

Student Engagement in Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy and Framework			
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I have carried out an equality impact assessment screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.			✓
I have considered the impact of the Policy on the Welsh language and Welsh language provision within the University.			✓

# The Student Engagement in Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy and Framework

## Context

The Student Engagement in Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy and Framework is intended to apply to all students studying for a Wrexham Glyndwr University (WGU) award, including those students studying at one of WGU's partner providers based in the UK and overseas, and online. Some specific student engagement activities may only apply to students studying at WGU's own campuses, but equivalent opportunities will be made available for partner and online students.

## Part 1: Student Engagement in Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy

### 1. Introduction / Purpose

**1.1** Engaging students as partners is fundamental to the ethos of WGU. The University's Vision and Strategy to 2025 and the Strategy for Supporting Student Learning and Achievement (SSSLA) outline WGU's priority to *work with students as partners to develop a culturally embedded approach to student engagement*. It is the University's view that we work more effectively together with our students and WGU is committed to putting students at the heart of what we do.

**1.2** This Policy outlines how WGU supports and enables students to have the opportunity to engage with and participate in quality assurance and enhancement activities and provide feedback on their student learning experience. The operational detail is contained in Part Two - Framework for Student Engagement which will be updated on a regular basis to ensure effective implementation.

**1.3** The policy has been developed jointly by the University and the Students' Union, with valued input from student representatives on Student Council.

**1.4** In the development of this policy, the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code [Advice and Guidance on Student Engagement](#), has been considered and WGU is committed to:

*"the meaningful participation of students in quality assurance and enhancement processes, helping improve their educational experience as well as benefiting the wider student body, provider and sector."*

### 2. Scope

**2.1** The policy and framework are intended to apply to all students and will be regularly reviewed by WGU, student representatives, and the Students' Union. The Policy applies irrespective of level and mode of study. This includes undergraduate and postgraduate students; taught and research students; full-time and part-time students, including those involved in credit-bearing continuing professional development; and campus-based, work-based and online learning students. It includes UK, European and international students, irrespective of funding.

### **3. Definition of Student Engagement**

- 3.1** WGU defines student engagement as the process of taking deliberate and positive steps to empower and involve all students, in partnership with staff and each other, to shape their student learning experience. This includes individually (e.g. via surveys) and collectively (e.g. via student focus groups) and is underpinned by a commitment to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or location, have a meaningful ability to contribute with the purpose of assuring and improving the student learning experience for both current and future cohorts.
- 3.2** The student perspective and voice are critical to the quality of higher education, highlighting good practice and areas where enhancements could be made to the benefit of all. The University views the Students' Union as the collective voice of students irrespective of location of study.
- 3.3** Students studying at WGU campuses have a system of personal tutors (with an equivalent system for online students) and the informal and formal aspects of student representation, alongside a supportive approach to learning and teaching, promote a culture where students' views are welcomed at all levels; module, programme, faculty and university. The University is committed to communicating to students when and how their feedback has been acted upon, and if change is not possible, the reasons why.
- 3.4** Student studying at partner providers also have systems in place to provide informal and formal aspects of student representation to promote a culture where students' views are welcomed at all levels. Partner providers are committed to communicating to students when and how their feedback has been acted upon, and if change is not possible, the reasons why.

### **4. Opportunities for Student Engagement**

- 4.1** There are many ways in which students can share views, feedback, ideas and be involved in decision making to inform the quality assurance and enhancement of the student educational experience. The list below outlines some examples of the opportunities for students to participate on an individual and collective basis:
- Stand for nomination as a course or Faculty representative
  - Participate as a student representative on University committees
  - Stand for nomination in the Students' Union elections to become an officer
  - Engage in feedback mechanisms such as internal and external surveys
  - Participate in working/project/focus groups on specific issues
  - Attend Student Voice Forums to share feedback, views and ideas
  - Engage in audits and institutional inspections
  - Share feedback and ideas via an anonymous online feedback system
  - Participate in periodic reviews when programmes of study are reviewed
  - Participate in validation panels when new programmes of study are developed
  - Talk informally to lecturers, personal tutors, student reps, SU Officers and professional support staff

### **5. Benefits of Engagement for Students and WGU**

- 5.1** Student engagement is important to continuously develop the quality of learning, teaching and the support environment, highlighting areas of good practice and where enhancements could be made.

### **Benefits to Students**

- Enables students to shape, improve and enhance the learning, teaching and overall student experience, for current students and those who will study in the future.
- Students develop transferable key skills (like engaging with complex ideas, oral communication, decision-making and working in teams), enhance their CV and increase their employability skills
- Students at the heart of University decision making processes, inform change and enhancement
- Enables students to be partners in their education
- Participation can contribute towards an advocacy module – an extra 20 credits.

### **Benefits to the University**

- The student perspective is essential to identify what works well and areas that can be improved.
- Ensures that students are at the heart of any decision-making process
- Improves the relevance, structure and delivery of WGU programmes and enhances the learning opportunities
- Staff and students work in partnership to create solutions, creating a community of partnership working

**5.2** In seeking student views Wrexham Glyndŵr Students' Union (WGSU) and the University aims to be accessible, supportive, innovative and ambitious.

## **6. Training and Support**

**6.1** Training for staff regarding student engagement processes is done collaboratively between WGU and the Students' Union. Training and support are offered throughout the academic year through a number of ways, for example:

- **Course Rep Handbook:** The Students' Union have a designated handbook with guidance on the Course Representative System and provide training for the role, including online training.
- **Annual course rep conference:** Delivered by the Students' Union on the Course Representative System, online feedback systems, Student Voice Forums and other new initiatives
- **Training for SVF chairs:** Delivered by the Student Administration team, who maintain a central record of all members of staff trained as SVF chairs
- **Training for student reviewers on validation panels:** Delivered by the Quality team
- **Training for student reps on committees:** Delivered by the Students' Union and committee secretaries

## **7. Recognition of Student Contribution**

**7.1** WGU and the Students' Union is committed to recognising the value of the engagement of students and ensuring that students feel rewarded for their involvement.

There are a number of ways which students can be recognised for their contributions, such as completing an Advocacy module, receiving an Annual Students' Union Award and reimbursement for taking part in University activities, e.g. attendance at Faculty Boards and validation events.

**End of policy**

## Part Two: The Framework for Student Engagement

Student Council determined the model outlined below to outline the opportunities for students to participate and contribute views, feedback and shape learning, teaching and student experience on a module, programme, faculty and University level.

### Module Level

#### The Student Evaluation of Module Survey (SEMs)

Every student has the opportunity to feedback anonymously at a module level via the completion of a short module evaluation questionnaire (SEM). SEM surveys are completed online and designed to be completed early in a module and again at the end of a module. The survey asks questions about the teaching and assessment of the module, resources and the general learning experience. This is valuable feedback as it allows academic teams to be able to check students' understanding of the delivery schedule and assessment criteria. Once the survey is completed, the academic team have instant analysis – *on an anonymous basis*. After the results are received, course teams open up the online SEMs in a session with the students and discuss the feedback and discuss any common issues.

#### What happens to the information?

Associate Deans of Faculties monitor SEM uptake and Programme Leaders report on the outcome of the SEM surveys as part of their annual programme monitoring reports. These annual reports review what has worked well on the programme and what actions can be taken to address any common points of dissatisfaction. The feedback is then considered at Faculty Boards so that any changes that are required can be discussed and the Dean of Faculty is aware.

### Programme Level

#### Online Feedback Tool<sup>1</sup>

An online feedback tool for students and course reps has been developed by the Students' Union. The tool captures feedback which is sent immediately to the relevant individuals / departments. All staff should encourage students to use this tool in order to identify issues as they occur. *Students can use this online feedback tool anonymously or can give contact details to receive a response.*

**Programme Feedback** (e.g. module experience, teaching, assessment, feedback, induction, programme organisation and management, NSS results, personal tutoring etc)

If a student uses the online feedback tool to give feedback about their programme, this is sent directly to the Course Representative for that programme to be raised and addressed via the Student Voice Forum (SVF). Course Representatives can also use the tool when liaising with students as a way to log feedback. If course reps are unable to attend an SVF, the Students' Union will present the feedback.

**Operational Feedback** (e.g. IT, Study Skills Support, Catering, Library, Campus and Estates, Sports Centre etc)

The online feedback tool is also intended to capture feedback about operational issues. For operational matters brought up at Student Voice Forums, staff are encouraged to ask students to use the online feedback tool in order to receive a direct response. Through the online system, students are encouraged to contact the Students' Union if they do not receive a response or are not happy with their response.

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<sup>1</sup> This applies to students on WGU campuses only. SVFs will be the mechanism for feedback for partner students

Feedback features in operational departments' monitoring and evaluation processes. Changes as a direct result of this feedback feature on SVF agendas.

### **Course Representative System**

The course representative system, developed by WGSU in partnership with WGU, ensures that every student is represented and/or has the opportunity to feedback at programme level. Course reps play a key role in gathering the views of students which can influence improvements at programme and University level and are supported by training. For course representatives located at partner providers on-line training is provided.

The number of course representatives elected varies depending on the size of the cohort. The decision of how many course representatives should be elected must be made by the student body.

#### **Electing Course Reps**

- Course reps must be democratically elected by students and must not be selected by members of staff.
- WGSU will facilitate elections
- Once course representatives are elected, their contact details should be sent to [coursereps@glyndwr.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@glyndwr.ac.uk) before or on the date specified by WGSU.
- Returning students will have the opportunity to elect their course representative for the following year at the end of the academic year. Again, contact details of those reps should be sent to [coursereps@glyndwr.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@glyndwr.ac.uk) before or on the date specified by WGSU.
- Programme Leaders must ensure that the details of the elected course rep are publicised on the course Moodle page.

For more information about the online feedback platform, course rep system and SVFs, contact the WGSU Student Voice Co-ordinator at: [katie.taffinder@glyndwr.ac.uk](mailto:katie.taffinder@glyndwr.ac.uk)

### **Training and Support for Course Reps**

WGSU manages the course rep database and is responsible for providing training to course reps. A number of training sessions are held across all WGU campuses. Emphasis is placed on course reps attending the in-person sessions, however there is an opportunity for reps to complete online training. The details of this are made available on WGSU's website. In addition, there is an opportunity for course reps based at WGU campuses to receive further training at WGSU's annual Course Rep Conference. Support for all course reps during the year is provided by WGSU and Programme Leaders.

Further training is offered to course reps based at WGU campuses through the delivery of an extra 20 credit module in Advocacy. This award-winning module enhances students' skills during their time in their role and is based around WGU's course representative system.

### **Responsibilities within the Course Representative System**

#### **Course Reps**

- Attend course rep training delivered by WGSU or undertake online training
- Ensure regular communication with other students to gather feedback
- Encourage other students to use the online feedback platform
- Attend Student Voice Forums (SVFs) and share the feedback gathered, including online feedback
- To ensure the feedback cycle is closed and students are aware of any outcomes of SVFs
- Talk to staff about what works well, what might need changing and ideas relating to your course
- Work in partnership with the programme team to create solutions and share ideas to enhance the student experience

- Where possible to liaise with and feedback to the Faculty Rep

## **WGSU/WGU**

- Ensure course rep elections take place
- Ensure students are aware of the course representative system and who their course representative/s are. This includes promoting other mechanisms for feedback such as online
- Ensure the dates, times & venues of SVF meetings are published at the beginning of the academic year and that students are made aware of them
- Work in partnership with course representatives to act on feedback and in informing students of any outcomes from SVFs and ensuring that the feedback cycle is closed

## **Student Voice Forums (SVFs)**

Student Voice Forums are normally held once a semester and provide opportunities for:

- Students to feedback to staff about their programme and overall student experience
- Reviewing the current programme(s) to inform change and enhancement
- Students to feed 'the Student Voice' into the university's strategic decision-making

## **Membership of SVFs**

- All course representatives associated with the course
- Programme and Module leaders associated with the course
- Every student can attend SVFs and it is the responsibility of Programme Leaders and course representatives to publicise the details of the meetings through Moodle, or alternative mechanisms at partner delivery sites
- The Faculty Dean and Associate Deans can attend, or equivalent roles at partner delivery sites
- A member of the Students' Union is invited to attend to support course representatives, this only applies to SVF meetings held at Wrexham Glyndŵr University campuses

The meeting is never chaired by anyone from the programme team – this is to ensure independence. For partner providers the meeting should be chaired by the WGU designated Academic Link, either in person or remotely.

SVFs should have clear reporting lines and a transparent system to identify relevant staff members who are responsible for progressing any actions and ensuring the student body are made aware of any outcomes.

## **Reporting and Monitoring Student Feedback from SVFs**

The Students' Union are responsible for identifying any actions from SVFs that have not been closed down and any issues that have been raised generally. These will be reported to the relevant committees (Faculty Boards and Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC), or in the case of partner students, the Academic Partnerships Committee (APC)). A Student Voice report is also received by Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

## **Faculty Level**

There is student representation, which takes into account feedback received from partner sites, at numerous levels of the Academic Faculties which includes:

- Student representation on Faculty Boards (1 Undergraduate student, 1 Postgraduate taught student and the Faculty rep)
- Student representation on Senior Management Team Meetings (Faculty Rep)
- Course Representatives

## **Faculty Rep**

Each Academic Faculty has an overarching Faculty Rep elected by the student body and supported by the Students' Union. The Faculty Rep sits on the Students' Union Council and is the link between the Faculty and the Students' Union. The Faculty Rep has the opportunity to liaise with Wrexham Glyndŵr University campus Course Reps through the annual Course Rep Conference and gather feedback from online feedback data available to them from the Students' Union. Feedback given will be discussed at Faculty Boards and other Senior Management Team Meetings. Faculty reps have an important role in gathering the views of the wider student population, including considering views received from students located at partner sites.

## **Faculty Boards**

Faculty Boards deal specifically with academic quality and standards matters, with a reporting line to Academic Board via the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee and Academic Partnerships Committee. Faculty Boards have Student Representatives in their membership and meet three times per year (as a minimum). All efforts should be made to avoid scheduling Faculty Boards during the assessment board period.

The Faculty Board will typically discuss issues such as:

- Student Voice Forums (SVF) conducted across all sites of delivery including closing down any actions and ensuring students are informed of actions taken as a result of the SVF meeting(s)
- Curriculum developments, programme developments including any collaborative delivery

It is important that students are invited to participate in Faculty Boards, and Faculty Deans ensure student representation is secured. It is recommended that a mix of undergraduate, postgraduate taught, full time and part time students are represented where practicable, with not more than 3 or 4 students attending each meeting. Students attending Faculty Boards are entitled to claim a nominal attendance/expense allowance for each meeting.

## **University Level**

### **Wrexham Glyndwr Students' Union (WGSU)**

The University is committed to working in partnership with WGSU to ensure there is effective student representation across the institution and at partner providers. There are a number of ways in which students can share feedback and shape the way in which their Students' Union operates.

Student Council is a WGSU Committee that sets Union policy and holds the sabbatical officers (President and Vice-President) to account. The membership consists of elected part-time campaign officers. These officers are current students who undertake the role on a voluntary basis. They debate and vote on policy which shapes the work of the sabbatical officers for the academic year. This includes what issues the sabbatical officers should be addressing with the University to improve the student experience. University departments can attend Student Council to gather feedback about their service.

WGSU sabbatical and Campaign officers also gather feedback through a variety of mechanisms that feed into University committees.



## **The Student Charter**

The Student Charter, developed jointly by WGU and WGSU, sets out what the University and students can expect from each other as partners in a learning community. The charter is reviewed every year.

## **Student Representation on University Committees**

WGU is committed to ensuring student representation in the membership of University committees. Students are represented via Students' Union Sabbatical Officers and by Faculty and Course representatives at all level in our committee structure.

Examples of committees on which students are represented include:

- The Board of Governors
- Academic Board
- Learning and Teaching Quality Committee
- Research Committee
- Faculty Boards

Annually the University reviews membership and liaises with the Students' Union to fill any vacant student places available on University committees.

WGSU works to ensure that a diverse range of students are represented on University committees, including undergraduate and postgraduate; full time and part time. Sabbatical officers also contribute to the development of academic policy via membership of working groups and committees.

There are some committees where personal information may be shared, for example academic misconduct hearings or complaint hearings. In these cases, the student voice is represented by the Students' Union Sabbatical Officers, such as the Students' Union President or Vice President.

The University recognises that it can sometimes be challenging for students to speak out in formal committees, particular in the early stages of involvement. The University works in partnership with WGSU to deliver training for students on University committees to ensure students are supported and effective in carrying out the role. The WGSU Student Voice co-ordinator provides ongoing training to the Student Representatives and acts as a key point of contact.

It is required that all matters raised by student representatives at the relevant committee must be given proper consideration and duly minuted. Where an action cannot be implemented, the reasons should be explained and minuted.

## **External Surveys**

### **National Student Survey**

Eligible students can provide feedback via a number of nationally recognised, institution-wide surveys including the National Student Survey (NSS) which is for final year undergraduates (excluding partners). The NSS is **independent** of the University and answers remain anonymous. The NSS provides the opportunity to give honest feedback about what it has been like to study at the university. It is an influential source of public information about higher education, and can help shape the future of courses and the university for current and prospective students.

### **Graduate Outcomes Survey**

The Graduate Outcomes survey asks eligible students who have recently gained a qualification at WGU about the work and /or further study they are doing shortly after

graduation. The information is useful to advise current students about the opportunities that might be available to them and to see trends in graduate employment.

The University widely promotes these surveys and opportunities to get engaged.

### **What happens to the information received?**

- The feedback is analysed on a University-wide level and also at Faculty and programme level and is reviewed by Programme Leaders when they prepare their annual programme monitoring report.
- The feedback is discussed at the Board of Governors, the Vice-Chancellor's Board, Academic Board and Learning and Teaching Quality Committee. The aim is to use the data to enhance the student learning experience by identifying great practice and areas for development.
- The data about student views and feedback from national surveys is available to prospective applicants via the [Unistats website](#).

Other internal student surveys may be conducted to gather feedback on specific issues/inform University developments.

### **Engaging in Audits and Institutional Inspection**

WGU is committed to encourage and support student participation in external and internal reviews.

#### **Quality Enhancement Review (QER)**

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) review the standards, quality, and course information published by **all** UK Universities. At least every six years, a University will be reviewed by the QAA to ensure it meets the required expectations, as set out the [UK Quality Code](#). QAA also reviews how well Universities embed initiatives to continually improve the student learning experience (often referred to as 'enhancement'). WGSU will work with the University to identify a lead student representative who will develop a student submission to share students' views and feedback. Students will be asked to meet with the QAA reviewers in person to share their experience and views of being a student at WGU.

### **Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)**

Many Faculties have links with the PSRBs for their subject area, such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council. PSRBs may approve, accredit or recognise relevant University programmes.

PSRBs may be involved in the validation or re-validation of a programme or may attend to review the programme independently and students are often invited to share their views and feedback.

### **Student Reviewers on Validation Panels, Periodic Reviews & Re-validation Panels**

Validation refers to the **scrutiny process which all new programmes go through before being approved**. This is important to ensure that the academic standards and quality of a new programme are suitable and that students will have the best possible opportunity to learn. Periodic review and re-validation refers to when **existing courses are reviewed and re-designed**.

WGSU actively recruits student reviewers, who are full members of the Panel. If it is a periodic review and revalidation, the feedback of students is also captured via NSS results which are reviewed to check what is working well and areas for enhancement. Also, a representative group of current students and recent graduates will meet with the Panel to give their feedback on the course, this includes panel events held at partner delivery sites. The Panel will ask questions for example about topics such as assessment and feedback.

**Responsibilities of Student Reviewers**

- Attend the training session and validation event arranged by the Quality Team
- Review the documentation ahead of the event
- Engage with discussions on the programme under review, particularly with regard to the student experience

If a student is interested in getting involved in validation events email [quality@glyndwr.ac.uk](mailto:quality@glyndwr.ac.uk) for more information.

## Summary of Engagement Methods

Level	Method	Who has the opportunity?	Timing	Purpose	How it happens?	How will students know the outcome of their feedback?
<b>Module</b>	Student Evaluation of Modules (SEMs)	All students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normally week 3 of module delivery</li> <li>End of module</li> </ul>	The SEM survey is the primary tool for getting honest and constructive feedback about the effectiveness of a student's teaching and learning experience at a module level.	It is completely anonymous and completed online. Facilitated by module leader in partnership with course representatives.	After the first SEM, module leader discusses feedback with students. After the end of module SEM, the course rep is given a written summary of the programme team's responses. SEMS are discussed at SVFs to ensure actions are closed down.
<b>Programme</b>	Online feedback tool	Students at WGU campuses	Throughout the year, 24/7	Captures student feedback on academic and operational issues.	It can be anonymous and submitted online. If the feedback relates to academic issues it is sent to the Course Rep. Operational feedback is sent to the relevant department.	<p>Course reps discuss feedback at SVFs.</p> <p>Operational departments will respond directly to the student (where not anonymous)</p>
	Course Reps	All students	<p>Elected at the start of the academic year.</p> <p>Level 5 &amp; 6 reps elected in April for the following academic year</p>	Ensures that every student is represented and/or has the opportunity to feedback at programme level. Course reps play a key role in gathering the views of students which can influence improvements at programme and University level.	Course reps are elected online by their peers. The SU is responsible for training and supporting reps and for holding the database of elected reps.	Course reps consult with their cohort, respond to online feedback and work in partnership with Programme Leaders (including the Academic Link for partner provision) to inform their cohort of SVF outcomes.
	Student Voice Forums	All students	Minimum twice a year	Opportunity for students to give feedback to the programme team on the programme of study, their student experience & help to inform positive change	Arranged by the Student Administration team in conjunction with each programme team.	Action minutes are made available online. WGSU identify any actions from SVFs that have not been closed down, which are reported to relevant committees
<b>Faculty</b>	Faculty Rep	Student representatives with experience	Elected at the start of the academic year.	The Faculty Rep sits on the Students' Union Council and Faculty Board and is the link between the Faculty and the SU. The Faculty Rep liaises with Course Reps and gather feedback, including online feedback data.	Faculty reps nominate themselves and are elected by students within their faculty (the election process is facilitated by the Students' Union).	Feedback given will be discussed at Faculty Boards and other Senior Management Team Meetings. Faculty reps have an important role in gathering the views of the wider student population.

<b>University</b>	The Student Charter	All students	Revised annually	Sets out what the University and students can expect from each other as partners in a learning community.	Developed jointly by WGU and the Students' Union.	n/a
	Student Representation on University Committees	The Students' Union President / Vice President / students / faculty reps / course reps	Throughout the year	To ensure the student voice features at every level within the University decision making process to embed the ethos of students as partners. Sabbatical officers also contribute to the development of academic policy via membership of working groups and committees.	Elected / recruitment processes  The University works in partnership with the WGSU to deliver training for students on University committees	Feedback is given during the meeting and via the minutes.
	NSS	All eligible final year undergraduates	January – April	Students can feedback their opinions about their course, including what students liked and what could be improved.	The annual NSS is carried out independently. WGU and WGSU actively promote student participation.	Survey results are reviewed and actioned by LTQC and feeds into annual programme monitoring
	Engaging in audits, institutional inspections, PSRB visits, validation events and periodic reviews.	All eligible students	Throughout the year / periodically	During internal and external reviews, students have the opportunity to share their experience and views of being a student at WGU. All validation and periodic review events include a student panel member.	WGU works with WGSU to identify students to participate.  The Quality Team provide guidance and training for student validation panel members	Where possible, students would be advised of an outcome during the course of the event. Where the timescale is longer, students are updated when the outcome of the audit / inspection is known.