

## **WGIR06 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**

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Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol](#) | [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee](#)

[Strategaeth Ryngwladol Llywodraeth Cymru](#) | [Welsh Government's International Strategy](#)

Ymateb gan: Asiantaeth Sicrhau Ansawdd Addysg Uwch (QAA) | Evidence from: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

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### **1. What is your relationship, if any, to the International Strategy?**

QAA is the expert quality body for higher education in Wales and across the UK. We regularly review the quality of higher education provision in Wales, and support the sector to continuously improve its quality. To date, QAA has had no formal relationship to the Welsh International Strategy. However, our work directly supports the competitiveness of the Welsh and UK higher education sectors on the global stage by providing assurance of its world-class quality. QAA also undertakes significant international work to support the capacity building of overseas higher education sectors, reviewing international universities and building relationships (often supported by memoranda of understanding) with education authorities across the globe.

### **2. What are your views on the Welsh Government's International Strategy – what's worked well and any areas for improvement?**

### **3. What are your views on the Welsh Government's priority international relationships for 2022-25?**

### **4. What are your views on the availability of information on the Welsh Government's international activities and delivery of the strategy?**

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**5. In your view, what information on the Welsh Government's international activities should be in the public domain?**

**6. What are your views on how the Welsh Government's international activity is resourced?**

**7. What priorities and priority relationships would you like to see included in the Welsh Government's approach to international relations beyond 2025?**

UK higher education has a strong reputation worldwide. The Welsh higher education sector also enjoys a positive global reputation in its own right. Given the positive global reputation of the Welsh higher education sector, and the value of the higher education sector to the economy as an important export from Wales, higher education should appear prominently in the Welsh international strategy as a mechanism to build international links, support Wales' global nature, and boost the economy.

There are a number of activities across the Welsh higher education sector that facilitate this. The Global Wales programme led by Universities Wales with partners across the sector has been instrumental in supporting Welsh higher education's reputation as a leading destination to study higher education.

The majority of Welsh universities also deliver some form of transnational education, delivering Welsh higher education overseas. QAA runs a scheme to enhance the quality of UK transnational education. All Welsh universities that deliver TNE are part of the scheme, demonstrating their commitment to high quality Welsh transnational education globally.

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and the relationships and activities across it, are integral to supporting Wales' higher education sector. Collaboration across the EHEA builds trust and understanding between member countries. The Bologna Process is the mechanism through which Governments across the EHEA achieve this collaboration. The Welsh, Westminster and Northern Irish governments are signed up to the Bologna Process as a single 'UK' membership, but are recognised as individual nations in the monitoring reports. Scotland has separate membership.

The Bologna Process commitment supports inward and outward mobility of staff and students across the European continent and beyond, making Wales a

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destination of choice for international students worldwide. QAA's position on the European Quality Assurance Register facilitates this. Welsh Government's current intention to become a Governmental member of the European Quality Assurance Register to support the EHEA's work on quality assurance of higher education is a welcome indication of the value that it places on collaboration across the EHEA, and the importance of higher education quality in promoting Welsh higher education worldwide.

**8.** Are there any other matters you would like to draw to the Committee's attention regarding the Welsh Government's international relations?