

The aim of this jargon buster is to help staff and students involved with the Higher Education Academy's work in Wales wade through all the higher education (HE) acronyms and terminology. Spotted any jargon missing? Please email [wales@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:wales@heacademy.ac.uk).

**Academic standards:** Standards established by institutions for the courses provided and that are expected for their awards.

**Accreditation:** A process of approving a programme through assessing its quality by an external/independent organisation.

**Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL):** This is where credit is awarded for learning that has already been assessed and certified.

**Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL):** A process that enables learners to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge they already possess.

**Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA):** An indication of professional identity for higher education practitioners, aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework.

**Association of Learning Development in Higher Education (ALDinHE):** A membership association for staff working as learning developers, or have a role which involves supporting student learning.

**Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE):** An organisation which informs and supports the leaders of student services departments in higher education institutions, and represents, advocates for, and promotes the student experience.

**Alumni:** People who have graduated (i.e. completed a course and gained a qualification) from a particular university.

**Bachelor of Arts (BA):** an undergraduate academic degree awarded to a student typically after three to four years of studying.

**Bachelor of Engineering (BEng):** an undergraduate academic degree awarded to a student typically after three to five years of studying.

**Bachelor of Science (BSc):** an undergraduate academic degree awarded to a student typically after three to five years of studying.

**Blended learning:** Refers to a mixing of different learning environments. It combines traditional face to face classroom methods with computer mediated activities.

**Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT or CETL):** Departments in universities set up to provide staff with support in the enhancement of learning and teaching.

**Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA):** A network organisation, seeking to develop and demonstrate the value of recording achievement and action planning processes as an important element in improving learning and progression.

**Colegau Cymru / Colleges Wales:** Raises the profile of further education with key-decision makers to improve opportunities for learners in Wales.

**Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol:** Loosely translates as “Welsh national college” – an organisation which aims to increase, develop and broaden the range of Welsh medium study opportunities at universities in Wales, and has branches at each higher education institution in Wales.

**Collaborative Approaches to the Management of E-Learning (CAMEL):** A group set up, used to support communities of practice, often for specific projects.

**Communities First:** Geographical locations where typically learners receive lower incomes. Institutions receive increased funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales for recruiting students from Communities First areas.

**Department for Education and Skills (DfES):** Welsh Government department responsible for education and skills.

**Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC):** An assistant to the Vice Chancellor, usually with a specific role (e.g. learning and teaching, or research).

**Digitally enhanced learning:** Using technology to enhance learning.

**Doctor:** A title which graduates may use once they have obtained their doctorate of philosophy.

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD):** A postgraduate academic degree awarded by universities.

**Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC):** A Higher Education Academy facilitated group which focuses on sustainability issues.

**Enhancement theme:** A specific area or aspect of provision or practice, agreed and planned by the higher education sector in Wales and managed by HEA, with the aim of enhancing the student learning experience. The current enhancement theme is Graduates For Our Future.

**European Social Fund (ESF):** Set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help to raise standards of living.

**Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA):** An indication of professional identity for higher education practitioners, aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework.

**Formative assessment:** Feedback on students' performance, designed to help them learn more effectively and find ways to maintain and improve their progress. Does not count towards final degree mark.

**For Our Future:** The Welsh Government's higher education strategy. Its twin priorities for higher education in Wales are to support a buoyant economy and deliver social justice.

**Foundation Degrees (FD):** A vocational qualification in higher education, intended to give a basic knowledge of a subject to enable the student to go on to employment or further study. They are often offered by universities and further education colleges working in partnership.

**Further education (FE):** Post-compulsory education for learners over 16. Primarily taught in further education colleges, work-based learning, and adult and community learning institutions.

**Future Directions for Higher Education in Wales (Future Directions):** The quality enhancement programme of work, led by the Higher Education Academy in Wales.

**GO Wales (Graduate Opportunities Wales):** Helps students and graduates in Wales to find work, and encourages Welsh businesses to look to home grown talent to meet their needs.

**Graduates For Our Future:** The current enhancement theme in the Welsh higher education sector. Consists of three strands: Learning for Employment; Learning in Employment; and Students as Partners.

**Gwella:** Loosely translates as “enhancement” - often used to refer to the Higher Education Academy led ‘Gwella’ project aiming to enhance learning and teaching through technology.

**Higher Education Academy (HEA):** a national and independent organisation, funded by the four UK HE funding bodies and by subscriptions and grants to support the higher education community in order to enhance the quality and impact of learning and teaching through recognising and rewarding excellent teaching, bringing together people and resources to research and share best practice, and by helping to influence, shape and implement policy.

**Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW):** Funded by the Welsh Government to distribute funding for higher education to organisations and institutions in Wales.

**Higher education in further education (HE in FE):** Higher education courses delivered by further education colleges.

**Higher education institution (HEI):** Bodies that deliver higher education – universities and higher education colleges.

**Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA):** The central source for the collection and dissemination of statistics about publicly funded UK higher education.

**Higher Education Wales (HEW):** Represents the interests of higher education institutions in Wales, and is a national council of Universities UK.

**Institution:** Usually used to refer to a higher education institution.

**International Student Barometer (ISB):** A national survey which gathers feedback from international students.

**Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC):** The UK's expert body on information and digital technologies for education and research.

**Joint Information Systems Committee Regional Support Centre Wales (JISC RSC Wales):** Supports the development of e-learning and the use of technology across all post-16 education and skills sectors in Wales.

**Learning and teaching (L&T):** what it says on the tin!

**Learning for Employment:** A Future Directions group of staff from every provider of higher education in Wales and key sector agencies that provides higher education, working to enhance the experience of staff and students engaged in the learning for employment agenda. Learning for Employment is one of three Future Directions groups – the other two are Learning in Employment and Students as Partners.

**Learning in Employment:** A Future Directions group of staff from every provider of higher education in Wales and key sector agencies that provides higher education, working to enhance the experience of staff and students engaged in the learning in employment agenda. Learning in Employment is one of three Future Directions groups – the other two are Learning for Employment and Students as Partners.

**Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN):** A key measure used in Communities First areas for widening access activity.

**Massive open online courses (MOOC):** Classes that are taught online to large numbers of students, with minimal involvement by teaching staff.

**Master of Arts (MA):** A postgraduate academic master's degree.

**Master of Research (MRes):** A postgraduate academic master's degree, undertaken by research.

**Master of Science (MSc):** A postgraduate academic master's degree.

**National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS):** Recognises and rewards excellent learning and teaching. Run by the Higher Education Academy, the scheme is open to all higher education institutions in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

**National Student Survey (NSS):** A national survey which asks final year undergraduates for feedback on their courses and other parts of their student experience.

**National Union of Students (NUS):** The national voice of students in the UK.

**National Union of Students Wales (NUSW):** The national voice of students in Wales.

**Personal Development Planning (PDP):** a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and / or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.

**Peer Assisted Student / Study Support (PASS):** An initiative used in many universities in the UK, where students support fellow students with settling into university life, developing study skills, and discussing course content.

**Peer Assisted Learning (PAL):** Schemes which foster cross-year support between students on the same course. It encourages students to support each other, and learn cooperatively under the guidance of trained students (usually from the year above).

**Peer learning:** where students learn with and from each other as fellow learners.

**Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (PFHEA):** An indication of professional identity for higher education practitioners, aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework.

**Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES):** A national survey which asks postgraduate research students for feedback.

**Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES):** A national survey which asks taught postgraduate students for feedback.

**Professor:** An academic rank above 'Reader' for academics following a research career pathway.

**Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC):** An assistant to the Vice Chancellor, usually with a specific role (e.g. learning and teaching, or research).

**[academic] Quality:** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, institutions manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

**Quality assurance (QA):** The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet UK expectations, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

**Quality Assurance Agency (QAA):** Reviews the performance of universities and colleges delivering higher education and provides guidelines on standards and quality in the Quality Code publication.

**Quality enhancement (QE):** Efforts to improve cultures, strategies, processes, or practices, in order to increase levels of student attainment, development and learning. Linked to enhancement themes.

**Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE):** A network of academics, practitioners, advisors and student representatives drawn from the higher education sector who are working and / or interested in researching and promoting student engagement.

**Reaching Wider (RW):** Initiative aiming to increase higher education participation from groups and communities in Wales by raising aspirations, and creating new study opportunities and learning pathways.

**Reader:** The title denotes an appointment for a senior academic with a distinguished international reputation in research or scholarship. It is an academic rank above senior lecturer.

**Recognised Prior Learning (RPL):** Includes the Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning and the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning.

**Russell Group:** A group of the 24 most research intensive universities in the UK.

**Sandwich course:** Degree courses which include an extra year 'sandwiched' between the years of study. During the extra year, students usually go on work experience with an organisation or department in their subject field.

**Sector Skills Council (SSC):** independent, employer-led, UK-wide organisations designed to build a skills system that is driven by employer demand.

**Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA):** An indication of professional identity for higher education practitioners, aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework.

**St. David's Day Group:** A group of universities in Wales. Made up of Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Cardiff University, Swansea University and the University of Glamorgan.

**Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM):** The acronym is often used to refer to the study of subjects in the categories of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

**Students as Partners:** A Future Directions group of staff and students from every provider of higher education in Wales, who work together to enable students to enhance their experience by working with staff in partnership. Students as Partners is one of three Future Directions groups – the other two are Learning in Employment and Learning for Employment.

**Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTA):** Joint Higher Education Academy and National Union of Students project to support students' unions to deliver student led teaching awards to reward and recognise excellent teaching.

**Student engagement:** A term used to describe the various ways institutions get students involved in their learning experience such as course reps, surveys, focus groups, students on committees etc.

**Student learning experience:** refers to all elements of a students' experience during their time at their institution. There are a range of different elements including: curriculum, learning resources, teaching and learning, assessment and achievement, student progression and outcomes and, quality and standards.

**Students' union (SU):** An organisation to represent students at a particular institution.

**Subject benchmarks:** Statements that set out the expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject.

**Summative assessment:** The formal assessment of students' work, contributing to the final result.

**Technology enhanced learning (TEL):** the support of learning activity through technology. Also see Gwella.

**Welsh Government (WG):** The devolved Government for Wales.

**Welsh Institutional Group (WIG):** Made up of representatives from all higher education institutions in Wales, informs the strategic direction of HEA Wales.

**Universities Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI):** A strategic partnership between the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales, Newport – improving skills and qualifications by making learning accessible locally.

**Universities UK (UUK):** Represents the interests of higher education institutions in the UK.

**UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF):** Used by higher education institutions to apply to their professional development programmes and activities, demonstrating that professional standards are being met.

**Vice Chancellor (VC):** The head / chief executive of a university.

**Virtual learning environment (VLE):** An education system based on the web that models real-world education by integrating virtual concepts for tests, homework etc. Common virtual learning environments are Blackboard and Moodle.

**Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE):** A cross sector group aiming to reinforce, share and build upon currently good practice relating to student engagement, and to help higher education institutions and organisations in Wales enhance approaches to student engagement. The group consists of the Higher Education Academy, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Higher Education Wales, the Quality Assurance Agency, and the National Union of Students Wales.

**Widening Access (WA):** Increasing opportunities for people from a diverse range of backgrounds to benefit from higher education.

**Work based learning (WBL):** Refers to any formal higher education learning that is based wholly or predominantly in a work setting.