

Annual Quality Assurance Summary for North Wales Medical School

This summary provides an overview of how an organisation is progressing towards meeting our standards as detailed in [Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training](#). It outlines the quality assurance activities we undertook and a summary of our findings.

Organisation	North Wales Medical School
Review period	2024/2025

Overview of findings

Overall findings statement

North Wales Medical School (the school) is proposing to deliver a 5-year BMBS programme and a 4-year Graduate Entry (GE) BMBS programme based in Bangor, North Wales. The 5-year course commenced in September 2024 and the 4-year GE programme commenced in August 2024.

Overall, the activities undertaken as part of this year's quality assurance cycle have provided the panel with sufficient assurance that the school is making good progress towards meeting our standards.

We set recommendations and requirements where we have found areas for improvement related to our standards. Following this year's quality activities, we have set 1 recommendation relating to the school's facilities. Details of this can be found in the 'Recommendations' and 'Requirements' sections of this document.

If, through our ongoing quality assurance processes, we identify significant risks and feel the school is not progressing satisfactorily towards meeting our standards, we may recommend a delay or pause to the programme. We will highlight any concerns to you as soon as we become aware of them and work with you to address these.

Quality Activity undertaken

Activity	Date	Summary
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1	3 rd SAQ submission	02/12/2024	<p>The SAQ was submitted on time and covered all five themes of <i>Promoting excellence</i>. It provided a good overview of how the school plans to meet our standards in line with its planned timelines.</p> <p>This was scrutinised by the GMC team including our education associates.</p>
2	Document Submission	02/12/2024 13/02/2025	<p>Documents submitted alongside the SAQ submission</p> <p>Documents submitted ahead of in person visit to the school</p>
3	In person visit to the school	03/03/2025	<p>The visit focused on areas of the SAQ that required further clarification and exploration to provide assurance around the school's progress towards meeting our standards.</p> <p>The sessions we conducted comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the senior management team (including quality team) ● year 1 students ● curriculum and assessment ● academic and clinical educators ● contingency school representatives ● Placement staff ● student support and fitness to practice. <p>We met with a range of staff and representatives from North Wales Medical School, Cardiff Medical School, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Primary Care providers. We also met with a group of year 1 students.</p> <p>At the end of the visit day, we verbally highlighted areas we found to be progressing well as well as areas that require focus.</p>
4	Initial feedback proforma	06/03/2025	A document outlining the key areas highlighted verbally at the end of the visit was shared with the school.
5	Year 2 student Q&A session	24/03/2025	As the year 2 students from the GE programme were unavailable on the day of the visit, we held a separate

			Q&A session with them. We asked questions focused on the themes of Promoting Excellence.
6	Updated version of initial feedback proforma	09/04/2025	During the year 2 student Q&A session, we identified a further area that requires focus. We amended the initial feedback proforma to reflect this and shared the document with the school.
7	SAQ Written Feedback	23/04/2025	The GMC's line-by-line feedback in response to the school's SAQ submission. This details our review of progression against each of our standards and details additional information sought at the next submission inclusive of additional supporting documentary evidence required.
8	Summer meeting with the school Senior Management Team	30/07/2025	<p>The school delivered a presentation detailing its progress in addressing the open recommendation, and the areas for focus identified following the March 2025 visit. The GMC panel also had the opportunity to ask exploratory questions in response to the presentation.</p> <p>Overall, the panel felt the school's presentation was comprehensive and the school's responses to the panel's questions provided additional assurance around the progress the school is making towards meeting our standards.</p>

Areas working well

We note areas where we have found that not only our standards are met, but they are well embedded in the organisation.

Number	Theme	Areas working well
1	Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership, R2.6, R2.20	The school has provided reassuring updates about progress in admissions, placement capacity and SLAs.
2	Theme 3: Supporting learners, R3.2, R3.5	We were pleased to hear about the school's plans to emphasise student voice, mental wellbeing and future preparedness.
3	Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments, R5.1	We were encouraged to hear about the progress of the Gateway year entry route which helps prepare Welsh-domiciled students for entry into the medical degree programme.

Areas for focus

Number	Theme	Requirements
1	Theme 1: Learning environment and culture, R1.7	We heard that there has been progress on staff recruitment. However, the school needs to maintain momentum with recruitment to ensure that there are no gaps in delivery.
2	Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments, R5.12	The school provided reassurance that a school-based disability tutor will be involved in decisions about adjustments related to competency standards. However, it is essential that individuals with clinical practice experience are responsible for decisions regarding adjustments that may affect patient safety; therefore, we recommend clearly identifying and confirming their role in the decision-making process.

Updates on open requirements and recommendations

Number	Open requirement	Update
1	<p>Theme 1: Learning environment and culture, R1.19</p> <p>Given the delays to the refurbishment of the proposed medical school building, the school should consider expanding its existing contingency plans for facilities, to ensure adequate learning space as student numbers increase.</p> <p>[Corresponding area of SAQ: LEC1-07]</p>	<p>We have remaining concerns about the medical school facilities, which is covered by the open recommendation. At the meeting the school provided reassurance that additional rooms made available in the Brigantia building will meet the space needs to deliver the programme for the forthcoming academic year. However, the long term plans to ensure suitable space remain in flux, and certainty is urgently needed to ensure that space which is fit for purpose will be ready in time to meet future requirements.</p> <p>We were reassured to hear that communication with students on changes has been prioritised.</p>

Next steps

The school has been provided with areas within the line-by-line SAQ feedback that require additional information or focus for the school to continue to progress. In addition, key areas for enhanced focus to ensure progression have been highlighted in this document. We also expect any relevant updates across all SAQ items to be provided. The school should review the feedback provided, and submit the next SAQ no later than **29 November 2025**, alongside any supporting documentation.

Once we have received the submission of the next SAQ, we will work to review this and organise our next quality assurance activity. This will include...

- An in-person visit to the school to meet with stakeholders. We will meet with students, educators, representatives from Local Education Providers and the Senior Management Team at a minimum.
- We may also meet with other staff at the school, e.g., representatives from the student support and quality teams. We hope for this visit to take place in early 2026.

Following this visit we may decide to undertake additional quality activities in this cycle. Once we have received and reviewed the resubmission of the SAQ and supporting documentation, and undertaken the visit in early 2026, as well as any additional quality activities, we will provide the school with written line-by-line SAQ feedback, as well as an Annual Quality Assurance Summary for the 2025-26 cycle.

Organisation's response

The organisation has the right to reply to the AQAS; if they have responded it will be included below.

Organisation's response