Chapter 1

Institutional Context

1. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

This Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) is designed to provide guidance and act as a source of reference for the regulations and principles upon which the University's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms are based.

The AQH covers a broad range of areas, including the academic regulatory framework, the committee structure and quality assurance and enhancement systems. The regulations and principles outlined within the AQH apply to all academic activities. The AQH also refers to a number of policies and appendices which can be accessed via the University's website.

The AQH is reviewed and updated regularly and in response to changing circumstances and experiences. Advice and information on the regulations and principles within the AQH can be obtained from the Academic Office.

The AQH and its constituent policies and procedures are consistent with the indicators for good practice outlined in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* published by QAA, which is divided into three parts:

1. **Expectations** which express the outcomes higher education providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision.

2. **Practices** representing effective ways of working that underpin the delivery of the expectations and will deliver positive outcomes for students.

3. **Advice and guidance** which help providers to develop and maintain effective quality assurance practices.

Full details of the *UK Quality Code* can be found at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

The University is working towards full governance and administrative integration with the University of Wales (UW). UW will continue to meet its obligations to students who are registered on programmes of study leading to UW awards, and to the collaborative centres and other institutions where the students are enrolled. Such programmes will continue to be managed in accordance with the academic regulations and quality assurance procedures of UW, which are published separately and are available from the University Registry in Cardiff.

1.2 Background

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) is Wales's oldest Royal Chartered University. The University has multi-disciplinary campuses and learning centres in Birmingham, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Lampeter, London, Swansea, and other outreach centres in Wales.

The UWTSD Group is a multi-institutional collaborative venture owned and governed by the Royal Chartered University. Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion are constituent colleges within the UWTSD Group. The UWTSD Group aims to deliver clear, tangible benefits for learners, employers, industry and communities by offering a new integrated approach from entry level to post-doctoral research.

1.3 Mission and Vision

The University's mission is:

Transforming Education; Transforming Lives.

The University's vision is to be a University for Wales, with a commitment to the well-being and heritage of the nation at the heart of all that it does. Central to the vision is the promotion and embedding of a dual sector educational system which educates learners of all ages and backgrounds, and stimulates economic development in the region, across Wales and beyond.

1.4 Values

Through its activities the University promotes:

Excellent teaching informed by scholarship and professional practice, and *applied research* that influences knowledge and policy in Wales and beyond.

Inclusivity, by removing barriers to participation and supporting people from all backgrounds and circumstances to fulfil their potential.

Employability and creativity, by offering educational programmes that develop entrepreneurial and creative skills, enabling learners to have the best opportunities to gain employment and to contribute to the prosperity of their communities.

Collaboration through strategic relationships, working with others to provide educational and commercial opportunities and to ensure that Wales is connected to the wider world.

Sustainable development, by behaving in a way which ensures that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and by systematically embedding this principle in our approach to teaching and learning.

The concept of global citizenship, through the development of multi-national activities and opportunities for our learners, staff and partners.

Wales and its distinctiveness, through embedding the goals of the *Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act* in all of our activities, and by celebrating the vibrant culture, heritage and language of Wales.

1.5 Strategic Priorities

The University has identified four strategic priorities for 2017-2022:

Strategic Priority 1:   Putting Learners First
Strategic Priority 2:   Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship and Applied Research
Strategic Priority 3:   Creation of Opportunities through Partnerships
Strategic Priority 4:   A University for Wales

Further information about the strategic priorities is published in the University's *Strategic Plan 2017-2022*.

1.6 The Institutes

The University is divided into four Institutes as shown below:

Institute of Education and Humanities
Institute of Inner City Learning

Institute of Management and Health
Wales Institute of Science and Art

Institutes offer clusters of cognate academic programmes. Details of the composition of the Institutes, and the programmes they provide, are available on the University's website. The Institutes and the clusters within them may carry other names for branding purposes.

The Institutes have formal programme links with the constituent colleges in the UWTSD Group and with the University's collaborative partner institutions through our collaborative partnership framework as outlined in Chapter 9 of the AQH. Details of the latter are provided on the University's website.

1.7   Institute Quality Structures

The organisational structure of each Institute's quality structures depends upon a number of factors including the size of the Institute, its campus locations, and the range and nature of its provision and activities.

Each Institute is led by a Dean supported by Assistant Dean(s), one of whom normally has a responsibility for quality. Where there are a large number of partnerships linked to an Institute, an Assistant Dean normally has responsibility for oversight of partnerships within the Institute. This group is in turn supported by the Academic Directors and programme managers who coordinate the programme clusters and other thematic areas within the Institute.

Each Institute has an Institute Board which has oversight of quality and enhancement within the Institute and is chaired by the Dean and reports to the Senate. The terms of reference and membership of Institute Boards are published in Chapter 2. In addition, Academic Disciplines have Academic Discipline Boards which report to the Institute Board (see terms of reference in Appendix IC1).

Within the overall parameters set by UWTSD, Institutes take an individual approach to the management of the quality of the student learning experience and the academic standards of provision and establish their own sub-committees. Within each Institute, the Dean is responsible for ensuring that the organisational structure is appropriate to secure compliance with academic and other regulatory requirements, to meet the University's expectations with respect to quality assurance and enhancement, and to liaise effectively with relevant academic and professional services units to achieve this.

Membership of the Institute consists of the Vice-Chancellor (ex-officio), the Dean and all members of the academic and professional services staff assigned to or formally associated with the Institute.

The Institutes work closely with the Provosts, who carry responsibility for the University's individual campuses. The Institutes also work closely with the Collaborative Partnerships Office in relation to partners.

1.8   Central Quality Structures

The key professional units in relation to the oversight of quality assurance and enhancement are the Academic Office for UWTSD programmes and the Collaborative Partnerships Office for collaborative provision reporting at a senior level to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and key committees.

1.9   Academic Governance

The University's governing body, the Council, submits an annual assurance statement to HEFCW in relation to academic quality. In order to assist Council, Senate is required to confirm annually to Council that it has discharged its responsibilities, and in particular that:

- the standards of the University's awards have been appropriately set and maintained, and reports on degree outcomes and academic integrity have been submitted to Council as appropriate;
- there has been continuing and focused attention on improving the student academic experience and student outcomes, using methodologies that are robust and appropriate;
- there has been appropriate continuing dialogue between the University and the SU, including formal annual dialogue in respect of the Annual Student Statement;
- the Student Charter and the relationship agreement between the University and the SU have been reviewed and presented to Council within the past year;
- student survey outcomes have been scrutinised and action plans have been put in place and implemented, in partnership with the student body, to address the issues raised.