TEF Year Three provider submission

Our Vision: *"Together, we will transform lives and futures by providing an outstanding academic environment with a balance of excellence between world-class teaching and research, driving impact that is enabled by effective regional and global collaborations."*

Introduction

We continue to build on our distinguished reputation for excellence in learning and teaching, and our **consistently outstanding delivery of an inspirational student experience.** We are one of the UK's most ambitious universities, and are proud to be attracting increasingly talented students and staff. We have listened to our students and staff across the University and together, we have pledged to:

- Respect and value our students as partners.
- Deliver inspirational teaching enhanced and informed by world-class research and professional practice.
- Increase participation from under-represented groups and provide a supportive and enriching learning environment for all of our students to enable their success.
- Support students to achieve the highest personal, academic and employment outcomes by providing exciting opportunities to enhance skills, global knowledge, and cultural agility.

We are a **research-intensive** University with a long-standing commitment to inclusivity, widening access, and social mobility. **We are 26th in the UK for research excellence (REF2014)** and have the highest proportion of young full-time undergraduate students from low participation areas out of all the REF top-30 universities. Through partnership working with schools and further education colleges, we actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds and with differing levels of attainment to provide them with opportunities for academic and personal success. We excel at ensuring positive outcomes for these and all of our other student groups, with **consistent top-20 rankings in UK league tables for graduate level employability or further study.**

Students studying here receive an international, multicultural experience that has a positive impact on their personal development. We achieve this through our extensive international community of staff and students, research and teaching collaboration with other top international universities, the provision of mobility opportunities for our students to **study and work abroad,** and the nature of Swansea as a bilingual Welsh University.

Through partnership with our Students' Union (SUSU), students and staff we have co-created and **delivered a consistent and outstanding student experience that prepares all students for personal and professional success.** We deliver full and part-time provision through our seven Colleges, over three campuses. Supported by our Professional Service Units and four Academies (Swansea Employability Academy (SEA), Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching (SALT), Swansea Academy of Inclusivity and Learner Success (SAILS) and Academi Hywel Teifi), we deliver a consistently outstanding experience for all of our students.

We have embedded our commitment to the achievement of excellence in both teaching and research across the academic community. **Our award-winning mechanisms such as academic Professional Development Reviews (PDR), career pathway developments and promotions pathway support this.** Through these mechanisms we identify good practice, which we then disseminate and embed across the University for the benefit of all. This commitment also directly informs our academic recruitment process.

We take great pride in our **inclusive** approach to teaching, the **outstanding** quality of our academic support at subject, College and University level, and the career enhancing opportunities that we offer. This ensures that **a high proportion of all students, regardless of background or qualifications on entry, continue with their studies and achieve the best possible academic and employment outcomes.**

This document outlines how we have developed, embedded and delivered on these pledges over the last three years and the positive impact this has had on the diversity of our University community, the quality of teaching, our learning environments and the outcomes achieved by our students.

Summary of our performance against core and split metrics

We have delivered continuous improvement in five of the core metrics since TEF2. Our performance remains excellent for the sixth and we have no negative flags. This demonstrates a consistently outstanding student experience at Swansea University:

- A double positive flag in Student Outcomes and Learning Gain.
- A positive flag in Learning Environment.
- Above benchmark performance in Teaching Quality and steady improvement.
- Significantly exceeding the benchmark for Continuation.

The two positively flagged metrics perform significantly above our benchmarks right across the splits, with nine positive flags (including two double positives) for Academic Support and 13 double positive flags for Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study.

For Continuation, we achieved seven positive flags across the splits, most significantly for those students more at risk of withdrawing. We were 0.1% away from the benchmark and we can demonstrate that around 10% of students who withdraw, return to study in subsequent years and therefore this performance is actually more reflective of a third positive flag.

We will demonstrate that our excellent and consistent performance right across the core and split metrics is as a result of planned and considered initiatives designed to provide the very best support and outcomes for all of our students.

Students' Union Voice

As SUSU we value our on-going strong and proactive relationship with the University and aim to play an active role in all processes and activities where we feel a student voice needs to be heard. Our commitment to aid the continued progress of both teaching excellence and the student experience in Swansea is evident from our involvement in all strategic programmes such as STEP4Excellence, curriculum development planning and all SEA events, where our partnership approach has significantly benefited from having Full-time Officers (FTOs) in co-chair positions, as will be discussed later in the document. We believe that Swansea offers a world-class experience thanks to staff constantly evaluating, listening to feedback and adjusting to fit current student needs and expectations in an ever shifting higher education landscape. Our input throughout this document will provide evidence that Swansea gives a unique and satisfying journey for all students welcomed into our community. Relationships between staff and students are strong within both the academic community and between the University and SUSU. This is clearly shown through our mentor system between the Senior Management Team and FTOs, attending regular catch-ups and providing each other with applicable advice.

We respect and value our students as partners

Listening and responding to the views of our students is at the forefront of all that we do. Our strategies and delivery platforms, developed in partnership with our SUSU, students and staff, empower and engender participation in the co-creation of our consistent and outstanding student experience. Students develop skills and have new experiences that positively impact on their future success in employment or further education.

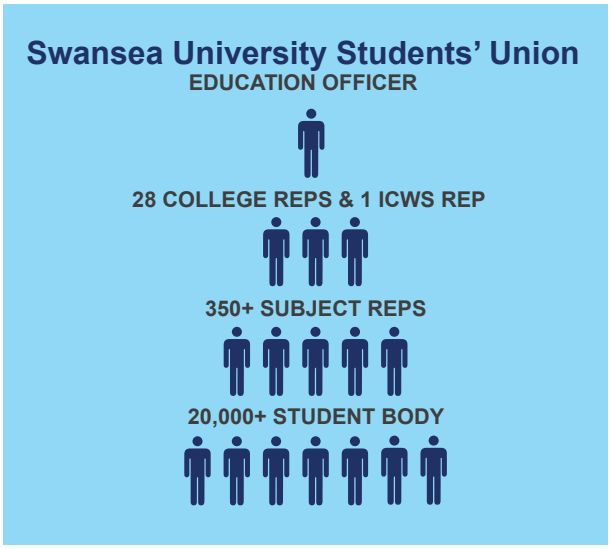
Student Engagement Strategy

Our strategy includes programmes such as STEP4Excellence, which builds on the strong partnership with the SUSU and students in a spirit of **co-creation,** with the SUSU acting as **co-leaders** of themes each year. Areas of focus have included Learning and Teaching, Student Support, Student Engagement, Culture Change, Student Participation and Student Empowerment. Through this programme, we have developed and embedded initiatives to enhance the student experience, which include student exchange, student representatives and leads, Unitu, Together We Changed, growth in academic societies, academic mentoring and a Student Life Network. The positive impact these have had on students is evidenced within this document and we continue with this programme to ensure we are meeting the evolving needs of all of our students.

We were the first University to carry out a UK-based week-long student exchange, emphasising Partnership, Innovation, Collaboration, Networking, Improvement, Creation (PICNIC) as part of the Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) network. **This sector-leading initiative promotes student-centred sharing of best practice** and enabled one of our students to get a 'feel' for how a different institution works and compare with experiences of Swansea University. The student actively shaped the future framework for partnership, providing a unique way of sharing best practice between institutions. The staff and student experience was presented at the RAISE conference, and internally the student has shared this information to inform future initiatives.

Building a network of student representatives and leads

We have supported the SUSU in **significantly increasing the number of student representatives** at both College and subject level, all of whom receive a bespoke training and development programme and take part in the SUSU annual student representative conference. Student representation is now mandatory on all University committees; ensuring **students are active in decision-making at all levels.** The SUSU FTOs meet regularly with the University's Senior Management Team. Other examples of us working together to enhance our University include **students being involved with major University projects and change initiatives** such as the Bay Campus Experience Group (BCEG), Travel Plan Working Group and Sports Strategy Group. Through BCEG, we have worked to ensure the **transition to an additional campus has been a positive experience,** by listening to feedback and working jointly towards enhancements. We provide our students with a range of opportunities to be involved in quality assurance and enhancement through individual student feedback. An example of this is students forming part of the programme approval panels. **Student engagement leads** within every College are key members of academic staff who support the student representatives within their College, chair student-staff forums and ensure student engagement activities are promoted and supported at College level.



Open and connected community

Our embedded Unitu, **a digital student feedback platform** is managed by the

student representatives in Colleges, which enables issues to be resolved quickly and with transparency for students. Complex issues are escalated to student-staff forums or other University committees to ensure a speedy resolution. This has enhanced the student experience by improving access to the teaching timetable and information on staff location and their office hours; increasing the number of computer terminals on the Bay Campus for student use; cleaning public cycling routes between campuses and the introduction of student lockers on both campuses.

We work together with student representatives to develop robust College action plans responding to feedback from module and programme reviews, NSS, our internal Student Experience Survey (SES) and Post-graduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). Actions resulting from student feedback are shared with the wider student body in the form of **'Together We Changed'** messages, providing clarity and re-enforcing the value of student feedback. Students are involved in teaching evaluations through mid and end of module reviews and periodic programme reviews. We highlight to students the numerous ways feedback is provided to enhance their understanding and future development.

Student Voice

As a student, I feel that I was able to work alongside the professionals, Student engagement leads, Full-time Officers and the student body to have a consistent outcome with regards to exploring and improving my student experience through the use of Unitu while studying at Swansea. Unitu has led to a clear path of communication in regards to improvement, solutions to problems and presenting the views of the students.
(Shevani Patel, Business Analytics' student, 2017)

Academic staff have supported the SUSU and wider student body in the growth of our academic societies, emphasising their role in engaging on programme development and student representation, as well as **creating a sense of a learning community** in each subject area. We have built on areas of excellence in order to ensure that students are fully represented in institutional governance and teaching processes. Each College has an embedded **academic society champion,** who are a point of contact for, and support academic society students, demonstrating a mechanism that further **empowers student voice and action.**

Together, staff and students have broken down barriers that traditionally existed between them by working in partnership at a departmental level. Support and encouragement has resulted in jointly organised departmental and society events, where staff and students have created a community approach to the learner environment, including curriculum review, programme design, extracurricular activities and learner spaces. Students and staff now better appreciate the framework in which the department operates, for example, **students have more insight and contribution into departmental research activities.**

Staff and Student Voice

Staff and students in Physics have an enhanced professional relationship, and students are much more willing to approach and engage (in and outside the subject area); staff are also able to understand and address issues and concerns. Since 2014 we as a society have adopted the idea of building a community within Physics, keeping informal, regular feedback at the heart of everything we do. This has allowed us to try a variety of events that have been hugely popular with both staff and students, while allowing us to make everything we do open and accessible to all. In recognition of the substantial progress we have made, the Institute of Physics awarded us Society of the Year in the UK and Ireland in 2017. This is testament to the commitment of all within the department to make the experience in Physics truly exceptional.
(Physics Society Committee)

The impact of this on the students in Physics and their learning is also evident in their NSS results, with continual improvements (2015–2017) in teaching on my course, (86 to 96%), assessment and feedback (61 to 77%), learning resources (85-94%) and overall satisfaction (83 to 97%). High scores were also achieved for the new questions; student voice (85%),

learning opportunities (94%) and learning community (90%).

Students have access to **146 student societies** (ranked 3rd in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards, 2016), with over 3,500 members, 57 of which are academic and employability societies, along with 53 University sports teams with over 4,000 members. We have **cultural venues** on campus and around the City, which provide the **space for staff, students and the community to work together to enrich** the experience for all. We also benefit from an on-campus mosque and a separate multi-faith facility.

Students' Voice

We aim to help students during their time at Swansea University through encouragement from Islamic tradition. ISOC aim to educate, raise awareness and eliminate any misconceptions of our faith amongst students and local residents by holding events such as charity drives, and organising weekly social and sporting events for everyone to come together. By working closely with societies, staff and the Swansea Muslim community, the Islamic Society has become a fundamental part of this University, stimulating a more inclusive and diverse institution.
(Islamic Society Committee)

Student engagement also informs our recruitment of teaching staff with applicants teaching a group of students who are trained in the recruitment process. The students complete an evaluation form, which is taken into account by the recruitment panel, further demonstrating the **value and status we place on the student voice within teaching.**

We deliver inspirational teaching enhanced and informed by world-class research and professional practice

Our commitment to the achievement of excellence in both teaching and research is fully embedded within the academic community. The effective integration of these activities is critical in underpinning the delivery of an inspirational and enriching student experience at Swansea. We are a community united in a common purpose to make a difference to the lives and futures of our students and the wider community, society, and economy. We achieve this by working collaboratively with: students as partners, colleagues in a cross-disciplinary approach to education and research, education partners in other universities, colleges and schools within the UK and globally and partners from other sectors, including government, large companies and their SME supply chains. This approach connects our staff and students to world-leading impactful research and professional practice. This has created a positively challenging environment that inspires our students, heightens the quality and relevance of what we teach, and supports our consistent delivery of outstanding employment outcomes. Leadership in learning and teaching is embedded through our Directors of Learning and Teaching within each College and the Pro-Vice Chancellor (academic).

Excellence in learning and teaching

SALT has supported the transformation of our academic community, raising awareness of innovative teaching and learning practices, driving teaching excellence across the University and improving the student learning experience. All teachers have access to individualised support, collective stimulation and sector-leading development. SALT sponsors and promotes pedagogic research and enhances the profile of education across the University to develop a community of practice. The Academy encourages **teacher engagement** through the annual Learning and Teaching Conference and a rolling programme

of seminars, workshops and events.

The **Post Graduate Certificate (PGCert)** in **Higher Education** programme delivers initial teacher development and CPD opportunities for staff. We have adapted **international best practice** to create an effective Teaching Intensive programme, which integrates pedagogic theory, reflection and talking teaching. Staff are recognised and developed through mentoring and assessment towards HEA Fellowship. CPD provides opportunities for personal learning, delivered around individual preferences and commitments. All academic staff have the opportunity to gain a teaching qualification and up skill through PGCert modules, accessible through various means.

Staff Voice

I found the experience of undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education a highly valuable one in many regards. In the first place, it provided an occasion for me to be more thoughtful about my teaching practice. Additionally, I had opportunities to learn from and with pedagogical experts through the various training events that made up the taught component of the certificate. The certificate has also made me a more effective communicator of teaching practice. Overall, I felt that undertaking the PGCert has enhanced me greatly as an academic and I am grateful for having been afforded the opportunity by Swansea University.
(Matt Wall, Senior Lecturer in Politics)

Peer observation is a core component of teacher development and sustaining teaching excellence. It enables staff to reflect upon and improve their teaching and promotes the identification and sharing of good practice, which is linked to CPD. Our **Open Door (OD) Teaching** (devised with colleagues in Australia) involves selected teachers offering five/six chosen sessions during the year where their colleagues observe the lesson and follow with a group tutorial where the OD teacher explores pedagogic issues from the session. This has generated considerable interest amongst staff and has positively impacted teaching practice.

Our students benefit from exposure to world-leading research throughout their teaching and learning experiences. In the 2014 REF we were ranked 26th in the UK, securing a significant increase in Quality Research funding. We used the funding to **recruit and retain world-leading academics** who share our commitment to excellence in both teaching and research. Our research strategy is for all academic staff to be engaged in research, giving students the **opportunity to learn directly from staff at the forefront of research.** Students on professional programmes undertake **50% of their learning** in practice, and are highly sought after by employers.

Recognising and rewarding excellence

We have a culture of recognising and rewarding both teaching and research excellence. This is fully supported through our award-winning mechanisms such as academic **PDR, career pathway** developments, and the promotions pathway and directly informs our academic recruitment process.

Student module feedback and indicative performance indicators for teaching quality are key features of the PDR discussions and ensure reflection on learning and teaching practices. This provides an opportunity for line managers to signpost staff to **personalised CPD and/or sharing of good practice,** as well as discussing future career opportunities. We set **University KPIs linked to teaching, research and innovation** that are cascaded down to individual academic staff. PDRs take account of these, for which we have a 99% completion rate. 78% of our senior academic professional leaders also participate in 360-degree leadership feedback. This process won the Times Higher Education (THE) Award and the Universities UK Human Resources Award in 2012.

Teaching is a core requirement of all three of our **promotion pathways** (Research; Teaching and Scholarship; Innovation and Engagement), encouraging staff to provide evidence of **teaching that is innovative, inspirational and enables transformative learning** for students as part of the application processes for promotion. Between 2014-16, 36% of our promoted academic staff were on the University's Teaching and Scholarship pathway, with 13% of the total number of professorial promotions being

achieved through this pathway. This reflects the **increased importance and subsequent esteem on learning and teaching** across the University. In 2016 we won the THE Award for Outstanding Leadership and Management.

We are proud to have been recognising and rewarding our excellent teachers and support staff for over a decade, celebrating and inspiring others through our **Excellence in Learning and Teaching /Student Support Awards Scheme, developed with students.** These awards, designed in conjunction with the SUSU and nominated for by students, reflect the appreciation of students for the quality of the teaching and support that they have received. Nine members of staff received these awards during the 2016-17 graduation ceremonies (80 since 2005-06).

We are developing new approaches to recognise and reward teaching and learning excellence, achieved through our teacher recognition working group. We have developed ways to continue to raise the esteem of teaching, for example through the implementation of a University Teaching Fellowship programme to enable staff to have dedicated time to **focus on pedagogy and enhancements in learning and teaching.**

Rigour and stretch

Our focus on teaching quality, changes in teaching practice and the extenuating circumstances process, and diversification of assessments has led to an improvement in the percentage of First Class Honours Degrees we award from 24% in 2014-15 to 26% in 2016-17. In the same period, the number of Upper Second class honour degrees awarded improved from 45% to 49%. Across a ten-year period, this averages out to an annual improvement of 1.7% for firsts and a 0.8% for 2:1s awarded.

The improvement in degree outcomes between 2007-08 and 2016-17 is attributed to a number of factors alongside our commitment to teaching excellence. Student average tariff points on entry have risen steadily from 289 in 2007-08 to an average of 344 in 2016-17 (+55) reflecting the admission of **increasingly highly motivated, highly qualified and focused students. Our high quality programmes of study are rigorously quality assured** with the ethos of enhancement at their core. We have external examiners for all our provision and our staff are external examiners for other Universities.

A wide range of **innovative assessment methods** have been developed **to inspire and motivate students to achieve,** including reflective writing, presentations, patchwork text, research commentaries, journal style articles and pieces of contemporary research. We provide **real-world assessments,** for example the involvement of external bodies in the assessment of students, which includes problem-solving assessments with industry and **assessment at clinical and other placement settings.** College improvement plans are in place to respond to performance for a small group of full-time other undergraduate students (93) in teaching, and assessment and feedback, and from our part-time students for assessment and feedback.

External Examiner Voice

The programme team consistently demonstrate an upholding of high standard of assessment and award, meaning that the achieved grades are appropriate and proportionate to the quality of work submitted by learners.
(Social Work External Examiner, 2016 - 17)

The teaching staff are very dedicated to their students. Their open-door policy is very time consuming, particularly with the ever-increasing student numbers, but highly commendable and very much appreciated by their students.
(Chemical Engineering External Examiner, 2016 - 17)

The impact of our strategy for teaching quality is evident from our majority mode core TEF metrics:

- Exceeding the benchmark for teaching with a positive flag in year 1.
- Achieved positive flags for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and disabled students.
- Exceeding the benchmark for assessment and feedback.
- Very high satisfaction with our teaching for our part-time students and performing

in line with the benchmark, also reflected across the splits.

- Our outstanding teaching quality has also been recognised externally, with the award of a five-star quality rating by the internationally recognised QS Stars quality scheme.

Student Voice

The School of Management is always evolving in terms of teaching and learning and working in conjunction with global organisations like Fujitsu, which is within the building. Having Fujitsu has been beneficial as they have provided case studies and real-life examples within the module of Change Management. This has encouraged me to take an internship with this organisation and potentially a placement, which is embedded within the module.
(Jack Meredith, Business Management student, 2017)

We increase participation from under-represented groups and provide a supportive and enriching learning environment for all of our students to enable their success

We have a long-standing commitment to inclusivity, widening access, and social mobility. Through partnership working with schools and further education colleges, we actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds and with differing levels of attainment. Foundation years in Engineering, Science and Medicine, with higher levels of student support, provide students without the required qualifications the opportunity to study and excel in these subjects annually. All students receive personalised high quality support for their learning and pastoral care throughout their learning journey to ensure they achieve their full potential. We also work extensively to encourage more women to study STEM, and have achieved an Athena SWAN silver award.

We recognise the importance of high quality physical and digital resources to support student learning. We have developed a world-leading physical learning environment, and an enhanced digital environment through an ambitious programme of investment. The student experience is enriched by the international, multicultural nature of the University and culture of collaboration with partners from other sectors, including government, large companies and their SME supply chains. This learning environment and the opportunities it provides for students has a positive impact on their personal development.

Increasing participation

We support students in the transition to HE, **raising educational aspirations and attainment,** and offering campus visits to help overcome the “mystique” of university. **We are the lead partner in the South West Wales Reaching Wider Partnership** and University staff and students contribute to a wide range of outreach activities with children and young people. The annual Summer University provides targeted Year 12 students with a two-week residential experience, which prepares them for the transition to university both academically and pastorally.

Our foundation years in Engineering, Science and Medicine are providing over 400 students without the required qualifications, the opportunity to study and excel in these subjects annually. An analysis in 2015-16 showed 54% of these Welsh domiciled students were from disadvantaged areas. We work with further education colleges through the College University Skills Partnership to develop alternative options to traditional HE pathways, which include foundation degrees and degree apprenticeships delivered in partnership with industry. The wide range and scope of our outreach **engages, inspires and enthuses as well as raising the awareness of university level study amongst young people.** We are proud that this partnership **has increased the participation** in higher education of people from underrepresented groups and communities in South West Wales, with a specific focus on Communities First areas and care experienced young people. We have increased the number of students from Communities First Areas by 10% and UK Low

Participation Areas by 14% in the last five years (2011-12 to 2015-16), with positive outcomes for these student groups.

Student Voice

We were working on the 'Bloodhound' supersonic car initiative, built in collaboration with various partners including Rolls Royce, as part of a module within the College of Engineering. As part of the assessment we could present to either local schools or further afield on the production of the supersonic car in order to engage younger students, especially girls around the age of 13/14, in order to introduce them to the opportunities they could achieve from studying at Swansea University.
(Bethany Allen, Medical Engineering student, 2017)

Students' Union Voice

As well as our FTOs, the SUSU also elects 17 Part-time Officers (PTOs) who carry out their role voluntarily alongside their studies. Each PTO has their own specific role to represent the rights and voices of students who are from under-represented groups. They do so by participating in various committees and meetings held by the Union and University, in particular the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Part-time Officer sits on the University's Learning and Teaching committee.

Supporting students towards academic success

Over the last four years we have invested **£3m of operational expenditure in our student support and facilities. Online modules support students in their induction and transition to HE.** An example of this is the academic integrity module that enhances students' understanding of the academic standards expected and is also being offered as an educational support tool for students who have committed misconduct. Staff members and students have also contributed to the QAA guidance on contract cheating, reflecting internal and sector best practice.

Following staff and student feedback, we have refocused personal tutoring as academic mentoring to ensure **students continue with their studies, progress and succeed on their programmes.** Mentoring encourages self-reflection and a focus on personal and professional development. Academic mentors are the first point of contact for students with academic or pastoral issues. We have also created a **Student Life Network** (SLN) comprised of appropriately trained professional services staff in every College and MyUniHub (central student support service) for student pastoral support.

We support staff to ensure all students' **academic experiences are inclusive and accessible.** For example, SAILS help staff to support students with disabilities via meetings, an online forum, training and guidance. Other resources include the **Transcription Centre, which provides transcription for students who have a print disability (cognitive or physical).** We are only the second Welsh Institution to receive the Stand Alone Pledge (helping estranged students overcome disadvantage), and are now recognised as a 'Champion Institution'.

Building on Student Law Society's student-to-student peer support network, we were awarded a grant by the HEA to develop a **national peer mentoring e-toolkit.** The underlying work appeared in the Compendium of Effective Practice in Independent Learning in Higher Education (published by the HEA and QAA in 2015). The development of the toolkit was supported by the SUSU FTO for Education and a student from Aerospace Engineering. SAILS hosted a national conference in May 2016 on student transition and retention, which featured the e-toolkit.

Our Centre for Academic Success (CAS) provides a wide range of academic support to students throughout their learning journey helping them achieve their academic goals and develop skills, which will be relevant beyond graduation. The centre's staff ensure that both generic and discipline specific skills are open to all students, at all levels. **A comprehensive maths and academic literacy enhancement programme supports students transitioning into and through university.** In addition to skills development such as academic writing and critical thinking, the team deliver popular workshops in topics such as Learning to Learn,

Memory Skills, Sorting Data and Thesis Boot Camp. We also run language development courses for students whose first language is not English. Additionally, specialist tutors develop individual learning plans and personalised teaching sessions for students with specific learning differences. CAS also provides advice and guidance to academic colleagues on working effectively with students with specific needs.

For ease of student access and to maximise student usage, we have housed academic **support materials** and other library and related services under one digital roof. As a result Library Guides and our Library Chat service have increased in popularity. For a number of years we have promoted the Assignment Survival Kit, which helps students plan and write their assignment, and Library Inductions, which cover all subject areas are built into year one through close working with our Colleges.

To meet students' increasing expectations from their student experience and the need to access a broad range of support services when required, **MyUniHub** was established. We invested **£310k in appropriately trained staff,** who provide a complete spectrum of non-academic support services throughout the entire student journey from homesickness at arrivals to disability assessments for exams. They are able to deal with many of the issues presented and a referral system identifies students requiring more complex support (e.g. for mental health issues) via the Student Life Network. MyUniHub has been a success with more students accessing it each year and positive student ratings of over 95%.

We are proud to be a bilingual University. Our Academi Hywel Teifi leads on the University's strategy for delivering increased Welsh-medium provision across a range of subjects and to work in collaboration with the newly-established Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. **Welsh-medium provision** has increased from five subjects delivered in Welsh (2011) to 17 subjects (2017) and a 40% growth in students studying their subjects through the medium of Welsh. To maximise the **Welsh work-experience opportunities** afforded to students, we work closely with Welsh industry and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (CCC). Our students also have an opportunity to learn/improve skills in a new language, including Welsh, as part of their degree scheme through the **University's Languages for All Scheme.**

Student Voice

Being fluent in Welsh before coming to university and having the opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh in Swansea has developed my Welsh language skills even further and to a higher standard while obtaining my degree. (Tomos Watson, Geography student, 2017)

The effectiveness of the support we provide for our students studying through the medium of Welsh is clear from our performance in the TEF metrics. Our majority mode of delivery shows a very positive picture across all credit bandings (0-5, 5 to 40 and over 40 credits). We have no negative flags, a positive flag for Continuation (5 to 40 credits) and a double positive flag for Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study (0 to 5 credits).

Providing a high quality learning and teaching environment

Alongside major refurbishment of the Singleton Campus and a number of new builds, in 2015 we doubled our research and teaching capacity when we opened the new **65-acre £450m Bay Campus.** Housing our College of Engineering and School of Management, the Bay Campus is expanding to include Computer Science and Maths from September 2018, through the Computational Foundry, and the Engineering Impact Building that will open in 2020. Plans for further development are currently being scoped. The Bay Campus provides the most up-to-date facilities for students alongside **academic and research space,** enhanced through co-location with **international and national companies**. Through BCEG, we have ensured that investment is directed at areas identified by students as important in enhancing their learning experience.

In 2016 we invested **£1.6m** in refurbishing our laboratory space, preparation rooms and offices and we spent a **further £400k** on new equipment. This modernisation provided students in science and medicine with a high quality laboratory experience and promoted cross-disciplinary working with new ways for students to learn and collaborate.

We have **over 1,700 social, group and individual study spaces** and 500 computers available in the libraries, in addition to loan laptops and self-issue laptops and support services 24/7, 362 days a year. We provide catering and vending facilities within our libraries to support students during long hours spent working in the library and staff are available to **provide a wide range of operational and academic support** services. A **new customer service model** was developed in 2015-16 based on feedback from students and staff. Over the last four years we have invested **£5m of operational expenditure on library and information services** to provide students with the best facilities and services.

We have a dedicated Learning Spaces Forum who advise on the **strategic development of our learning environment** including: sharing of best practice, encouraging collaboration in the use and the refurbishment of spaces, ensuring that user feedback from both staff and students is built into continuous improvement of learning spaces and identifying future needs, opportunities and technologies to maximise learning. We have **designed spaces to increase collaboration inside and outside of the classrooms,** as well **individual study spaces.** We are also working to further develop our community space, including the development of the Student Precinct.

Students' Union Voice

The SUSU hold regular student forums in order to engage students with decision making within the University. At the last forum we invited Library Services along so that the students could have their say on the proposed plans for the upcoming library refurbishments on Singleton Campus. The library took comments from the students and have implemented these in to the libraries' renovations.

We use the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support student learning through activities. **Independent learning** is promoted through students having online access to 51,128 ejournals and 203,000 ebooks, as well as extensive online support. **We are enhancing our digital learning environment to support all students.** SALT is home to a major change initiative funded and supported by all of our Colleges that will embed **Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)** into teaching practice. New developments include the prototyping of **virtual reality.** Staff experienced in the use of TEL and blended learning have joined the project to share their work and maximise its impact. Incorporating this approach in modules has **resulted in significant improvements in student feedback scores and highly positive comments,** demonstrating how this approach helps improve understanding and inclusivity by supporting our highly diverse student body.

Students' Voice

A focus group was held with students who have used the Virtual Reality Anatomy App, their comments included:
'it was a great interactive way to learn about anatomy',
'a fun way of learning',
'really immersive and cool to use'
(Sports Science students, 2017)

We offer programmes specifically designed for **mature and part-time students,** our award-winning 'Return to Practice' programme, designed in close partnership with our two partner Health Boards has an employability rate of 100%. We support our part-time mature students through **our accredited Taste of Higher Education and the Preparation for Higher Education programmes,** meaning they are more likely to succeed once entering HE. Our College of Arts and Humanities has a dedicated **Study Skills and Retention Officer as well as a guidance worker,** who offer support to part-time mature students. The part-time TEF metrics show this approach is successful with a positive flag achieved for Continuation and positive flags achieved across the splits including first degree and mature students. We also achieved a double positive flag for Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study with performance 9.5% above the benchmark and multiple double and single positive flags across the splits. This clearly demonstrates our consistent and embedded approach to support all students to exceed expectations and achieve excellent outcomes.

We not only **educate students** on campus but **within the broader community,** using spaces

familiar to people to increase the participation, progression and achievement of students from areas which have a lower uptake within HE. For example, our Department of Adult and Continuing Education teach their BA part-time Humanities degree in eight venues throughout the South West Wales region, using community resource centres (Clydach), training centres (Glynneath) and YMCAs (Neath, Port Talbot).

We pride ourselves on our consistently outstanding **Academic Support** for all students.

- Positive flag (including across all three years of data).
- Nine positive flags across the splits – with no negative flags.

Our strong performance is also reflected across our part-time delivery with above benchmark performance and no negative flags across the splits.

Continuation - We are very close to achieving **a third positive core flag for Continuation:**

- 0.1% points from achieving a 2% higher than benchmark score across three years.
- The 0.1% difference equates to around 9 students against a population of over 9,000.
- Over the three years of data 44 of the students who did not continue (10%) actually returned to their studies with us in a later year – to date 17 have achieved a degree (including three Firsts).
- Majority of reasons for withdrawal relate to personal and health reasons.
- Positive flag in year 2 of the data.
- Multiple positive flags in the splits, particularly for student groups more at risk of not continuing (e.g. Q1 or Communities First, BME and Disabled students).
- Core positive flag with numerous positive flags against many of the splits for our part-time students (e.g. first degree and mature students).

As evidenced in this section, the consistent performance right across the core and split metrics (for both full-time and part-time, and previously in TEF2 results with a positive flag) is as a result of planned and considered initiatives designed to provide the very best support for our students. **Our continuation levels are excellent and will further benefit from the implementation of academic mentoring and the Student Life Network for pastoral/welfare support.** In addition, emerging learner analytics which include card reader attendance monitoring, assessment and VLE data identifies at risk students leading to earlier interventions.

We feel that the qualitative and quantitative evidence provided above reflects consistently outstanding performance within this area and should be afforded a greater weight within the overall assessment.

Student Voice

Life in Swansea began with a phone call, in which I was given a chance to prove that despite not having an A-level in Mathematics, I was capable of studying Physics. During my foundation year I was told if I was willing to work hard, staff would help me reach my full potential and true to their word I was quickly achieving at a high level. Over the next few years I continued to develop with extra-curricular roles and given my sustained academic success was allowed to transfer to an integrated masters course. Shortly following this I was named in Target Jobs Top 10 male undergraduates of the year and awarded a placement with L'Oréal at their London headquarters working in business analysis. Recently returning to Swansea for my final year I have been given the opportunity to carry out my research project at the CERN facility in Geneva, working on the ALPHA experiment alongside Swansea academics. Swansea has guided me to becoming a more well-rounded, confident and resilient person than I could ever have hoped to be.
(Adam Powell, Physics' student, 2017)

Supporting students to achieve the highest personal, academic and employment outcomes by providing exciting opportunities to enhance skills, global knowledge, and cultural agility

We are proud to be one of the UK's leading HEIs for learning gain, with graduate employment at the heart of our provision. Our employability strategy is embedded through a dedicated central team (SEA) working closely with senior Employability Directors for Colleges, who enhance and diversify employability opportunities for all of our students. We deliver consistent top-20 rankings in UK league tables for graduate level employability or further study, while also being ranked 67th in the UK for average entry tariff, demonstrating the impact of the work we do with students of all backgrounds and levels of academic attainment. As measured through the Guardian's Good University guide value-added metric, we have demonstrated continual improvement in learning gain and are now 1st in Wales and 26th in the UK for this metric. We are one of a small number of UK universities with a 4 stars rating in the global QS Stars rating for employability in 2015 and 4th in the UK for employability in the 2016 WhatUni Student Choice Awards. Working with our students and external partners to understand their needs, we have enriched the social and professional potential of all of our students by offering them extensive and high quality opportunities. These have led to a positive impact on employment outcomes, further study and learning gain.

Placements

As part of our employability strategy the **SEA Employment Zone initiative** connects students with graduate recruiters, part-time jobs and work experience opportunities. Our inclusive SEA award was launched in 2013 and has made a difference to 1,772 students by **providing opportunities to collaborate with international businesses** that have interests in Wales and beyond. Its success is groundbreaking across the institution and by way of example, a Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey for Psychology students found, each graduate was **twice as likely to be working and/or studying** upon completion of the Bronze level SEA award.

Two further opportunities are the Swansea Paid Internship Network (SPIN), which connects students to employers across all sectors for four week graduate level **work placements** and our Week of Work (WOW) programme offers students a taster of a wide range of businesses and gives employers an opportunity to bring talented students' to the business for **project based work.** Central to our employment outcomes are **embedded placements,** which form an essential part of our degree programmes, ensuring students are confident and competent in their discipline.

Supportive measures are offered to **remove the barriers** students face when paid employment prevents them accessing placement activity, such as financially supported placements. These are **flexibly designed** placements to fit around students' other commitments, maximising uptake and providing all students with the same opportunities. Our Go Wales 'Achieve through work experience programme' also supports students who may face barriers to gaining work experience. These include students with disabilities, caring responsibilities or from low HE participation neighbourhood.

Every student is offered the opportunity to study or work abroad to enhance their **global knowledge and deepen their cultural agility.** We have achieved an 86% increase in the number of students participating between 2010 and 2015. Opportunities include study, work and volunteering opportunities, and take place all over the world. We continue to develop a **wide network of international institutions and organisations that we work with to deliver these opportunities.** These opportunities have had a **significant effect on students' employability as well as enhancing their experience.** Through the strong relationships we have with our international partners our students are fully integrated and immersed into their culture, for example through involvement in social and cultural activities beyond the University walls.

We are proud to offer all of our students these opportunities and data shows that 51% of our students taking a mobility opportunity have at least one under-represented characteristic. As well as successfully securing external funding, such as Erasmus+, to enable increased student mobility, we have also invested in "Global Opportunities" bursaries to **reduce the financial barrier on students** who wish to spend time overseas. Additional funding for students from low-income background is also available and has helped to increase participation further.

Students' Union Voice

Thanks to the hard work of the SEA team in partnership with our Union, the SEA award is now embedded into the training programmes for both student representatives and society committee members. This has encouraged reflection on skills obtained through their roles, with the extra benefit of utilising informal communication methods to spread the idea of integrating employability into university life. Aside from the award, SEA frequently awards grants to students, enabling them to take proactive steps in setting up employability based events, examples of this have ranged from networking meals to student-led careers fairs.

Employment, enterprise, further study and research projects

Employers and professional bodies engage in our **course design, teaching delivery, assessments and placement opportunities.** Industry panels are proactively advising us on the skills and attributes they require from graduates and inform our development of **stimulating and relevant curricula.** 57% of our students study accredited programmes and our staff are actively involved with their respective Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. External partnerships support the **delivery of professional programmes,** for example, industrial panels for Human and Health Science programmes include local Health Boards, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and other regional providers. A flagship Engineering programme is being delivered in partnership with Coleg Cambria and Airbus that offers **higher apprenticeships** to students who are seeking employment and those already working within the industry.

Our learning environment is enriched through the **co-location of academia and industry.** This provides **innovative opportunities for our students** to undertake placements, network and engage with prestigious partner organisations. Over 50 companies have been based on Campus over the last five years including Tata, Rolls Royce, Fujitsu, Pfizer, PWC and BP.

Enterprise teaching and entrepreneurial approaches are incorporated into programmes. With the support of the Welsh Government's 'Big Ideas Wales' programme, over 3,000 students have been engaged with enterprise activity. Set-up in 2013, the **Student Enterprise Society** joins students together who are already embarking on their own business ventures with those who would like to enter the Start-Up market.

The success of our work is evident in our TEF supplementary LEO metrics. For our full-time provision, sustained employment or further study is within the top 10% of the sector and has also achieved a positive significance flag. In the minority mode of delivery, this metric exceeds the benchmark. We are performing as expected compared to the benchmark in above median earnings threshold or further study. A review of the splits show the groups at risk of not achieving are also performing as expected (e.g. Q1/Q2 POLAR, BME and Disabled). This is quite an achievement considering the benchmark does not account for any regional variations. A similar picture is also portrayed in the minority mode part-time delivery. We believe these figures demonstrate our commitment to produce global graduates capable of achieving high employment rates and salaries.

We have the **highest proportion of students in Wales progressing onto further study,** with our proportion steadily increasing, 36% in 2015-16 and a 32% average over three years (2013-16). All of our Colleges encourage postgraduate study with open days, taster lectures and advice through academic mentor meetings. Through investment in our College of Arts and Humanities, for example we have awarded **Masters Scholarships for academic excellence** to top performing undergraduate

students, which has more than doubled the number of students taking our Masters programmes. Our WOW and SPIN placements have enabled **students to work with academic staff on major research projects,** working as research assistants, editorial assistants, marketing and communications and project assistants. Students have **gained confidence** through these placements and have **been inspired** to carry out further research.

Cultural agility and volunteering

Ensuring that international students, incoming exchange and visiting students have the best possible experience is an important part of **student mobility** and of our commitment to them and our partner institutions. As well as being fully integrated into cultural and social activities, additional measures are in place for those who may only spend one semester with us. These include orientation and induction events, a **buddy scheme** and a range of social and cultural events.

We actively support students to **volunteer** through University-wide opportunities, including sustainability, a network of 450 student ambassadors, College-based learning and teaching ambassadors, as well as in the SUSU and the **Discovery Student Volunteering** charity. With 300 volunteers involved in over 25 student-led projects all over the city, Discovery offers students a range of experiences, as well as the life enhancing, CV improving opportunity to **volunteer in the community.** Their student-led structure means there are a range of leadership and governance opportunities available to students e.g. leading and managing their own project, becoming a team leader and standing for election as a student trustee. "We have been incredibly proud to see our student volunteers grow in confidence as they take on new challenges and explore new experiences." (Discovery, 2016-17).

Student Voice

I have found nothing quite like Discovery. The way Discovery empowers students to make genuine and lasting changes in their communities and the way it enhances the lives of those who are disadvantaged, less-abled or vulnerable is a fantastic and, frankly, amazing thing. It has been a highlight of my student career to be part of Discovery, and I am sure it will continue to be a highlight as I become an early-career researcher.
(David Mair, Discovery student volunteer, 2017)

Impact on the Community: "The pupils have had the opportunity to develop positive, nurturing relationships with the volunteers. They have been supported to be comfortable in making mistakes, but also developing skills to overcome reading obstacles. They have also been encouraged to ask questions about the world and make connections with what they already know. By engaging with university students, the pupils have been inspired by and exposed to the possibilities of furthering their education." (Hafod Primary School – Buddied Reading Scheme, 2017)

We are consistently outstanding at supporting all of our students to achieve positive outcomes. In particular, our core metric for Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study shows **a double positive flag with the indicator 8.4% above the benchmark and double positive flags across all three years of data.** Our strength is also evident across the full-time splits with 13 student groups receiving double positive flags, including those most at risk of not achieving (Q1/Q2 POLAR, BME, Disabled students).

Final words from our students

Swansea University Students' Union are proud of the achievements this Union and University have accomplished from working in partnership with one another. Full-time Officers, student representatives and student ambassadors from diverse backgrounds have engaged and were consulted by the University on this submission for TEF, the SUSU is proud to state that we support the information illustrated within this report, and fully endorse the University's application for well-deserved Gold TEF rating.