

Glossary of Terms





Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Medr Glossary

Accessibility

The extent to which learning environments, services, information and physical spaces can be used by all learners, including those with disabilities or additional needs. Accessibility includes digital, linguistic, physical and cognitive dimensions.

Action Plan

A structured written response requested by Medr from a provider to address identified areas of concern. Action plans typically include specific objectives, timelines, and oversight arrangements, and may be monitored by Medr or its agents. Failure to deliver against an agreed action plan may lead to further regulatory action.

Accountable Officer

The senior individual within a provider who holds responsibility for ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. The Accountable Officer is the primary point of contact for Medr in matters of assurance, intervention, and provider accountability. In the absence of an Accountable Officer, this authority must be delegated as appropriate.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

A statutory term defined in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, referring to learners who require additional or different educational provision due to a learning difficulty or disability. In the tertiary education sector, this includes learners in further education providers who need tailored support to access and benefit from their education. Provision for ALN is coordinated through an Individual Development Plan (IDP), which outlines the learner's needs, support strategies, and outcomes. The Act replaces the previous SEN framework and promotes a unified, learner-centred approach across all educational settings, ensuring continuity of support as learners transition into post-16 education.

Adjusted EBITDA

Adjusted earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortisation refines the standard EBITDA calculation by excluding unusual, proprietary or non-recurring items to provide a clearer picture of operational profitability. The adjustments typically include

removal of one-time expenses, exceptional items and non-cash items. This is a financial indicator seeking to act as a proxy for a provider's underlying operational cash generation for the year on an accruals basis.

Advice and Guidance

Medr may give advice and issue guidance (whether general or specific) regarding the provision of tertiary education or any matter connected with Medr's functions. This may be formal or informal communications issued to tertiary education providers. These communications are intended to support compliance with regulatory conditions and promote good practice across the sector.

Annual Assurance Return

A yearly structured self-declaration submitted by each provider and formally signed off by its accountable officer and governing body (or equivalent). It enables providers to confirm that they have taken appropriate steps and have obtained sufficient assurances to ensure that they continue to comply with the conditions of registration or funding, and to provide any updates on material changes, challenges, or risks.

Apprenticeship Programmes

An apprenticeship is a paid job with training. Apprentices gain experience, learn new skills and gain a nationally recognised qualification while earning a wage. This is completed through an apprenticeship framework, which sets out the programme of learning and qualifications from level 2 up to degree level

Appropriate Oversight

A provider's responsibility to maintain effective governance and monitoring of its own operations and those of delivery partners, including how it meets its regulatory and statutory duties. This includes clear accountability structures, risk management processes, and senior-level engagement.

Assurance Environment

The framework of internal and external audit, risk management, and compliance systems that provide confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of a provider's governance and operations. This includes adherence to audit standards, independence of auditors, and mechanisms for identifying and addressing weaknesses.

Assurance Mapping

An assurance map is a mechanism for articulating, identifying and linking the assurances a provider receives from various sources across all lines of defence to the risks that threaten the achievement of the provider's aims, mission and strategic objectives.

Attainment / Awarding Gaps

These gaps are the measurable differences in academic outcomes between groups of learners, often influenced by social, cultural, economic, or organisational factors and are considered differentials when they persist beyond what can be explained by prior attainment or individual ability, and indicating potential inequalities within the system.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Medr's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) supports the Medr Board and Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurance on Medr's governance, risk management, the control environment, and the

integrity of Medr's financial statements and Annual Accounts. ARAC also oversees Medr's external provider assurance work.

Audit Committee

A committee of a provider's governing body responsible for monitoring internal controls, the work of the internal and external auditors and compliance with regulations. In some providers, the Audit Committee may also oversee financial reporting and risk management.

Capital Funding Provided for a Specific Purpose

Funding provided for the purpose of undertaking a distinct, agreed, specified capital project, as differentiated from more general capital funding which may be required to be applied to specified policy areas.

Charity Commission

UK Government department which regulates registered charities in England and Wales.

Charitable Status

The legal designation of a provider as a charity, requiring it to operate for public benefit and comply with charity law. Providers registered in the Higher Education Core category must be charities and clearly communicate their charitable status, including compliance with relevant legal obligations and the impact on their operations. Further education colleges are exempt charities, where their legal obligations are the same. This includes further education corporations in Wales whose principal regulator is the Welsh Ministers (including St David's Catholic Sixth Form College).

Chief Audit Executive

The leadership role responsible for effectively managing all aspects of the internal audit function and ensuring the quality performance of internal audit services i.e. the head of internal audit. The specific job title and/or responsibilities may vary across providers. This is defined by the Institute of Internal Auditors in their 2024 publication of the [Global Internal Audit Standards](#).

Civic Mission

Civic mission involves actions that promote or improve the economic, social, environmental, or cultural well-being of Wales. This reflects the responsibility of tertiary education providers to contribute to the public good by working in partnership with communities and preparing learners to be active, informed citizens. This may involve offering services or facilities to the public, conducting impactful research, engaging staff and students in volunteering and civic activities, and aligning institutional practices with the sustainable development principle and the seven well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Co-creation

A practice where learners and staff work collaboratively to design or improve learning experiences, environments, or policies. Co-creation promotes engagement, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for learning.

Code to Describe Welsh Language Ability

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 establishes a standard method for describing Welsh language ability, which is intended to be relevant to all contexts,

including as a to guide the development of language learning programmes and assessment. The Code to describe Welsh language ability will be based on the common reference levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a well-established and proven international framework for assessing linguistic competence.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol¹

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is an organisation that works with further education colleges, universities, organisations that offer apprenticeships, and employers to create opportunities to train and study in Welsh. Medr has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Coleg who have been designated to provide advice to Medr on its strategic duty to promote tertiary education through the medium of Welsh.

Collaboration

A principle underpinning Medr's regulatory approach, referring to the active engagement between providers, learners, stakeholders, and regulators to achieve shared goals. Collaboration supports the development of coherent provision, the sharing of effective practice, and the creation of inclusive, learner-centred systems. It also includes joint working across providers to improve quality, reduce duplication, and enhance learner outcomes. Collaboration is one of the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Collaborative Development

The process of designing regulatory conditions and guidance in partnership with stakeholders such as learners, providers, sector bodies and other parties to ensure relevance and fairness.

Committees of the Governing Body (or Equivalent)

Sub-groups established by a provider's governing body (or equivalent) to oversee specific areas such as audit, finance, risk, remuneration, and governance. These committees support the governing body (or equivalent) in fulfilling its responsibilities and must operate transparently and in accordance with good practice.

Communities of Practice

Collaborative groups of providers or stakeholders who share knowledge, practices, and strategies to improve equality of opportunity and address shared challenges.

Complaints and Regulatory Concerns Monitoring

We routinely review systemic or thematic issues arising from learner complaints or regulatory concerns and correspondence when assessing risk and monitoring provider compliance. We only consider complaints information where it is relevant to our statutory regulatory duties, for example, where complaint trends or outcomes may indicate systemic risks or potential non-compliance with the conditions of registration or funding.

Medr does not investigate, determine or comment on the merits of individual learner complaints. Where learner complaints or regulatory concerns are sent directly to Medr, the learner will normally be referred to the relevant provider for handling under its own procedures. Medr does have a role in ensuring all registered and funded providers have published procedures in place to investigate complaints by learners and former learners.

¹ Included as an organisation designated to provide advice to Medr

We may also consider concerns raised directly with Medr regarding compliance with the conditions of registration or funding, the Financial Management Code (until it is superseded), or, in the case of registered higher education institutions, the Prevent duty.

Complaints Procedure

A formal process established by a provider to investigate complaints made by learners or former learners about acts or omissions by the provider.

Compliance and Reimbursement Direction

A formal directive issued by Medr to a provider's governing body (or equivalent) requiring them to comply with fee limits and/or reimburse learners for any excess fees charged. This direction is enforceable and may be subject to review.

Composition of the Governing Body (or Equivalent)

The structure and membership of a provider's governing body (or equivalent), including the balance of skills, experience, independence, and diversity. Membership terms should not normally exceed nine years, with a maximum of ten years in exceptional cases.

Condition of Funding

A requirement that a provider must meet in order to receive public funding from Medr. Various conditions of funding will apply to providers receiving financial support from Medr, regardless of registration status, but dependent on the nature of the education delivered for which funding is provided.

Condition of Registration

A regulatory requirement that a provider must meet in order to be included on Medr's Register. These conditions ensure that providers meet minimum standards in certain areas. Conditions of registration may be initial (required at the point of registration) or ongoing (required throughout the period of registration).

Condition Requirements

The specific expectations and obligations that providers must meet to comply with a regulatory condition.

Conflicts of Interest

Situations where personal, financial, or other interests could compromise or appear to compromise the impartiality of individuals involved in governance or management. Providers must maintain a public register of such conflicts and monitor it regularly.

Continuous Improvement

The ongoing process through which providers use self-evaluation, data, analysis and information to strive for sustained excellence. It is iterative, and can include both addressing deficits and making incremental changes to learner outcomes over time. Higher education providers usually refer to this activity as enhancement.

Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)

This is an inclusive meta-framework designed to provide greater clarity on the qualifications and credit system in Wales. It includes three pillars of learning, higher education, regulated qualifications which include vocational and general qualifications, and lifelong learning.

Culture

The shared values, behaviours, and norms that shape how a provider operates. Providers must assess and monitor their organisational culture, identify gaps between actual and desired culture, and take action to align culture with strategic goals and values.

Cynnig Cymraeg (Welsh Offer)

A scheme coordinated by the Welsh Language Commissioner to help organisations improve their Welsh language services and promote the use of Welsh among service users.

Data Monitoring

Data both published or submitted to Medr used to monitor key indicators relevant to our regulatory conditions — such as participation, continuation, outcomes, or financial trends. Data is never viewed in isolation and is interpreted in context. Where data suggests potential risk or underperformance, we may seek additional information or use it to prioritise further engagement.

Decision Reviewer

An independent person or panel appointed by Welsh Ministers to review certain regulatory decisions made by Medr, such as the imposition of specific ongoing conditions or directions. The Decision Reviewer considers representations from providers and may recommend that Medr reconsider its decision based on procedural fairness, new evidence, or proportionality.

Developmental/Geographical/Thematic Reviews

These reviews are carried out for the purposes of continuous improvement, and do not result in summative judgements. They can be thematic (i.e. on a particular area of focus such as a specific subject area, or policy area), or geographical (within a particular region). They may include the findings and conclusions of multiple engagements, which when viewed holistically may reveal patterns or trends, such as root causes

Direction in Respect of Failure to Comply

A formal instruction issued by Medr to a provider's governing body (or equivalent) when it has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with an ongoing registration condition. The direction may specify actions to be taken and is enforceable by injunction.

Disruption to Learning

Circumstances that prevent learners from continuing or completing their studies, including institutional failure, course/campus closure, or other events which could have the potential to negatively impact on learners.

Due Regard to Advice and Guidance

Governing bodies of providers should consciously consider the advice and guidance and its impact, for the provider including on any decisions to be taken. Governing bodies do not necessarily need to adopt the advice and guidance, for example if it is not considered to apply to the provider's context, but they must be able to provide evidence that this conscious consideration has taken place (if requested).

Emotional Wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing in tertiary education is the capacity of individuals to manage their

emotions, cope with educational and social pressures, build positive relationships, and maintain a sense of purpose and belonging. It encompasses both individual resilience and the provider support systems that promote mental health and emotional balance.

Employability

Activities, qualifications and support designed to help learners develop the skills, attributes and behaviours they need for future employment. Employability skills can be embedded into qualifications which aim to give learners the knowledge and attributes they need to work in a particular industry or career. Employability support could also include, for example, support to apply for jobs or gain work experience, interview skills, teamworking skills, and motivational courses.

Engagement Activities

Medr's sector-level and provider-level engagement activities serve as a source of monitoring information. These include routine meetings, strategic dialogues, consultation responses, and informal feedback. These conversations help surface issues, clarify intent, and support our understanding of provider context.

Engagement in Learning

The active engagement of learners in all aspects of their personal educational journey, from enrolment through to completion and progression. This concept is central to equality, diversity, and inclusion strategies and is shaped by legal obligations, regulatory frameworks, and national policy initiatives.

Enhanced Monitoring

A non-specified intervention used by Medr when concerns arise about a provider's compliance or performance. It may involve more frequent reporting, submission of additional information, or increased engagement with senior leadership. Enhanced monitoring is intended to support early resolution of issues and may precede (or limit the likelihood of) further formal intervention.

Enhancement

Deliberate steps taken by providers to improve the quality of learning opportunities. Enhancement goes beyond meeting baseline standards and focuses on innovation, excellence, and the learner experience.

Equality of Opportunity

Equal of opportunity means the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions, but not including language. This definition is closely aligned with the [Government of Wales Act 2006](#). In addition, the Welsh Government has enacted the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act. Medr is committed to 'acting in the spirit' of the duty, as this relates to under-representation in tertiary education from socio-economic disadvantage. Also see Medr's commitment to the Welsh language as set out under the Welsh language condition.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

A process used to evaluate how policies, practices, or decisions may affect different groups, particularly those with protected characteristics, and to ensure actions promote equality.

Estates Management

The strategic and operational oversight of a provider's physical estate, including buildings and land.

Estyn²

His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, the body with statutory responsibility for carrying out inspections, and developmental (e.g. thematic and geographical) reviews of quality and standards in specified types of education and training providers in Wales. Estyn also provides Medr and Welsh Government with advice and guidance on the standards and quality of education and training (Sections 57-68 of the **Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022** (the Act)).

Estyn and QAA reviews

For providers subject to inspection by Estyn or review by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), these external assessments contribute to our understanding of quality, leadership, and learner outcomes. Medr does not duplicate these processes but will consider their outcomes where relevant to our conditions and regulatory functions. Where Estyn or QAA identify significant concerns, we may seek further assurance from the provider or explore whether any compliance issue is indicated.

Exchequer Interest

The contingent interest in a provider held by Medr, arising from the use of exchequer funds, in the form of capital funding provided for a specific purpose, to purchase or develop an asset. Such interest may create an obligation upon the provider to repay grant, or recognise a liability, on the occurrence of certain exceptional circumstances. In the context of this Regulatory Framework, exchequer funds are government grant or grant-in-aid paid by Medr and its predecessor funding bodies, the Research Councils, Welsh Government and Welsh Office.

Exempt Charity

An institution established for charitable purposes that is not required to register with the Charity Commission, but is instead regulated by a Principal Regulator. Exempt charities must still comply with the usual legal rules applicable to charities, including the Charities Acts.

External Quality Assessment

A process carried out by a body that is independent of the provider to assure quality and drive continuous improvement. This encompasses both reviews and inspections. Reports are published and will confirm whether the provision meets quality standards.

Financial Commitment

Financial commitments, or borrowings, are aligned to the definition as set out within UK generally accepted accounting practice, such as financial reporting standard 102 ('FRS 102') or successor standards.

Financial Management

The systems, processes, and oversight arrangements that ensure a provider's financial affairs are conducted sustainably, transparently, and in alignment with strategic

² Included as Estyn has a statutory role in quality assessment of tertiary education

objectives. This includes budgeting, forecasting, internal controls, covenant monitoring, and compliance with public funding requirements. Financial management extends to all entities within a provider's group structure and is a key component of the Governance and Management condition.

Financial Risk

The potential for instability or mismanagement in a provider's financial operations that may threaten compliance, learner outcomes, or organisational sustainability.

Financial Sustainability

A requirement for providers to demonstrate ongoing financial health, viability, and capacity to fulfil obligations without jeopardising educational quality (and where relevant, research and innovation capability) over the medium term of at least three to five years.

Financial Viability

The ability of a provider to remain financially viable in the short term of one to two years, with no reason to suppose the provider is at material risk of insolvency within this period.

Fit for Purpose

A phrase used to indicate that a system, process, policy, or plan is sufficiently robust, appropriate, and effective to meet its intended regulatory or educational purpose.

Formal Complaint

A complaint submitted through an official channel, typically in writing, and subject to investigation under the relevant organisation's complaints procedure.

Franchise Arrangements

Arrangements between a registered provider and another education provider under which the registered provider provides higher education to a learner on behalf of the other provider or authorises the other provider to provide higher education to a learner on its behalf. These are also referred to as sub-contractual arrangements.

Further and Higher Education Statement of Recognised Practice ('FE/HE SORP')

Statements of Recommended Practice (SORPs) provide a framework, supporting UK Generally Applicable Accounting Practice, giving specific guidance to specialist industries or sectors on the preparation their financial statements. SORPs are mandatory for entities in scope. The Further and Higher Education Statement SORP combines the requirements for providers of both further and higher education in the UK.

Good Governance

The principles and practices that ensure a provider is effectively led, managed, and held accountable. This includes transparency, integrity, adherence to the Nolan Principles of Good Governance, and alignment with a recognised and appropriate governance code.

Good Quality

Good quality education meets the reasonable needs of learners. It is demonstrated by positive outcomes for learners, in the context of the diversity of the sector and the learner body. This includes:

- course completion, achievement of qualifications, and progression to employment or further study

- a good learner experience, including in relation to teaching and learning, as evidenced by learner engagement and satisfaction with their education
- pursuit of continuous improvement through effective self-assessment and responding to feedback.

Education demonstrating these features is considered to represent good value for public funding. Partially and fully Welsh-medium provision is embedded in these approaches.

Governance and Management

The effectiveness of a provider's oversight of systems, leadership, decision-making structures, and internal controls—including risk, audit, and strategic governance.

Governing Body (or Equivalent)

The highest decision-making authority charged with governance within a provider. Responsible for strategic direction, oversight, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory obligations. The governing body (or equivalent) must act collectively and in the best interests of the provider. Governing bodies may differ in form across the tertiary sector, for example: for higher education and further education providers this is the Board or Council and is mainly non-executive; for training providers not normally regarded as institutions the governing body may be the persons responsible for the providers' management; for adult community learning it will be the governing body, council or equivalent of the body funded for the provision (normally the local authority, but can also be further education providers); and for sixth form provision in maintained schools it will normally be the council of the local authority. The exception to this is the learner engagement code, where the governing body of a maintained school is the body responsible for compliance. Please check with Medr if you are uncertain what constitutes your provider's governing body.

For local authorities, this should therefore be read as references to the local authority acting through its established governance and assurance bodies responsible for post-16 education.

Governing Body (or Equivalent) Operations

The processes and resources that support the effective functioning of the governing body (or equivalent), including access to independent advice, budgetary support, and transparent decision-making.

Governing Documents

The legal documents which outline the purpose, rules and procedures for how a provider is run.

Group Structure

The organisational or legal configuration of a provider with related entities, used to assess financial links and liabilities as part of financial sustainability evaluation.

Harassment

Harassment has the meaning given in section 26 of the Equality Act 2010, Section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and Section 24 of the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015.

Hate Crime

Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity. This reflects the definition currently used by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service. As this agreed definition may be updated from time to time, providers should refer to the most recent CPS or police guidance when applying this definition in practice.

HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency)

The UK's official agency for collecting, analysing, and disseminating data about higher education providers, including learner and staff records.

Higher Education (Alternative) Category

Providers in the alternative category do not need to be charities. Their courses are also automatically approved for student support, but students can only access the lower level of tuition fee loans. These providers are not subject to tuition fee limits, so they can set their own fees.

Higher Education (Core) Category

Providers in the core category must be charities. Their courses are automatically approved for student support for undergraduate and postgraduate provision, and students can access the higher level of tuition fee loans for undergraduate provision. These providers are also subject to tuition fee limits for undergraduate provision set by the Welsh Government, meaning fees for this provision are capped.

Higher Education (HE) Provision

Programmes of study typically at Level 4 or above, leading to qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, foundation degrees, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate awards. Provision may be delivered directly by a registered provider or through franchised or subcontracted arrangements.

Inclusive Practice

An approach to education that actively seeks to remove barriers to participation and achievement for all learners, particularly those from under-represented or disadvantaged groups.

Increased Engagement

A greater than usual frequency of engagement with a provider's leadership as a form of enhanced monitoring (see Enhanced Monitoring). This is likely to arise from concerns over non-compliance or potential non-compliance with conditions of funding or registration, and could lead to regulatory interventions as specified in the Statement of Intervention.

Independent Assurance

Third-party assurance obtained by providers, such as other regulating bodies, internal audits, external evaluations, or expert reviews. These can support a provider's self-evaluation of compliance and may contribute to our understanding of how risks are being identified and managed internally. Where relevant, we may ask providers to share key findings or actions arising from such reviews and any associated action plans.

Initial Monitoring

The process undertaken by Medr during the registration of a provider to assess its compliance. Initial monitoring informs the application of ongoing conditions and determines the proportionality of future monitoring.

Insolvency

A provider being unable to pay its debts as they fall due. Being unable to pay debts as they fall due has the meaning given by section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986, substituting 'Medr' for 'the court' in section 123(2).

Inspection

External quality assurance focused on improvement and evaluation of tertiary providers other than higher education, carried out by Estyn. The core cyclical inspection arrangements are detailed in the *What we inspect* and *How we inspect* guidance for each sector.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

A tool used to evaluate the potential effects of policies and decisions on equality, the Welsh language, rights, and socio-economic disadvantages.

Internal Control

Actions, systems and processes used by providers to manage risk in line with their risk appetite and increase the likelihood that their strategy, goals and objectives will be achieved.

Intervention Powers

The statutory and non-statutory mechanisms available to Medr to address non-compliance or risk in regulated providers. These include specified powers under the Act and other non-specified actions such as enhanced monitoring, action plans, or funding levers.

Learner

The collective term used for individuals undertaking learning in the tertiary education sector in a wide range of settings including classrooms, workplaces and communities. Within different parts of the tertiary education sector more specific terms are often used, such as 'student', 'pupil', 'doctoral researcher' or 'apprentice.'

Learner Engagement

Active involvement of learners in shaping their education, support services, and provider decision-making processes.

Learner Engagement Code

A statutory framework published by Medr that sets out expectations for how learners should be involved in decision-making processes within their provider. Compliance with the Code is a condition of registration or funding.

Learner Lifecycle

The stages of a learner's journey through tertiary education, including access, transition, retention, outcomes, progression, and participation in research and innovation.

Learner Protection Plan

A formal document, requested by Medr, outlining how a provider will support learners in the event of significant disruption to their studies, including provider or campus closure, or course discontinuation, or other circumstances which could negatively impact on learners. It should also set out how learners will be supported if they wish to transfer to a new course of tertiary education for any reason.

Learner Surveys

Medr uses findings from learner surveys - including the National Student Survey (NSS) and any future cross-sector surveys - to gain insight into learner experience, satisfaction, and concerns. These survey results may provide useful indicators of quality, equity, and wellbeing, especially when triangulated with other data. Survey results may also inform our thematic priorities or highlight providers where additional engagement could be valuable.

Learner Voice

The views, needs and feedback of learners, gathered and used to shape policy, teaching, support services, and strategic planning.

Learning Activity

Individual courses or qualifications undertaken by a learner

Learning Programme (Programme)

A set of learning activities (qualifications) with a defined purpose and outcome

Legal Basis

The statutory foundation for a regulatory condition or requirement, typically referencing specific sections of the Act. The legal basis provides the authority under which Medr imposes conditions of registration or funding and ensures that regulatory actions are grounded in legislation.

Lifelong Learning

Broad term that is generally taken to include learning for adults that is provided on a part-time or flexible basis at any level, and intended to help people develop knowledge and skills throughout their life. It often includes part-time learning for adults (who may be in employment already), and adult community learning.

LLWR (Lifelong Learning Wales Record)

The data collection system used to gather data from further education, apprenticeship and adult community learning providers in Wales.

Measurable Outcomes

Specific, evidence-based targets set by providers to demonstrate progress in promoting equality of opportunity across access, retention, attainment, and progression.

Mechanisms for Engagement

The structured and meaningful ways in which a provider involves learners and staff in shaping provision, services, or institutional strategy.

Medr Register

The Register established and maintained by Medr under section 25(1) of the Act.

Mental Health

A state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and wellbeing that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right, and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development. People with poor mental health can have a mental health condition but this is not always or necessarily the case

Misconduct

Refers to behaviour by learners or staff that breaches organisational codes of conduct, policies, or legal standards and includes misconduct relating to a programme of learning (e.g. plagiarism, cheating). Each provider's governing documents and internal policies determine what constitutes misconduct within their institution. Medr's use of the term reflects this institutional context and does not impose an independent or overarching definition.

Misconduct (as it Relates to Staff and Learner Welfare)

Refers to behaviour by learners or staff that is not academic related and breaches organisational codes of conduct, policies, or legal standards. It can include harassment, violence (including sexual violence), discrimination, or criminal behaviour.

Monitoring

The ongoing process by which Medr gathers and analyses information to assess whether providers are meeting their conditions of registration or funding. Monitoring is risk-based and proportionate, and may include data and other returns submitted directly to Medr or accessed by Medr via other parties, engagement with provider leadership, and other forms of evidence. It supports both compliance and continuous improvement across the tertiary education sector.

National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh

A national framework to be prepared by Welsh Ministers under section 24 of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, which will set out expectations for Welsh-language education and for learning Welsh, including in tertiary education.

National Institute for Learning Welsh

The national body to be established under section 38 of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, to support people to learn Welsh, and facilitate their progress, so that more people (of all ages) are learning the language. The Institute will replace the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

National Plan for the Welsh Language in Tertiary Education

Medr's plan (in development) to increase and improve Welsh-medium education and assessment across the tertiary sector in Wales, led by Medr in collaboration with stakeholders.

National Student Survey (NSS)

The National Student Survey (NSS) is a UK-wide annual survey of final year undergraduate students that gathers their views on their learning experience. Results are

used to inform prospective students, support providers to improve the quality of the student experience, and contribute to public accountability.

Negative Assurance Internal Audit Report

Currently, there is no set terminology to define a negative assurance internal audit report, as every chief audit executive is free to define the criteria and language for their audit opinion. Providers can confirm the terminology used to define their assurance levels with their chief audit executive.

Notifiable Event

A type of reportable event that providers are required to report to Medr on a monthly basis. These events may not be immediately critical but are relevant to ongoing compliance and risk assessment. Providers are responsible for determining and disclosing such events in a timely manner.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

The independent body that reviews student complaints in higher education in England and Wales.

Operational Cash Generation

The underlying recurrent cash generated from operating activities in a reported period or year. This will be expressed as adjusted earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortisation, ('EBITDA') where 'adjusted' refers to the removal of non-recurrent items such as capital grants, restructuring costs, non-cash adjustments and other accounting treatments other than accruals that do not equate to cash. To reduce burden, Medr will only adjust for items already separately disclosed on other finance returns.

Parity of Experience

The expectation that learners studying through validation arrangements receive learning and pastoral support, resources, and opportunities equivalent to those provided directly by the awarding provider.

Participation

Participation in the context of the equality of opportunity condition, includes a focus on widening access and tackling barriers to engaging in learning, and/or the carrying out of research, experienced by people from under-represented groups (see definition of under-represented groups above). Widening access includes a response to socio-economic disadvantage and our commitment to act in the spirit of the Equality Act socio-economic duty and supporting people with protected characteristics. Widening access to, through and beyond tertiary education should ensure everyone can achieve their full potential.

Prevent Duty

A statutory duty placed on specified authorities, such as universities, colleges and schools, under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. It requires those authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This may include ensuring appropriate policies, risk assessments, staff training, welfare and safeguarding arrangements, and processes for managing external speakers and events. Medr considers compliance with the Prevent Duty when assessing relevant conditions of registration or funding.

Post-16 Data Collection

The data collection used to gather learner, learning programme, and learning activity data from maintained schools with sixth forms in Wales.

Proportionate Response

A principle underpinning regulatory action taken by Medr in respect of providers, whereby the action taken is appropriate to the nature, scale, and severity of the issue at hand.

Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Provider

An organisation which provides tertiary education or training.

Providers May

Indicates that the provider has the option to take the action described. It does not create a requirement, an expectation, or an implied obligation. Choosing not to take the action carries no regulatory consequence.

Providers Must

Where Medr uses the term 'must', it means it is a specific legal requirement or regulatory requirement. Providers must comply with these requirements.

Providers Should

Where Medr uses the term 'should', it refers to actions or practices that are strongly encouraged but not legally required in the conditions of registration or funding; however, Medr would expect governing bodies (or equivalent) to take such guidance into account. Medr will consider the extent to which a provider has given due regard to 'should' provisions when assessing provider risk.

Providers Will (or Will be Expected to)

A phrase used to describe actions or commitments that Medr expects providers to undertake as part of their regulatory responsibilities. These statements often reflect future obligations or standard practices.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

A legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 requiring public bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups.

Publicly Available Information Monitoring

Medr may monitor publicly available information, for example published information on provider websites, including the clarity, accuracy and accessibility of information presented to current and prospective learners. This helps ensure compliance with conditions related to transparency, consumer protection, and fair treatment of learners. We may request changes where required information is missing or unclear, or where content may suggest potential breaches of registration conditions.

QAA³

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education; the UK's independent quality body for the quality assurance of tertiary education provision. QAA is the custodian of sector-owned reference points including the UK Quality Code, and provides guidance and enhancement activity throughout the UK as well as European Standards and Guidelines-compliant reviews in different capacities by nation.

Quality Committee

A statutory Committee of Medr, which advises Medr on the quality of all tertiary education that it funds or otherwise secures.

Quality Enhancement Review

External quality assurance assessment of higher education providers carried out by the QAA in Wales. The current review method for regulated higher education providers is the Quality Enhancement review, with a Gateway Quality Review used for providers who wish to become regulated.

Reasonable Needs

These are defined in the Act as being 'the reasonable needs of those receiving the education or undertaking the course.' These will change over time (e.g. the introduction of technology has changed the learner experience in recent years). Medr will use good quality as a proxy for reasonable needs.

Reasonable Steps

Actions that a provider is expected to take in order to minimise potential regulatory harm, or to meet compliance requirements. The reasonableness is judged in context, reflecting proportionality, scale, and the resources available to the provider.

Reflective Dialogue

Engagement that is non-directive, achieved via context-sensitive conversations that allow providers to reflect on their own performance, raise emerging issues, and engage with Medr on shared system challenges.

Regulatory Philosophy

The overarching approach that guides Medr's regulation of the tertiary education sector. It blends rules-based compliance with outcome-focused improvement, encouraging providers to meet baseline standards while striving for excellence. The philosophy emphasises proportionality, risk-based oversight, and institutional responsibility, aiming to foster a culture of self-regulation, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Reportable Events

Events that must be disclosed to Medr by providers, including both serious incidents and notifiable events, which may impact compliance with conditions of registration or funding. This includes events such as major financial issues, legal proceedings, leadership or governance failures, or breaches of statutory obligations. Providers must report serious incidents within five working days and notifiable events monthly, ensuring transparency and enabling timely regulatory response. The Reportable Events process is a core part of our model. It enables early, proportionate response to emerging issues and support a

³ Included as the QAA carries out quality activities

culture of trust, openness, and accountability. Supplementary detail is provided to help providers determine when reporting is required.

Research

As set out by the OECD in the Frascati Manual research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of people, culture and society - and to devise new application of available knowledge.

Requirement

A specific obligation that a provider must meet in order to comply with a regulatory condition. Requirements may relate to financial sustainability, governance, learner protection, or other areas of performance. They are assessed through monitoring and may be supported by guidance or additional expectations issued by Medr.

Risk Appetite

The nature and extent of risk that a provider is exposed to and willing to take on in its pursuit of its long-term objectives

Risk-Based Regulation

A principle underpinning Medr's regulatory approach, where monitoring activity will be aligned to both the risk appetite associated with each condition and the nature of each provider. This dual-risk lens allows for proportionality and flexibility, avoiding unnecessary burden while ensuring effective oversight. The intensity and nature of oversight will be proportionate to the level of risk to a learner, the public purse or the reputation of Welsh tertiary education.

Risk Judgement

Medr's assessment of the level of risk posed by an overall assessment of a provider's risk to compliance with the conditions which drives the intensity and nature of monitoring and oversight of that provider in the relevant condition area or overall. Our risk judgements will be evidence-led, responsive, and kept under regular review.

Risk Profile

Medr's internal profile of individual provider risk based on Medr's risk judgement.

Safety

in the context of staff and learner welfare safety means freedom from harm, including harassment, misconduct, violence (including sexual violence), and hate crime.

Safeguarding

Measures that a provider takes to protect learners and staff from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm, including training, policies and reporting procedures.

Self-Evaluation

A reflective process, through which providers evaluate their own performance, to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, and how they prioritise those areas for improvement. This informs the provider's own self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Medr may draw upon existing self-evaluation undertaken by providers, or request the provider to self-evaluate in respect of our conditions.

Self-Regulation

An expectation that providers take ownership of their compliance and improvement responsibilities. Self-regulation involves proactive risk management, internal accountability, and a commitment to transparency, including the self-reporting of issues. It is a key component of Medr's regulatory philosophy, supporting a mature and responsive tertiary education sector.

Self-Reporting

A structured process through which providers can notify Medr of serious incidents or material risks, enabling timely intervention and joint problem-solving. We expect providers to adopt a general culture of openness and to alert Medr if they become aware of emerging risks or compliance challenges. This includes issues that may not yet meet the threshold for formal reporting but could have implications for learners or regulatory confidence. Early and proactive self-reporting helps ensure proportionate response, avoids escalation, and is treated as a sign of good governance.

Senior Executive Team

The highest level of leadership and management within a provider that is responsible for implementation of the provider's strategy and the provider's overall management and operations and is ultimately accountable to the provider's governing body.

Serious Incident

A type of reportable event that must be reported to Medr within five working days. It includes significant failures or risks that may affect compliance, learner protection, or public confidence. Providers must submit detailed information and follow-up reports as necessary.

Social Research

Research into how people behave and interact within society. In Medr social research is likely to include primary research commissioned to understand the impact of our policies; literature reviews; surveys of learners, the workforce and stakeholders; and evaluations of our programmes and projects.

Social Partnership

Collaboration between employers and trade unions. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 places a statutory duty on certain public bodies to include recognised trade unions in setting their wellbeing objectives, and in making decisions about how to meet those objectives. Medr is one of the public bodies with this duty, and also has a statutory duty to promote collaboration between tertiary education providers and trade unions.

Socio-economic Duty (Wales)

A statutory duty requiring specified public bodies to consider how strategic decisions can reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. Medr has committed to 'act in the spirit of the socio-economic duty and will discharge this duty by placing related expectations on those it regulates and funds.

Specified and Non-specified Interventions

Intervention powers available to Medr under the Act. Specified interventions are explicitly defined in legislation and include formal actions such as directions, reviews, and de-registration. Non-specified interventions are not detailed in the Act but may include

enhanced monitoring, action plans, or funding levers used to support compliance and improvement.

Strategic Equality Plan (SEP)

A plan required of those education providers in Wales who are listed in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. The SEP is a document that sets out the steps the provider is taking to fulfil its specific duties including setting equality objectives, (see EHRC guidance for further information).

Suitability Checks

Pre-employment or continuing checks that assess the appropriateness of staff and individuals interacting with learners, often including DBS clearance, qualifications, references, and right to work in the UK.

Tertiary Education Sector

The collective term for post-16 education and training provision in Wales, including sixth form, adult learning, work-based learning, further education, and higher education.

Threshold Standards

Minimum expectations of performance. Medr will consult on any threshold standards for learner outcomes it wishes to adopt. Any such consultation will set out minimum numerical thresholds to inform us in making judgements about whether providers are delivering good learner outcomes. The thresholds may need to vary across different parts of the sector, and different qualifications to recognise the diversity of provision. Contextual issues may mean that a provider with performance below such a threshold is delivering positive outcomes for learners. Performance against threshold standards will therefore inform part of a broader consideration regarding whether the reasonable needs of learners are being met.

Transition Year

Where Medr references a transition year this represents the regulatory period during which providers begin aligning with the conditions of the Regulatory Framework while some legacy requirements (e.g. Fee and Access Plans for higher education) remain in effect.

Under-Represented Groups (Legal Definition)

Groups identified in legislation or guidance as having lower participation, success, or progression rates in tertiary education due to social, cultural, economic, or organisational factors.

Validation Arrangement

Arrangements between an applicant tertiary education provider and another education provider under which the applicant tertiary education provider awards a qualification to a student at the other provider or authorises the other provider to award a qualification on its behalf

Violence

Violence in this context includes actions that cause harm or threaten harm to another person fall under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, the Public Order Act 1986, and other statutes. It also includes gender-based violence and sexual violence as interpreted in section 24 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual

Violence (Wales) Act 2015. This includes violence between learners, staff, or third parties, and can occur on campus; virtual campuses; and provider-leased, occupied or owned accommodation, or during on or off-site activities under the supervision of the provider.

Warning Notice

A formal notification issued by Medr to a provider's governing body (or equivalent) prior to taking certain regulatory actions, such as issuing a direction or imposing a specific ongoing condition. The notice outlines the proposed action, the reasons for it, and provides the provider with an opportunity to make representations within a specified timeframe.

Welfare

Learner and staff welfare includes wellbeing and safety. 'Wellbeing' means emotional wellbeing and mental health and 'Safety' means freedom from harms including harassment, misconduct, violence (including sexual violence) and hate crime. Medr interprets "welfare" in accordance with the explanatory memorandum for TERA. This is explained in Medr's regulatory framework.

Welfare Risk Register

A document maintained by providers that identifies potential risks to staff and learner welfare and outlines mitigation strategies.

Welfare Plan

An annual plan submitted by providers to Medr outlining priorities and actions to support and promote staff and learner welfare, including mental health and safety initiatives.

Welsh Language Standards

Statutory requirements set by the Welsh Language Commissioner that local authorities, universities and colleges, must comply with to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh.

Welsh Language Strategy

A strategy published and maintained by a provider's governing body (or equivalent) that sets out how the provider will take all reasonable steps to promote the Welsh language, in accordance with the requirements set out under the Welsh Language Condition.

Welsh-medium Provision

Education or training delivered, either partially or fully, through the medium of Welsh, including teaching, assessment, and learner support.

Whole Provider Approach

A strategy where all parts of a provider, including governance, leadership, staff, and services, work collectively to deliver good outcomes for learners and staff, embedding relevant policies and procedures across every aspect of the provider's activities.

Wholly or Mainly Carried on in Wales

Medr interprets "wholly or mainly carried on in Wales" to refer to the overall substance and centre of gravity of a provider's tertiary education activities, including tertiary education delivered on its behalf, in line with section 144 of the Act. In forming this judgement, Medr may consider a range of indicators. These factors support an assessment that a provider's activities are "wholly or mainly" carried on in Wales:

- It is legally established in Wales; and
- It has its principal place of business in Wales; and
- Its UK-based educational activity is mainly carried out in Wales, including tertiary education provided on its behalf (such as through franchise or sub-contractual provision)

Please see our condition on “Status as a Tertiary Education Provider in Wales” for further explanation of our interpretation.

Working Capital

This is the provider’s cash reserve available to be spent on day-to-day operational needs. It excludes restricted or otherwise designated or ring-fenced monies.

This document provides general guidance to support understanding of Medr’s Regulatory Framework. It does not replace or override the statutory requirements set out in the Act, associated regulations, or the regulatory conditions published by Medr. In the event of any inconsistency, the statutory provisions and the formally published regulatory conditions take precedence.

Medr

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