Teaching in Higher Education (tHE) programme, now the PGCertHE. The project included developing guidance and training for teaching staff on inclusive teaching and learning activities on Blackboard, as well as creating a 'one stop shop' website containing relevant information and resources to aid inclusive practice in relation to disabled students.

Looking forward, the Disability Service plans to progress current in-house training and develop an accredited qualification for support workers, as well as furthering its inclusion work to a wide range of service departments to ensure disabled students' experience at Bangor University is of the highest possible quality. The Disability Service works in close collaboration with the Miles Dyslexia Centre which is based within the School of Psychology as described below.

Students declaring a disability are contacted during the application phase, and provided with information about Bangor's support for disabled students. UK based students are eligible for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). They are invited to attend the University Access Centre (or any other regional Access Centre) prior to arriving at Bangor where their study needs are addressed, resulting in an application for the DSA, which if successful provides paid for study support. The University runs the DSAkit service for students, which, where selected by funding bodies as part of the DSA process, provides IT equipment, software and training to disabled students. Both the Access Centre and DSAkit have key performance indicators reported to the governing body, the Disabled Students Allowance Quality Assurance Group.

#### **5.5.12 The Miles Dyslexia Centre**

Since the mid-1970s, when a Dyslexia Unit was formed based on pioneering research by Professor T.R. Miles in the School of Psychology, the University has been providing significant support to students (and prospective students) and to local schoolchildren and adults who are dyslexic. For many years it was the only university in the UK that did so. The Miles Dyslexia Centre<sup>89</sup> supports dyslexic students, and those experiencing other specific learning differences (SpLDs) within an integrated inclusive learning environment. The Centre provides assessments for dyslexia /other SpLDs, advice and guidance

post-assessment, DSA study needs assessments, and specialist tutorial advice, in English and Welsh. Around 625 are registered with the centre. Staff work with students to agree Personal Learning Support Agreements detailing adjustments to be made (e.g. relating to examination and assessment) by the University with information sent as appropriate to academic schools and central services.

To raise understanding within the wider student body of SpLDs and the support available Centre staff talk at open days and induction days and use a range of paper-based and electronic publicity. At committee level, and through the Disability Contact framework, the Centre advocates for SpLD students, and a staff pack, *Dyslexic Students at Bangor*<sup>90</sup>, is available on the Centre's website. Staff provide training on the PGCertHE scheme, offer information sessions to Schools, and regularly deliver workshops for placement providers within nursing, social work and teaching.

Feedback from students using the Centre is elicited via focus groups and formally with an annual questionnaire. The Centre responds to feedback by adjustments to practice, and relaying information within the wider University as appropriate. Generally, feedback is exceptionally positive, and the service is a significant strength in Bangor. The Centre has recently developed a team of specialist assessors for SpLD in HE, and is developing test materials in Welsh. A new framework for Quality Assurance for specialist support is currently being piloted in order to work towards developing a more formal monitoring structure.

#### **5.5.13 Student Counselling Service**

Due to increased demand for student counselling services staff resources were increased in 2011 to provide 3 FTE student counsellors. With the increase in resources, the service aims to work more strategically in meeting demand and developing its helping interventions, intake and referral pathways, and its capability to monitor and measure its value and impact to University life and the student experience. Currently, the Service's strengths are the quality, professional experience and standing of its counselling staff, and its existing good links with University departments and external services. Future developments will include the extension of workshop-based and online provision as well as further development of support for staff in pastoral roles through training, supervision and consultative support. The service is currently exploring innovative methods of client access through the development of new online registration systems, as well developing outcome measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of counselling.

#### **5.5.14 International Student Welfare Service**

Support for international students (both EU and non-EU) is provided by a team of four staff, based within the International Education Centre.

The International Student Welfare Service provides advice and support to international students and their families prior to and on arrival, and continues this work during students' studies at the University. A range of advisory services are provided on a range of issues, with the overall aim to ensure that international students have a positive experience at Bangor.

In addition, the Service has actively been working on developing its links with the various academic schools and central services within the University. A

series of staff development sessions have been undertaken since 2010, where issues relating to international students have been highlighted and staff encouraged to see the service as the first point of contact for issues relating to students from overseas. The Service has also been developing links with the wider Bangor community, so as to ensure that students have an opportunity to benefit from the opportunities available outside of the University. This is especially important as more students bring their families to Bangor and providing additional support to this group is a priority for the Service.

In support of the Student Experience Enhancement Strategy, the Service will be working collaboratively with the Students' Union to develop new social activities that will appeal to both international and home students and support the continuing development of our inclusive University community.

#### **5.5.15 English Language Centre for Overseas Students**

The English Language Centre for Overseas Students (ELCOS) was established within the University of Bangor in 1985. The purpose of the Centre is to design and deliver high quality courses to pre-sessional and in-sessional undergraduate and postgraduate students.

ELCOS has recently become part of a newly formed department; the International Education Centre, which will bring together all of the various aspects of the university that deal with the international market.

Currently, ELCOS delivers 6 pre-sessional courses of varying lengths, ranging from 42 weeks to 4 weeks. We also deliver 13 in-sessional, credit-bearing modules; 10 for undergraduate programmes and 3 for PGR programmes.

Additionally, ELCOS provides free tuition for spouses of current post-graduate students, free writing support classes to PGRs, 1-1 PG tutorials on demand (up to 5 hours per year per student) and we are a registered Cambridge Suite/IELTS testing centre.

ELCOS supports around 400 – 500 students annually through the provision described above.

ELCOS is at the beginning of an exciting process of establishing greater links with the wider university in order to design, develop and implement discipline-specific, in-sessional support. We have implemented some pilot projects with the Business School and the School of Biological Sciences, which are developing well and we plan to expand this provision over the coming years.

#### **5.5.16 Faith/Quiet Room**

The University provides a Quiet Room in the Rathbone building for any students who want a secluded space for reflection or prayer. The University is currently scoping a proposal to create a suite of rooms for faith provision that will include both a small Quiet Room and a larger Quiet Room suitable for group prayer, together with an office for a new post of University Faith Officer. This new post is designed to support faith-based groups and inter-faith activities.

#### **5.5.17 Other Services**

The University supports and co-ordinates a wide range of internal and external support services for students to provide an integrated and holistic support network for our students. The Students' Union run Nightline service is supported by the University through the provision of accommodation and contributions to running costs. The University Chaplaincy team is affiliated to Student Services and receives an annual budget to publicise and promote the volunteer-run service to students. Bodnant Health Centre works with the University to provide student-focused health services developed in line with student feedback conducted by Student Services and the Students' Union. The Student Services Task Group and the Student Welfare Co-ordinating Group include the Chaplaincy Team, Students' Union, and Bodnant Health Centre in order to facilitate co-ordination and evaluation of this support network.

#### **5.5.18 Wider Student Experience**

The University is committed to ensuring that students have full access to a range of facilities, activities and support which will enable them to make the most of their time at Bangor. This includes a commitment to their physical, cultural, civic and personal development. The University has recently reinstated Wednesday afternoons as period during the week set aside for extra-curricular activities.

#### **5.5.19 Sport**

Sport plays a crucial role in campus life. Students participate in team and individual sport at a local and national level and have improved their BUCS ranking markedly in recent years. The University has drawn up a new Sport & Recreation Strategy<sup>91</sup> (which has increasing participation in sport as a key priority), and as a first step towards implementation has recently appointed a Director of Sport and Recreation. A key element of his role will be the enhancement and redevelopment of sporting facilities across the campus, with a clear focus on raising participation levels across all areas. This will involve close collaboration with local authorities, with external partners (including the governing bodies of various sports) and with the University's School of Sport, Health and Exercise Science.

#### **5.5.20 Cultural Activities**

The cultural life of Bangor is also a high priority. The existing cultural programme, including the Music at Bangor series<sup>92</sup> and the Stepping Stones<sup>93</sup> cultural programme, will soon be further enhanced by the opening of the Pontio development in 2013 which will provide a state of the art performance space for both visiting companies and student-led events. The University has recently invested in a new night club for the Students' Union and has also committed a large area within the new Pontio development for SU facilities.

### **5.6 LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES SERVICE**

The Library & Archives Service was deconverged from IT Services in 2005 (it was previously part of 'Information Services') and now comes under the direct management of the University Librarian. This post was reinstated in December 2011 after a gap of several years. The University Librarian and Director IT Services report operationally and strategically into the Director of Business Improvement. In terms of lines of accountability, both the IT and Library Services report to the Executive

through their respective task groups<sup>94</sup>, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

There are currently six branches of the Library. These include the Main Library (in the Main University Building), the Science Library (Adeilad Deiniol) and smaller libraries on the Normal Site (School of Education and School of Sport, Health & Exercise Sciences), the School of Music, the Fron Heulog Site (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Studies), and the Archimedes Centre (School of Nursing, Midwifery & Health Studies, School of Radiography – Wrexham). There has been modest capital development, including the provision of 'social learning' areas in the Main Library and the Normal Site Library. The University is pursuing a further programme of development in each of the main libraries including a social learning space, adequate IT facilities, PG Research area/room, individual study, quiet study and collaborative group booked rooms with integral presentation facilities. A refurbishment of the Shankland Reading Room in the Main Library is underway following a successful fund-raising drive. A review of opening hours will also be conducted.

One of the main purposes of the Library & Archives Service is to provide learners and researchers with effective access to published and unpublished information required in the pursuit of excellence in learning, research and scholarship and to put the Student Experience at the forefront of the Library & Archives activities. An inherent part of the Library and Archives Service is the provision of information skills and user support for students. This covers areas such as searching for and finding information, using e-books, e-journals and e-databases, evaluating information, plagiarism, referencing and the use of referencing systems. It is recognised that there is a short fall in this provision leading to an inequitable service for some students. A multi-agency collaborative approach to the provision of study skills and information skills is now being examined. The Library & Archives Service is also looking at restructuring the existing staff to ensure further provision of Library User Support for information skills and information literacy and to ensure support for the institutional repository and research generally.

Of course, the Library plays a wider role in providing a service to the community more generally, and in supporting the University's commitment to the language, culture, health and economy of Wales and society as a whole.

The Library contains in excess of 800,000 printed items, and subscribes to some 12,000 journals mostly in electronic format. An increasing range of electronic books are available on a demand-driven basis whereby the users select what should be added to the library's e-book collection. Approximately 5,600 e-books have been selected by users and added to stock in this way.

Material not held by the University Library may be requested using document delivery (or inter-library loan) services. In addition, the library provides a short loan collection of items in heavy demand, an increasing number of digitised copies of course reading material and past exam papers on-line. The library catalogue incorporates the latest discovery tool and provides links to electronic journals and books which are accessible from anywhere on or off the campus 24/7. The Library also provides access to full-text and citation databases with seamless links to full-text articles from the latter.

In recent years, resources for Library books have been devolved to Colleges (and further devolved by Colleges to Schools). The purpose of this move was to place responsibility for determining the spend on books at School/subject level where it can most appropriately be judged. Central resources were retained for journals and e-books. The University feels, however, that in practice this has led to an uneven

provision. The Library & Archives Task Group is therefore undertaking a root-and-branch review of Library provision. This will include the Bookfund/Information Resources funding model, the production of reading lists, the utilisation of an online reading list system, information skills and the overall adequacy of the provision. The aim is to ensure that a more equitable service is provided for students throughout their programme of study by September 2012.

The NSS results for 2011 reflected a mean score of 4.0 for question 16 (Question 16 being 'The library resources and services are good enough for my needs' - students were asked to rate satisfaction on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being 'very satisfied'). Library related NSS comments are extracted from the survey and fed into the Library and Archives Strategic Plan by the management team. Progress is monitored by the Library & Archives Task Group against an action plan attached to the Strategy. The University believes that the Library Service can and should be enhanced.

### **Archives and Special Collections**

The University's Archives and Special Collections are acknowledged as one of the finest collections of manuscripts and documents in Wales, if not in the UK. It is recognised as a legal place of deposit by The National Archives (TNA) with material going as far back as the early medieval period held here. Especially important are the documents and papers concerning the history of the landed estates of North Wales.

The University has plans to raise the profile and accessibility of the collections in the Archives by creating a better front of house and public space with an educational centre to ensure that teaching and research can be accommodated. In 2010 the University commissioned a Preservation Assessment Survey from the Preservation Advisory Centre and is now working to ensure that the collections are kept under recognised standards as laid out in BS5454.

## **5.7 IT FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

The University aims, through its IT service, to provide the best IT facilities and services for students. The National Student Survey score for question 17 "I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to" in the 2011 survey was 89%, indicating that Bangor is succeeding in this respect. This above the sector average of 84%, and is better than for example Universities such as Swansea, Cardiff, and Exeter.

Over recent years IT provision has been developed to support students studying in a variety of locations - at the University, in halls of residence, at home, in the workplace, and anywhere with an internet connection. Blackboard, DesktopAnywhere and BangorPortal are the backbone of the Universities flexible IT provision. Blackboard is used extensively for blended teaching and learning, DesktopAnywhere for access to University licensed software from anywhere with an internet connection, and BangorPortal for access to on-line services such as access timetables on-line, to marks, ability to update administrative details, a clear view of the students financial position with the University. Currently the University is working towards an even more streamlined IT interface.

The number of PCs/Macs available to students has remained stable at approximately 1,150 available for student use across the University including halls of residence, study areas, and teaching rooms; there are nine computer rooms open 24 hours per every day, and printing is available in these rooms, and across the University in libraries for example. Computer use is monitored, and used to assess the on-going requirement for PC/Mac provision, the assumption being that the requirement will fall

as students continue to bring their own equipment to the University. Students are provided with personal and shared filestore in which to keep and work on their University work.

All 2,245 study bedrooms in halls of residence are networked, having a network connection which is better than local domestic broadband. The University has invested heavily in wireless, wireless enabling all student areas on the campus, libraries, social learning spaces, common rooms, cafes etc. Over 37 buildings have wireless coverage, with over 434 wireless access points deployed. We see the need for this continuing to expand. The Students' Union requested that the University made laptops available for student loan – after 3 successful years of providing these, and widespread use by students, over 50 wireless enabled computers are available to students.

Approximately 50 pieces of centrally-supported software are available from the University network, and where the license allows, are also available over the internet through the DesktopAnywhere service. Welsh language proofing tools developed at the University are available on all networked computers and where software is available in Welsh, e.g. Blackboard, Microsoft office etc. it is provided.

The IT Support Centre provides bilingual advice and help to staff and students via phone, email or in person. An IT induction has been provided in the last three years for undergraduate students at the beginning of term, and following its success will be rolled out to Postgraduate Taught and Research in September and throughout the year. For new students, the process of setting them up with their IT account starts well before they arrive at Bangor to help ensure they can undertake a number of pre-sessional activities on-line. For new student living in halls of residence, IT Services staff are on hand during Fresher's Sunday to help them connect their personal computers to the halls of residence, and make sure they have their University IT account and password set-up, prior to the beginning of welcome week.

Two assistive technology rooms are provided for disabled students located in the Deiniol and Main Arts libraries; the computers provided run a range of assistive software. There is also a Braille embosser, Rainbow scanner, CCTV magnifier and height adjustable furniture. This complements the Access Centre and DSAkit provision for disabled students (see page 81).

On-site facilities are provided in the digital print room and bindery for printing and binding student theses on-site.

The Learning Technology team with IT Services provide a comprehensive support and advice service to academic staff. The staff contribute to programmes run by the Academic Development Unit for early career staff, and run a series of technical workshops for staff. More recently, the team has worked with academics to publish a series of case studies to help disseminate good practice across the University.

IT Services provide IT Skills training and development opportunities for staff. These sessions often reflect the outcomes of staff appraisal returns received by HR and include short courses on major software packages used across the University. IT Services' training sessions are tailored to individual needs and are delivered to small groups.

## **5.8 TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING**

For over a decade Technology Enhanced Learning has been integral to the University Teaching and Learning Strategy. Developments have been, influenced by

the HEFCW Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy 2008, which was recently revised in 2011.

Technology Enhanced Learning has been, and continues to be, a key part of the learning experience at Bangor. Blackboard is used as the virtual learning environment, and since its introduction in 2002, continues to be widely used, and appreciated by students and staff.

Developments have been in accordance with wider teaching and learning drivers. The HEFCW funded GWELLA project work focussed on enhancement in assessment and feedback, collaborative and Welsh medium learning, and mainstreaming use of library resources within the learning environment.

The development of e-assessment and e-feedback was part of a larger university wide enhancement theme, and aimed to stimulate new approaches to assessment and student feedback/feed forward working with a range of academic staff, using a range of approaches e.g. on-line formative assessment, pedagogically effective use of audience response systems to stimulate class interaction, and help student monitor their understanding and progress, use of reflective journals, question and test and peer assessment. To enhance the impact of each development, beyond individual lecturers were encouraged to co-write a case study with the learning technology team in IT Services, outlining the reason for the technology intervention, benefits, lessons learnt etc. A set of case studies continues to be built to inform future development and practice.

The collaborative development strand supported the formation of the joint Bangor Aberystwyth Initial Teacher Education Training (ITET) Centre. A particular focus was the pedagogic use of video conferencing for teaching, supported by teaching staff at the Welsh Video Network. Also influential in Bangor's Gwella project was the work of the Welsh Medium Sector Group and its e-learning sub-group. A priority has been to engage and partner across Wales to develop Welsh Medium e-learning and this has been achieved in tandem with the Centre for Welsh Medium Higher Education.

To further support Welsh Medium students the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has its own installation of Blackboard called Y Porth. Many of the collaborative resources and modules on Y Porth have been developed by Bangor University teaching staff. Many resources are fully open access whilst others are restricted to module users. Collaborations exist between various Welsh HE partners (e.g. Bangor, Aberystwyth, Glamorgan) but also with English partners. Bangor and Liverpool John Moores have developed a bilingual interactive nursing pack, of which the Welsh medium version is placed on Y Porth as an open resource.

Following a pilot last year, the lecture capture system (Panopto) has been rolled out across the University to support learning, reflection, revision, and provide a vital resource for students whose first language is not English/Welsh, and for students with disabilities. The recording allows students to easily skip to the section they wish to review. All centrally timetabled teaching space is equipped with the software to capture lectures, and upload the recording to blackboard. The software can also be used on staff desktop computers. The future focus of this strand of work is to continue to support widespread adoption, and focus on a variety of techniques for making pedagogically effective use of recordings through interaction and engagement.

The continued focus for Technology Enhanced Learning as set-out in the new Teaching and Learning Strategy, is development of advanced e-assessment and e-

feedback and evaluation, pedagogically effective use of lecture capture, and use of mobile technology and applications for learning.

## 5.9 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The University has complaints and appeals procedures that are accessible via the University website<sup>95</sup>. The Student Grievance Procedure is appropriate for the majority of student complaints. To streamline the process for students, all formal complaints are channelled through the Academic Registrar. The University has three appeals procedures relating to Examination Board decisions; these are for UG students whose studies are not complete, UG/PGT students who have completed their studies, and PGR students. Work is ongoing to revise the appeals procedures with the aim of having a common procedure for all students.

Complaints and appeals procedures are based on principles that include the following:

- Every student has a right to complain or appeal against any service, academic assessment, academic or administrative procedure, perceived discrimination or harassment.
- Complaints and appeals procedures are non-discriminatory and unbiased.
- Complaints and appeals procedures ensure privacy and confidentiality wherever possible.
- The aim is to resolve complaints and appeals as quickly as possible.
- Complaints are addressed informally in the first instance, as close to their source as possible, and involving the individuals most directly concerned.
- Formal complaints are only lodged and pursued if it has not been possible to resolve the issues informally.
- Students have the right to receive reasons for decisions following consideration of a complaint or appeal and to be informed of the opportunity for further appeal.
- For any meeting or correspondence in connection with a complaint or appeal, students may be accompanied and/or represented (e.g. by an officer of the Students' Union, a personal tutor, a family member or a friend).
- Students who remain dissatisfied after a complaint has been considered by the University, and after a Completion of Procedures letter has been issued, may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

During the academic year 2010/2011, the total number of student complaints investigated under the formal stage of the Student Grievance Procedure was 11 (and 10 investigated under the Student Discipline Procedure). 3 complaints were referred to the OIA. During 2009/2010, a total of 40 student complaints and disciplinary matters were investigated.

9 cases have been lodged with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator since 2005; of these, only one case has been upheld, and that only partially.

The University's consideration of these matters has been assisted notably by the creation in 2009 of a post of 'Regulations, Complaints & Appeals Officer'.

### SUMMARY

Strengths:

- The emphasis on 'student experience' and the development of the Student Experience Enhancement Strategy in conjunction with students.

- Comprehensive and responsive student support services (e.g. disability support, counselling, the Dyslexia Centre and the Money Support Unit).
- The establishment of a comprehensive Employability Award ready for roll-out across the University.
- The Development of a Sport & Recreation Strategy and appointment of a Director of Sport.
- A positive and strong working relationship between the University and the Students' Union.
- The establishment of a University wide course representative system with the aim of further developing a comprehensive and effective representative structure.
- Peer guide systems that help new undergraduates, postgraduates and international students.

Future Developments:

- A root and branch review of library provision to ensure the adequacy and evenness of the provision is well underway (by December 2012).

## **SECTION 6**

### **ACADEMIC STAFF: QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS & DEVELOPMENT**

No resource is more important in ensuring the achieving success than the University's human resource, and the University endeavours to implement an approach which maximises the contribution and commitment of staff in order to achieve the University's mission, aims and objectives

## **6.1 THE UNIVERSITY AS A PARTNERSHIP**

The University aims to provide a working environment which has *partnership* at its heart: partnership between academic and support staff, between experienced and younger staff, between management and unions, and between staff and students.

There are two formal routes for formal communication and consultation with staff - the Staff Forum<sup>96</sup> and the Campus Unions Forum<sup>97</sup> (CUF). Both are chaired by the Vice Chancellor and meet 3 to 4 times per year. Members of the Staff Forum are elected and represent their staff group. Members of the Campus Unions Forum are nominated by their Union. The Campus Unions forum also has sub-groups which discuss detailed issues, and all in all the University believes that there is a close and productive relationship between unions and management. The agendas for these fora are similar and provide an opportunity to update, share and consult with staff representatives on issues and developments facing the University. Given the size of the University it is inevitable that these formal processes are complemented by informal channels of communication, and this has traditionally been the case at Bangor. The Vice-Chancellor and senior colleagues are easily accessible, and readily available for discussions with members of staff.

## **6.2 RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF**

One of the University's key aims is to ensure that it recruits and retains the best quality staff, with the skills necessary to enable it to meet strategic objectives. The University's appointment procedures in relation to academic staff are essentially managed at Head of School level, with the involvement of both a senior academic representative from another School, PVC as Chair and a representative of the HR Department, whose role is to ensure compliance with legislation and University policy. Training sessions are provided on recruitment and selection, on equality issues and guidelines on short-listing are provided to Schools.

Heads of Schools ensure that where appropriate academic candidates give presentations on aspects of their research specialism and teaching to a School audience, consisting of staff and students, for consideration of both delivery (communication skills) and content. If the post requires bilingual competency, at least one Panel member must be bilingual and interviews are conducted bilingually with simultaneous translation provided. A representative from Canolfan Bedwyr or the Chair of the Welsh Medium Studies Task Group or their representative must be part of the selection process for academic posts where Welsh is essential. References are sought for all short-listed candidates and are fed into the process at the interview stage.

In certain specified cases, other employment checks are essential e.g. CRB. A detailed protocol with a robust process is in place to ensure that these checks are undertaken as appropriate.

Appointments to senior academic positions (Chairs)<sup>98</sup> follow a specific procedure set out in an Ordinance, which requires the inclusion on the Appointment Panel of a senior academic with specialist knowledge who is external to Bangor University.

The appointment of part-time, casual or occasional teaching staff is managed by Heads of Schools. The numbers employed are not large, but the University plans to tighten up appointment processes for such staff.

The University utilises selected PGR students to assist staff in e.g. laboratory classes, seminars and tutorials. The University has established a post of Director of Postgraduate Teaching, and the Director of PGT is currently leading a review, with the aim of drawing up a more formal code of practice (guidelines have existed previously) for postgraduate students who teach. This will include procedures for the employment of such students, including maximum hours, payment and supervision, and training opportunities.

### **6.3 PROBATION**

All new permanent academic staff appointments are subject to probationary periods of up to 3 years. The Head of School/College is asked to report annually on all aspects of the probationary member of staff's performance (including their contribution to teaching and learning) and a final report is submitted to the HR Department at the end of the 3 years. The Reports are shared with the member of staff and he/she is invited to comment. If the outcome of the probation period is satisfactory, the staff member is confirmed in post; where issues or problems are raised, they are referred to a Review Panel comprising the Vice-Chancellor and one Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

For staff on fixed-term contracts, a 6-month probationary period is imposed, and responsibility for managing the probation is devolved to the Head of the School concerned. (If a fixed-term appointment is converted into a permanent contract, the normal probationary of up to 3 years is implemented).

This process is common throughout most higher education institutions, and in our view it remains an important mechanism for monitoring performance. It is a requirement in Bangor that confirmation in post is subject to successful completion of the PGCert HE qualification, unless the staff member has more than 3 years continuous teaching experience in HE or is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, then this requirement can be waived. It must be said that it is uncommon for an academic member of staff to be dismissed because of unsatisfactory progress during the probation period. However, Bangor has examples where the probationary period has been extended in cases where the contractual requirement to complete PGCert HE has not been met in full.

### **6.4 INDUCTION**

The University holds a monthly induction programme for academic and support staff. This ensures that new staff are signposted to key policies and support areas. This is the first stage of the induction at Bangor. It is expected that staff are provided with a local induction in their school or department and there is an 'Induction Checklist' to ensure that all key policies and processes are addressed.

### **6.5 APPOINTMENTS & THE LANGUAGE SCHEME**

The University's Welsh Language Scheme (2008), which is required by law and has been approved by the Council and Welsh Language Board, outlines how the institution will develop its bilingual capacity, both in teaching, learning and research, as well as in all aspects of the institution's administration and management.

The Language Scheme Advisory Panel (PYCI), which is chaired by the the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language and Civic Engagement) and which meets on a six-weekly basis, is responsible for operational matters related to the Language Scheme. 'Appointments' is a standing item on the committee's agenda.

To support the Scheme a 'Code of Practice for Staff Appointments in Accordance with the Language Scheme'<sup>99</sup> was developed. The purpose of the code is to ensure that at each step of the recruitment process, due consideration is given to the language requirement of each post. Monitoring of the language levels allocated to posts is done in HR in collaboration with Colleges, Departments and Canolfan Bedwyr.

Bangor University is due to review the existing Welsh Language Scheme in 2012 as well as the Code of Practice on Appointments that supports it. This new Welsh Language Scheme and Code of Practice will respond to changes that have occurred in the University since 2008 (e.g the development of new initiatives such as Pontio) as well as to the new context which now exists as a result of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

## **6.6 REWARD: PAY & GRADING POLICIES**

From 1 June 2008, following negotiation and agreement with the Campus Unions, the University implemented the 'Framework Agreement', which introduced a single pay and grading structure for all staff. As in other universities, the process was constructed around a single pay spine, a job-evaluation scheme (HERA) and a verification and appeals procedure. As a result, a range of mechanisms exist – including regrading, 'contribution' pay, discretionary points – to ensure that staff are appropriately rewarded for the responsibilities they hold.

The University also has mechanisms to ensure that high-quality staff are recruited or retained when there are competitive circumstances. This appears to be an extremely useful tool: there are several examples where staff have remained in Bangor despite the offer of prestigious posts from other universities.

## **6.7 ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION**

Under the Framework Agreement, advancement from Lecturer Grade 7 to Lecturer Grade 8 procedures<sup>100</sup> remain in accordance with the pre-Framework Agreement arrangements for advancement from Lecturer A to Lecturer B. To ensure consistency and quality, Heads of Schools submit a report to Human Resources with individuals submitting their C.V. and supporting documentation. Cases are in turn considered by a progression panel consisting of senior University academics.

Also as part of the Framework Agreement discussions, in 2009 the University and Campus Unions agreed new Promotions & Re-grading Policy & Procedures<sup>101</sup> which came into effect in January 2010. Promotion to a Senior Lectureship<sup>102</sup> follows a detailed procedure which in addition requires both external and internal references and relates to the individual's contribution to research, teaching & learning, administration and enterprise. The panel can approve promotion to a Senior Lectureship if the HERA score falls within the Grade 9 score boundaries (631-750).

A review of the criteria for the Promotion to a Readership or Personal Chair is in its final stages of consultation. The proposed changes give clearer benchmarks and indicators of assessment for promotion and recognise the importance, impact and value of the duties relating to the wider contribution to the University and Community. The review has also identified the coaching and mentoring necessary to explain,

support and encourage suitable applications, especially from under-represented groups.

Staff are able to apply for re-grading or promotion on 2 occasions each year.

## **6.8 RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE**

### **6.8.1 The 'Teaching Fellowships' Scheme**

In the mid-1990s, as part of a strategy to demonstrate its commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, the University introduced 'Teaching Fellowships'<sup>103</sup>. The aim is to recognise outstanding contributions to teaching, student learning and the pastoral care of students. A Teaching Fellowship is not awarded as a matter of routine, and nominees are expected to be able to demonstrate genuinely outstanding achievement in teaching and pastoral care. Strong evidence is needed with each nomination.

Nominations are considered by a Panel of Senior Academics (the Teaching Fellowships Panel, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching & Learning). Nominations can be submitted from Heads of Colleges, Heads of Schools or any other academic member of staff but typically they are instigated by the students themselves. The nominees are asked to provide evidence to support their nomination relating to programme design, the quality of delivery, the extent of the involvement in teaching and supporting students, involvement generally in student welfare activities, and lecture evaluation questionnaires; a nomination may—originate with students themselves.

Where the Panel decides to award a Teaching Fellowship, it is conferred during the relevant Graduation Ceremony held in July each year, and each Fellow receives a one-off honorarium of £1000.

### **6.8.2 Academy Of Teaching Fellows**

To date, 65 members of staff have been awarded Teaching Fellowships. The University believes that this is a highly valuable scheme – particularly where nominations originate with, and are demonstrably supported by, students. Recognising and rewarding excellence is a key element in encouraging enhancement. More could be done, however, to use Teaching Fellows more effectively in spreading good practice and in quality enhancement generally. An Academy of Teaching Fellows has been formed, chaired by the Director of the Academic Development Unit. It is a forum where best practice in teaching delivery and student support can be shared and projects can be initiated. The first annual conference of the Academy is planned for December 2012, the theme being 'Student Engagement: aspirations and inspirations'.

In the joint Aberystwyth-Bangor Teaching and Learning Strategy (2011-14) for HEFCW, one of the eight Enhancement projects is 'Recognising and Rewarding Teaching Excellence'. The two Universities have agreed to review their two schemes, aligning with the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Support of Learning in Higher Education, and with the National Teaching Fellowships scheme. The Aberystwyth Teaching Excellence Academy and the Bangor Academy of Teaching Fellows will help this process

Bangor's Students' Union has recently been selected as one of the 23 Students' Unions in the UK to receive Higher Education Academy funding, via

the NUS to support the development of Student Led Teaching Awards. To date a project group has been established, and it is hoped that publicity for the awards will begin in February 2012 with the awards themselves taking place in May.

### **6.8.3 The Award for Excellence**

The Award for Excellence<sup>104</sup>, which is now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, was designed to allow the University to recognise outstanding achievement by members of the support staff. Like the Teaching Fellowship scheme, the award carries an honorarium of £1,000, and is presented by the Vice-Chancellor at an annual dinner. Nominations are made by Heads of Colleges, Schools or Central Service Departments, and are frequently supported by students. To date, 13 members of the support staff – including technicians, security staff, IT support staff and administrative staff – have been awarded the Award for Excellence.

## **6.9 PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

The aim of Performance Development Review Scheme (PDR)<sup>105</sup> at Bangor is to ensure that all staff understand and have ownership of the strategic direction of the University and this is translated into specific goals at organisational level and ultimately into individual objectives and performance expectations on an annual basis. PDR also allows for the exploration of individuals` capability in relation to personal objectives and for the formulation of personal development plans (PDPs) to address any training/development needs identified.

The scheme was reviewed in 2009 which led to a rationalisation of the Policy and paperwork and an expansion of the scheme to include all staff. It is expected that all staff participate in the process on an annual basis and efforts have been made to ensure staff who have fixed term contracts and work part time are also included in the Scheme. Reports regarding reviews of the process and participation are reported to the Human Resources Task Group, and the Task Group will conduct a more thorough review in 2012/13.

New staff are briefed regarding the process and all staff who review others must attend a mandatory course to ensure that PDR's are carried out to a high standard.

Following the success of a Leadership Foundation Small Development Project bid with Aberystwyth University, Bangor has been able to introduce further enhancements of the process.

## **6.10 COACHING AND MENTORING**

Bangor is actively involved in the Womens' Universities Mentoring Scheme<sup>106</sup> (which is an innovative scheme that promotes and facilitates professional development for women working in Welsh universities by setting up inter-university mentoring partnerships). Over 100 women in Bangor have joined the scheme with the aim of mentoring others or supporting their professional and career development. This scheme has been very well received and as a result the University is currently working with Aberystwyth University to develop a joint Coaching and Mentoring Policy and process to support academic and support staff.

## **6.11 WELSH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

In order to support the University's Welsh Language Strategy, the University has ensured that a range of development opportunities are available through the medium of Welsh<sup>107</sup>. In terms of language learning, Welsh courses are available for fluent speakers and those who are learning Welsh and there are currently 153 members of staff following Welsh Language courses at various levels. The Staff Development Team also provides courses on a range of topics through the medium of Welsh as well as coaching through the medium of Welsh, and the PGCert HE is also available through the medium of Welsh. Staff in other departments offer Welsh-medium training in particular fields (e.g E-learning) and notably, Bangor University staff contribute greatly to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's staff and student annual development programme.

In July 2011 a new post of Staff Tutor was established with the aim of offering bespoke language teaching and support for staff wishing to learn Welsh.

The monthly training workshops are geared specifically to promoting the continuing professional development of academics able to work through the medium of Welsh. Some of the Staff Development Programme workshops focus on developing research skills, whilst other courses and workshops contribute to the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PGCertHE), enabling individuals to become formally qualified as university educators.

## **6.12 STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Development opportunities for leaders, managers and support staff are co-ordinated and arranged through the Staff Development section of the HR Department. Academic staff development is promoted and delivered by the Academic Development Unit (ADU), which was established in 2006 within the School of Education, and a CPD Framework has been approved to guide development activities.

The ADU and the HR Staff Development team work in collaboration with colleagues from other Welsh universities, as well as with regional and UK-wide networks. The University considers there to be a good staff development programme, though it is currently reviewing internal structures in order to reinforce joint working and further advance current provision.

The University seeks to provide appropriate development opportunities in order to support the University's strategic aims it also constantly adapts its development provision to address the needs of the staff (currently identified following the return of the training and development section of the PDR form) and has a comprehensive web page providing information regarding the provision. The University also has a Learning and Development Directory that provides an overview of all the opportunities available to staff.

The HR Department promotes, supports and administers non-academic development opportunities for staff. For example, annually the University holds a 'Maps and Compasses'<sup>108</sup> Programme for managers that includes presentations and discussions regarding key elements of the University's strategy. Topics that are included in the programme are: the Teaching and Learning Strategy, the Research Strategy, Welsh Language Strategy and Internationalisation. This programme has been very well received as it has facilitated the development of increased knowledge of strategic areas outside individuals' direct responsibility and the development of informal networks and discussions. The University also has a similar programme for

technical staff. This aims to help support staff, technical staff and research staff to better support the aims of the University. In 2009 this programme was nominated in the category of 'Outstanding Human Resource Initiative' in the Time Higher Education, Leadership and Management Awards.

The HR Staff Development Team also facilitate customised events for Colleges and Departments that reflect the changing demands on the University and maintaining high standards of service delivery. For example: managing change for support staff in the College of Arts and Humanities, Customised Equality Training, Customer Care in the Academic Registry.

### **6.12.1 Supporting Teaching & Learning**

ADU staff conduct, promote and support practitioner research into Higher Education and aim to support all colleagues in academic and academic related roles by providing:

- Professional development and support for all academic staff with roles in teaching and research supervision.
- Support for new and experienced staff to develop and enhance their teaching skills and pedagogic research interests.
- Structured programmes of workshops and courses linked to strategic priorities, tailored to local needs.
- Support for the personal and career development of 'Early Researchers' (doctoral students and contract researchers).
- Support for developing and implementing University strategic plans and priorities in liaison with University Executive and Officers.
- Consultancy to Colleges, Schools and individual staff.

### **6.12.2 Teaching in Higher Education Qualification**

The Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCertHE)<sup>109</sup> is delivered by the ADU and is offered to anyone who wishes to develop their knowledge and skills in the areas of teaching, learning and assessment, including academic staff, research assistants and postgraduate research students with teaching duties. This course is mandatory for new staff in a teaching role with fewer than three years previous teaching experience and no prior teaching qualification.

The programme, initiated by Bangor in the 1990s, is now delivered as part of a Wales-wide collaboration with Aberystwyth; Trinity St David's; Cardiff Metropolitan and Swansea. It is offered through the medium of Welsh and English. A particular initiative in 2012 is the introduction of a Teaching & Learning Conference, in co-operation with Aberystwyth.

Working alongside an experienced Teaching Adviser, participants draw and build on experiences gained during their normal teaching duties to prepare a portfolio demonstrating innovative and reflective professional practice underpinned with theoretical concepts.

The award involves two stages and is accredited by the Higher Education Academy and mapped against the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

Stage 1 introduces key areas of learning and teaching such as designing and planning, assessment and feedback and inclusive practice. Stage 1 leads to

Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (Standard 1 of the UKPSF).

Stage 2 develops skills in areas such as reflective practice and the scholarship of learning and teaching as well as developing links between research and teaching. Stage 2 leads to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (Standard 2 of the UKPSF).

### **6.12.3 Academic Development Workshops**

As collaborative partners all staff at Bangor are entitled to attend a selection of the workshops<sup>110</sup> at Aberystwyth and vice versa. The themes of the workshops are designed to address all areas of the UKPSF and reflect the Bangor / Aber Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy. Examples include 'Designing for Large Group Teaching' and 'Open Space Learning'.

The University has increased its engagement with the Higher Education Academy through strong representation on the HEA Wales Institutional Group. The Director of the Academic Development Group Unit, in liaison with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), represents Bangor on this group and has contributed to a number of Wales-wide HEA conferences and developments linked to the Future Directions Programme, in collaboration with HEA, HEFCW and QAA. This includes membership of the Future Directions Conference 2012 Steering Group. The University's Director of Student Experience represents Bangor on the project strands (Learning for Employment and Students as Partners).

### **6.12.4 Early Researcher Development Programme**

The Early Researcher Development Programme (EDRP)<sup>111</sup> provides workshops and courses for career management and development, including personal skills training. The workshops and courses will ensure that postgraduate research students and post-doctoral staff develop research, vocational and entrepreneurial skills that are matched to the demands of their future career paths.

For 2011-2012 the focus has been tightened to become a more distinctive two fold approach – that of employability and furtherance of research skills. Employability workshops will range from Commercial Awareness and Project Planning through to CV workshops and interview practice. The understanding and knowledge of entrepreneurship & commercialisation of research will also be further developed. Research Skills acquisition and maintenance will further not only the Institutions development, but run in line with the embedding of a Research Culture in Wales & the UK. New workshops include; Public Engagement, Bid Writing and Media Training.

The ERDP Gazette outlines all courses and workshops available to research students and staff.

### **6.12.5 Peer Observation of Teaching**

Peer observation was introduced in 2003/4 as a form of staff development, and the Chair and Secretary of the (then) Quality Assurance Committee visited all departments to discuss its implementation. Schools were permitted to trial their own style of peer observation.

Schools are now expected to implement a policy of peer observation of teaching as part of the process of critical evaluation and continuing development of the student learning experiences offered in programmes of study at the University.

Schools are free to develop their own approaches to Peer Observation but generic forms<sup>112</sup> are provided which should be used in the absence of any other method of record. It should be noted that the University has agreed that every member of the teaching staff should arrange for feedback from a peer observer at least once every academic year. Forms 1 and 2 should be copied to the Head of School or the person designated in the School. Form 3 should be retained by the teacher of the class observed.

An aspect which the University would wish to enhance is the institutional-level monitoring of the peer observation activities. The University intends to introduce a system of monitoring the peer observation programme to ensure that it is valuable and effective.

#### **6.12.6 Peer Observation of Probationary Staff**

All teaching staff appointed with fewer than 3 years prior teaching experience or a previous teaching qualification, are required to undertake the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education delivered by the Academic Development Unit. Peer Observation of Teaching is a mandatory element of the programme, and central to the programme philosophy of ongoing reflective practice, triangulating with action research accounts of teaching interventions and taught sessions.

#### **6.12.7 Leadership and Management Development**

Over the last 3 years, the University has introduced a Leadership Programme<sup>113</sup>, and there have been four cohorts (over 40) on the programme which is supported by the Leadership Foundation in the University. To date this has been attended by academic managers, mostly within the academic colleges, of which over forty staff have attended. This has been a very well received programme that has enabled the development of informal networks of senior leaders in the University.

A successful Welsh language Management and Leadership Programme is also an on-going programme for Welsh speaking academics and managers – 12 bilingual senior managers enrolled on the programme in 2011.

#### **6.12.8 Supporting Internationalisation**

To support the University's internationalisation strategy a number of in-house Internationalisation workshops for both academic and support staff have been held in collaboration with other Schools and Departments. These workshops have assisted Colleges and Departments to develop practical interventions to support international students. In addition, in order to support the internationalisation of the curriculum, a staff development day will be held in April 2012, led by an expert team from Oxford Brookes University.

As this is an important part of the University's Strategy the Staff Development Team applied for Leadership Foundation Small Development Project Funding

and was successful in receiving a £10K grant for its 'Supporting Internationalisation through Leadership and Knowledge Sharing' project.

### **6.13 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The equality function supports the implementation of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy<sup>114</sup>. The University has a number of consultative groups to support the development of the equality schemes in this area i.e. race. The University is currently embarking on a project to implement the Welsh Equality Duties. This will lead, through a process of engagement with staff and students, to a Strategic Equality Plan by March 2012.

The University has been particularly active in the gender area and has become a signatory to the Athena SWAN Charter. To raise awareness of the Charter the University arranged a 'Women in Science' conference which over a hundred staff attended. The SET colleges are now working with HR to identify key actions to undertake to support women working in science and networking events for women working in the science colleges. In November 2011 the University applied for a University Athena SWAN bronze award.

### **6.14 STAFF SUPPORT**

The Human Resources Department provides support to managers and to their staff on all matters relating to employment issues. In certain instances, this includes working towards resolutions that are a fair, equitable and appropriate response.

The University is committed to enabling employees to balance their working lives with their commitments outside the work context. Accordingly, the University has a comprehensive suite of policies and processes within its Family Support Framework<sup>115</sup> and wherever possible, staff are able to benefit from family friendly working practices that are more generous than the legal minimum. The provision of generous family friendly entitlements and work arrangements is considered to be one aspect of fulfilling the University's commitment to the attraction and retention of high performing staff.

A confidential staff counselling service is offered to staff by NOSS (Network of Staff Support)<sup>116</sup>. The Service has been able to identify trends and in some cases supported positive intervention. Their main objective is to support staff to stay in the workplace and this has proved successful.

The University also has formal grievance frameworks<sup>117</sup>, but initially will attempt to resolve staff issues that arise as informally and locally as possible. Where this is not the case, and formal routes are followed, the University endeavours to be as open and fair as possible, and to balance formal approaches with support where needed. Case management reviews frequently lead to the development and spread of good practice.

### **6.15 STAFF WELL-BEING**

The Occupational Health Practitioner at the University has in recent years established and delivered a health agenda to all staff through an annual programme of health activities that span the academic year. The programme includes, Health Surveillance, Health Promotion, Health Support, care for the expectant and new mothers, skills training and joint work with the Students' Union to promote the wider health agenda<sup>118</sup>.

The quality of health surveillance that has been designed and delivered to staff at Bangor University is cited as an example of best practice by the Health & Safety Executive in their document 'The Health and Safety of Great Britain - one year on' report (2010) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/one-year-on-print.pdf>. In addition the 'Pathways for Health' programme was reviewed by occupational health peers who gave Bangor University and award for "Health Promotion and Wellbeing" and cited the health agenda as the overall example of best occupational health practice in the UK in 2009.

## 6.16 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The University's Strategic Plan identifies one of its key enablers to achieving its strategic aims is the quality, commitment and capability of its employees. It is necessary therefore to ensure that the University is supporting and enhancing the talents and capabilities of its staff. To do this, Bangor University is developing an Organisational Development Strategy<sup>119</sup> with the aim of defining the various organisational development (OD) interventions that will support the University's Strategic Plan.

To ensure that future developments are focused on achieving the University's strategy, early 2012 will see the launch a major staff survey. This survey will invite views from all staff on a range of issues which will enable the University to benchmark its impact in areas such as academic leadership, internal communications and training and development.

### SUMMARY

#### Strengths:

- The existence of the Campus Unions Forum and Staff Forum for consultation purposes.
- The Teaching Fellowships Scheme, which rewards excellent teaching, including nominations by students.
- The Leadership Programme from 2008 targetted potential academic leaders – a number of whom have subsequently become Heads of School, Heads of College and other senior managers.
- The tuition and support offered to staff who wish to learn Welsh or improve their fluency.

#### Future Developments:

- The introduction of more detailed processes for the appointment of part-time and occasional teaching staff, to assure quality and cost efficiency (by September 2012).
- The development of a system to monitor the value and effectiveness of peer observation (by September 2012).

**SECTION 7**

**CONCLUSION**

The University has approached the Institutional Review as an opportunity for rigorous self-appraisal of our efforts to manage and enhance the academic quality and standards of our awards. In this document, the University has attempted to summarise the outcome of our own review process.

The University does not claim perfection in its procedures and systems, and we feel we have endeavoured not to overplay positive features when we see them. The University does believe, however, that its review demonstrates some strengths, and also the capacity to identify issues which require further development and to address them purposefully.

## REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

*(These will be available electronically)*

### SECTION 1 BACKGROUND, HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

| Ref | Title                      |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 1   | Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015 |
| 2   | Executive Membership List  |
| 3   | 2011 Task Group Review     |

### SECTION 2 SETTING THE STANDARD: THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

| Ref | Title  |
|-----|--|
| 4   | Membership and Terms of Reference of Teaching and Learning Task Group  |
| 5   | Membership and Terms of Reference of QA&V Task Group   |
| 6   | Membership and Terms of Reference of External Partnerships Scrutiny Group  |
| 7   | Membership and Terms of Reference of Institutional Review Group  |
| 8   | Learning and Teaching and Widening Access Strategy   |
| 9   | The Quality Enhancement Strategy 2007-2011   |
| 10  | Welsh Medium Student Statistics  |
| 11  | University Admissions Policy   |
| 12  | Appendix A to Admissions Policy Executive Recruitment and Admissions Group Terms of Reference                                |
| 13  | Appendix B to Admissions Policy: Sample Statistical report on admissions   |
| 14  | Code of Practice for Recruitment and Admissions  |
| 15  | Widening Access Strategy 2011/12 – 2013/14   |
| 16  | Rules and Procedures and Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students on Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes |
| 18  | Categorical Marking paper to Senate & Minutes Senate October 2009  |
| 19  | Minutes Senate Regulations Committee 25 May 2010   |
| 20  | Student Discipline Ordinance   |
| 21  | Unfair Practice – information provided to students to prevent unfair practice  |
| 22  | Code of Practice for Plagiarism  |
| 23  | Unfair Practice Procedure  |

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| 24 | Terms of Reference Teaching Facilities Group   |
| 25 | International Education Strategy   |
| 26 | Minutes Executive October 2011 strategic decision to engage in international partnership |
| 27 | University Regulations   |

### **SECTION 3 ASSURING QUALITY AND STANDARDS: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**

| <b>Ref</b> | <b>Title</b>   |
|------------|--|
| 28         | Code of Practice for Programme Approval, Monitoring and Review             |
| 29         | Executive Minutes approving new course for 2011                            |
| 30         | Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision                               |
| 31         | Validation Manual  |
| 32         | QA1 and QA2 Forms  |
| 33         | Institutional ARQUE Report for last 3 years                                |
| 34         | Summary report of QA1 Forms for last three years                           |
| 35         | Cycle of Internal Quality Audits for last 3 years (including current year) |
| 36         | Pro-forma for IQA SED  |
| 37         | Cycle of Re-Validation for last 3 years (including current year)           |
| 38         | List of PSRB's   |
| 39         | Code of Practice for External Examiners                                    |
| 40         | Current list of external examiners<br>(                                    |
| 41         | External Examiners Induction Day Programme                                 |
| 42         | External Examiners report form taught programmes                           |
| 43         | Summary of EE reports presented to QA&V Task Group for last 3 years        |
| 44         | Example of audit trail following External Examiners Comments               |
| 45         | New revised web based form for External Examiners                          |
| 46         | External Examiners Research Degrees Report Form                            |
| 47         | School of Lifelong Learning Student Numbers                                |
| 48         | Validation report for MSc Forestry   |
| 49         | Validation report MBA Chartered Banker (London centre)                     |
| 50         | QA Performance Indicators Set  |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 51 | University Code of Practice for Placement Learning  |
| 52 | Reports form Healthcare professional bodies presented to QA&V Task Group over last 3 years. |
| 53 | Thematic Audit Report of Franchised collaborative provision in 2008/2009                    |
| 54 | Executive Minute re termination of Theology franchised courses                              |
| 55 | Register of Collaborative Provision   |
| 56 | Template for Articulation Agreements  |
| 57 | Validation report for joint PhD SENRGY and CATIE  |
| 58 | Validation report for joint PhD with University of Bologna                                  |
| 59 | Annual Monitoring Form for Franchised programmes  |
| 60 | Validation report for 23 degrees at Coleg Llandrillo  |
| 61 | Template for ERASMUS agreements   |
| 62 | University PGT Strategy   |

#### SECTION 4: POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

| Ref | Title  |
|-----|--|
| 63  | Regulation for Postgraduate Research Degrees   |
| 64  | Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards of Research Programmes                    |
| 65  | Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors   |
| 66  | Minutes of Senate Postgraduate Committee which reviewed student supervisory committee reports for last 2 years |
| 67  | Terms of Reference of Research Strategy Task Group   |
| 68  | Terms of Reference of REF Task Group   |
| 69  | Postgraduate Ambassadors Scheme  |
| 70  | List of ADU training for new PhD Supervisors   |
| 71  | List of Directors of Postgraduate Study  |
| 72  | Copy of form used by PhD Supervisory Committee   |
| 73  | Senate Postgraduate Committee minute discussion of summary of PRES   |
| 74  | Appeals procedure for postgraduate study   |
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#### SECTION 5: STUDENT EXPERIENCE & THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

| Ref | Title                                     |
|-----|---|
| 75  | Student Experience & Enhancement Strategy |

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| 76 | Terms of Reference and Minutes of Student Forum   |
| 77 | Senate Minutes October 2011   |
| 78 | Guidance issues to Schools on Course Representatives System   |
| 79 | List of Task Groups which have student representatives as members   |
| 80 | Analysis of NSS results presented to QA&V Task Group and Executive for last two years                       |
| 81 | Minutes of Working Group on Induction and Registration  |
| 82 | Programme of induction event for non-residential students   |
| 83 | Summary of Welcome Week student survey for last 2 years<br>2009/2010 survey                                 |
| 84 | Summary of Peer Guide Student Survey for last 2 years   |
| 85 | Code of Practice for Pastoral Care  |
| 86 | Bangor Employability Award  |
| 87 | Terms of Reference of Hardship committee  |
| 88 | Bangor University Code for Shared Student Housing in the Private Rented Sector                              |
| 89 | Bangor Miles Dyslexia Unit  |
| 90 | Dyslexic Students at Bangor Publication   |
| 91 | Sports Strategy   |
| 92 | Music at Bangor   |
| 93 | Stepping Stones Cultural Programme  |
| 94 | Terms of Reference and Minutes of Library Task Group<br>Terms of Reference and Minutes of the IT Task Group |
| 95 | Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures   |

## SECTION 6: ACADEMIC STAFF: QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS & DEVELOPMENT

| Ref | Title   |
|-----|---|
| 96  | Minutes of Staff Forum  |
| 97  | Minutes of Campus Union Forum   |
| 98  | Summary of review of criteria for the Promotion to a Readership or Personal Chair |
| 99  | Code of Practice for Staff Appointments in Accordance with the Language Scheme    |
| 100 | Procedures for advancement form Lecturer Grade 7 to Lecturer Grade 8              |
| 101 | Promotions and Re-grading Policy & Procedures                                     |
| 102 | Procedure for promotion to Senior Lecturer  |

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| 103 | Teaching Fellowships Scheme Nomination Forms          |
| 104 | Award for Excellence Scheme and Nomination Forms      |
| 105 | Performance Development Review                        |
| 106 | Women's' Universities Mentoring Scheme                |
| 107 | Welsh Language Development and Training Opportunities |
| 108 | Map and Compasses Programme                           |
| 109 | Teaching in Higher Education qualification            |
| 110 | Professional Development Workshops                    |
| 111 | Researcher Development                                |
| 112 | Peer Observation Paperwork and forms                  |
| 113 | Leadership Programme                                  |
| 114 | University's Equality and Diversity Policy            |
| 115 | Family Support Framework                              |
| 116 | Staff Counselling Service                             |
| 117 | Staff Grievance Frameworks                            |
| 118 | Health and Well-being                                 |
| 119 | Organisational Development Strategy                   |