



Quality Enhancement Review of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Outcome Report

May 2022

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This report is published in both English and Welsh.

About the Quality Enhancement Review method

The QAA website explains the method for [Quality Enhancement Review \(QER\)](#) and has links to the QER handbook and other informative documents.¹ For 2021-22, the scope of QERs focused on quality assurance in line with HEFCW's changes to external quality assurance requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, QAA published an addendum to accompany the QER handbook which explains the adaptations to the method delivery. For 2021-22, providers have the opportunity to engage with QAA separately on quality enhancement. You can also find more information about the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#).²

About this review

This is the Outcome Report of the QER conducted by QAA at Grŵp Llandrillo Menai. The Review Visit took place online on 9-10 May 2022. The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers:

- Ms Lesley Davis (Reviewer)
- Dr Christine Jones (Reviewer)
- Dr Harry Williams (Student Reviewer).

QAA reviews are evidence-based processes. Review judgements result from the documents review teams see, the meetings they hold, and drawing upon their experience as peer reviewers and student reviewers.

In this report, and based on the information presented, the QER team makes judgements on:

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

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

The overarching judgement for this report can be found on page 3, followed by any commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

A more detailed [Technical Report](#) will be available for this review³ and will set out the team's findings under each heading in the QER: Wales method.

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

² About QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us

³ Technical Report: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/quality-assurance-reports/Gr-p-Llandrillo-Menai

About Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai (the Grŵp; GLIM) was founded in April 2012 following the merger of three successful colleges spread over a wide area of North Wales. The original colleges were Coleg Llandrillo (CLI), Coleg Menai (CM) and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor (CMD). These are preserved as member colleges, with the addition of Busnes@ (GLIM). The Grŵp is one of the largest further education (FE) providers of higher education (HE) programmes in Wales and one of only three colleges in Wales with Direct Funding status, which enables direct access to student fee income. The provision is validated by Bangor University (BU) as part of a well-developed strategic partnership. Pearson Edexcel validates HNC/D in General Engineering and an HNC in Performing Arts.

GLIM's HE provision aligns with the current strategic plan of the organisation Gwella Dyfodol Pobl, which runs up to 2024. The HE plan supports the achievement of all three strategic aims, but there is a particular focus on Strategic Aim 2 - 'To create a highly-skilled workforce to support employers'.

The plan considers Welsh Government strategic priorities captured in: The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; and Working Together to Reach Net-Zero Alignment - with regional skills priorities as essential for any future development of HE. The priorities are identified as: Energy & Environment; Construction; Advanced Manufacturing; Creative & Digital; Tourism & Hospitality; Health & Care; Food & Farming; and Financial & Professional.

Strategically, the GLIM Board has considered the priorities for the Grŵp's HE provision and has identified several key areas for development including: supporting regional economic recovery and growth; widening participation; embedded sustainability and digitalisation; further development of Level 4 and 5 vocational HE pathways; excellent strategic HE partnerships; an increase in the amount of Welsh language provision; and an efficient delivery mode.

At the time of the visit, there were 340 full-time, 399 part-time and 184 standalone student enrolments. Student numbers have decreased for both full-time (28%) and part-time (9%) provision since 2019-20 with a 52% decrease in standalone enrolments in 2021-22. There are 1533 unique employees. 581 have lecturing as their main role - of these, 488 are permanent with 292 working as full-time lecturers and 196 on non-full-time permanent contracts. There are 93 staff on temporary contracts, with five of those on full-time hours.

The Grŵp has previously had two QAA reviews. In 2013, it underwent a Foundation Degree Review, which resulted in recommendations around employer engagement, workplace learning, study skills and assessment turnaround. Good practice was also identified regarding the development of the lead tutor role. In 2016, the Grŵp underwent a Quality Enhancement Review: Wales, and received four recommendations relating to the student representative system, mechanisms to inform students of the outcomes of institutional and module-level surveys, timing and scheduling of assessments, and a procedure for periodic review of Pearson Edexcel provision with appropriate training for staff on panels and in programme teams. Good practice was also identified regarding: support for students; the use of external examiner reports; effective partnerships with employers; the effectiveness of the HE Quality and Academic Standards Group; and the online tracking system. Both reviews had positive outcomes overall. The action plans from both reviews have been addressed successfully.

GLIM carried out a Periodic Review of its Pearson provision in December 2017 and identified five areas of good practice including: the excellent relationship between staff and students; good links with industry; meeting local needs through the provision of General

Engineering programmes; support provided to students; and responses to external verifiers. There were a number of Areas for Development (Recommendations) around recruitment, marketing, promotion of information for students, planning of assessments, feedback, resources, curriculum planning and delivery, use of GLIM policies and procedures, assessment methods, CPD and HND approval. Overall, this was a positive outcome and the action plan has been addressed successfully.

Bangor University recognised GLIM as a trusted partner and introduced a new validation process in 2018-19. There has been an increase in bilingual provision across the Grŵp overall, with specific developments in Health and Social Care. The most significant change since the last QAA Review has been the Grŵp response to COVID-19 in order to continue effective provision for learners. Hybrid teaching was developed rapidly and has been welcomed by both staff and students. Teaching observations were also changed to recognise the development of hybrid teaching and a new 'Professional Discussion' was introduced as part of teaching observations.

Judgements about Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

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

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

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

Commendations

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

- The breadth and depth of student support services available at every campus and for all students, that enables their academic, personal and professional development.
- The comprehensive teaching and learning facilities available to students including the extensive use of technology to support delivery.
- The Grŵp's strategic approach to the online and distance-learning provision that ensures an inclusive student learning experience.
- The inclusion of employers and other external subject experts within the design and delivery of programmes that effectively enhances vocational experience and progression for students.

Affirmations

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

- The steps taken to further engage the diverse student body that enables the Grŵp to work in partnership with students and to enhance the student learning experience.

- The actions being taken with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to increase higher education Welsh medium vocational opportunities across the region.
- The developments being undertaken to ensure a linear, streamlined higher education admissions process through the role of the Higher Education Admissions and Careers Officer.

Recommendations

The QER makes the following recommendation.

- Formalise and implement appropriate training, for established academic staff, in the Grŵp's quality processes to ensure they are applied in a consistent manner.

Further information

A more detailed [Technical Report](#) is also available for this review. The Technical Report sets out the team's findings under each heading in the QER method.

This review and its findings relate to the provider as a whole and do not supply information about individual programmes of study or subjects. For further information about those, contact the provider or visit its website.

Further information about QAA and QER can be found on the [QAA website](#).

QAA2671 - R13107 - Jul 22

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