Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Barnfield College

May 2011

SR 67/2010

Preface

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Purpose of IQER

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

The IQER process

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

Developmental engagement

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams, however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report.

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published. Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's

management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

Executive summary

The Summative review of Barnfield College carried out in May 2011

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- where students change direction during their studies the collaborative partnership is able to provide alternative, more suitable progression routes
- there is a high overall level of support for staff development, from the College and the awarding body.

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it would be **advisable** for the College to:

- establish more formal student participation at course level, so as to allow the expression of the student voice and to facilitate the sharing of information such as external examiner reports with student representatives.

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to:

- extend the specific overview of its higher education provision to foster a more collective and strategic approach to the review and enhancement of standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- continue to develop the use of interactive facilities within the virtual learning environment.

A   Introduction and context

1   This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Barnfield College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Bedfordshire. The review was carried out by Mr Tom Cantwell, Mr Dan Morgan, and Mrs Trudy Stiles (reviewers) and Dr John Hurley (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included, documentation supplied by the College; meetings with staff, students, and the awarding body; reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagements in assessment and work-based learning. A summary of findings from the Developmental engagements is provided in section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice),* subject and award benchmark statements*, The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

3   In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree (FD) awards, section D of this report summarises details of the FD programmes delivered at the College.

4   Barnfield College is a large general further education college with three campuses in Luton and a fourth in Bedford. Higher education provision is distributed by curriculum area across all three Luton-based campuses. The College is the largest further education provider in Luton. Barnfield sponsors three school academies to broaden outreach and improve the education opportunities for young people in Luton. This includes the Barnfield Enterprise Academy (Studio School), providing an innovative enterprise-based curriculum, which opened in September 2010.

5   In 2009-10 the College delivered courses to around 11,000 students. Of these 455 were higher education learners registered with the University of Bedfordshire. In 2010-11 the College has 480 student enrolments registered with the University, and within this number 358 students are studying for a Foundation Degree. Three hundred students are full-time (FT) and 180 part-time (PT), constituting 390 full-time equivalents. There are 42 full-time or fractional members of staff currently teaching on higher education and 13 part-time. Increasing numbers of these teach wholly on higher education courses.

6   The following courses, listed with student numbers in brackets, are provided in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire:

- FdA Beauty Therapy and Spa Management (27 FT, 1 PT)
- FdA Complementary Therapy (10 FT, 1 PT)
- FdSc Building Technology (5 FT, 15 PT)
- FdSc Construction Management (7 FT, 17 PT)
- FdA Craft Design (4 FT, 7 PT)
- FdSc Computer Software Development (14 FT, 4 PT)

- FdA Early Years Senior Practitioner (51 FT)
- FdA Fashion and Textile Design (27 FT)
- FdSc Modern Telecommunications (6 FT, 5 PT)
- FdSc Network Management (29 FT, 5 PT)
- FdA Specialist Make-up Design (76 FT)
- FdSc Sports Therapy (29 FT)
- FdSc Web Development (15 FT, 4 PT)
- PGCE/Cert Ed (64 PT)
- Association of Accounting Technicians (58 PT)

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

7   The partnership agreement states that the University will exercise overall responsibility for all matters relating to standards, including assessment, progression, examinations and student appeals. Barnfield College is responsible for the operation and delivery of the programmes, including all teaching and support matters. The University and College agree to cooperate on staff development to ensure subject currency and professional expertise in higher education. The University commits itself to support Barnfield College in developing staff and scholarship.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   The course portfolio shows a decline in the number of programmes, from 21 offered in 2009, at the time of the first Developmental engagement, to 15 being run currently. Student numbers have increased by 60 full-time equivalents over the same period showing consolidation on stronger programmes. Some programmes have not run every year, resulting in a slightly different offer from year to year. A new Head of Higher Education has been appointed since the Developmental engagements. The College has instituted a programme of building, upgrading and replacement across its large estate, including a planned new higher education centre.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A student written submission was submitted, based on an online questionnaire and student focus groups. The information was collated and reported by a member of staff from the College quality assurance unit. This was in turn discussed, modified and approved by a meeting of student representatives. The submission provided indications of student opinion and evaluation.

10   The team also met a group of students during the visit who were drawn from most areas of higher education provision. The students were aware of the student written submission and had participated in providing information to it. The students gave a balanced view of the higher education provision in the College, identifying notable strengths in teaching and tutor contact, with some issues of course organisation.

B   Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

11   Ultimate responsibility for academic standards rests with the awarding body, and this is reflected in the memorandum of collaboration and in the operational structures that provide the framework for day-to-day running of the awards. The primary organisation of the College's higher education is through teaching teams organised into departments. This means that much of the operational management of higher education is conducted through the relationship between course leaders and university link tutors.

12   Nevertheless, the College has in place a clear structure for the management of academic standards. Organisational charts depicting management structures, along with reference to the College quality framework and partnership agreement documents indicate that the College has a clear understanding of how responsibility for the assurance of academic standards is delegated and monitored. While most of these structures apply across the College there are some that support the separate monitoring of higher education. The College has a Higher Education Manager who is line-managed by the Associate Principal: Teaching and Learning and Higher Education who, in turn, reports to the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality Standards. There is a Higher Education Quality and Standards Committee and a Higher Education Quality and Development Group.

13   The Higher Education Manager oversees the reporting structure, particularly with regard to the submission of annual monitoring reports to the awarding body. An annual monitoring report is produced for each programme. The College uses the same report for its self-evaluation of higher education within departments. There is a departmental self-assessment report and also a higher education self-assessment report that are submitted for inclusion within the overall College self-assessment. These management structures and reporting processes provide sufficient oversight and coordination of higher education.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14   The College states that the Academic Infrastructure is 'embedded within the University's quality assurance processes'. Appropriate consideration of academic standards is built in to programme design and the approval processes. Course approval and re-approval systems, implemented by the University, ensure that key documents are aligned with appropriate elements of the Academic Infrastructure. Course information forms take the place of the traditional programme specifications but serve the same purpose and contain the same information. Academic standards are assured through careful alignment with relevant subject and qualification benchmarks, the FHEQ, and the *Code of practice*. Grading criteria are provided by the awarding partner and align with sector standards.

15   The *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* advises that a named progression route to honours level is provided as part of the collaborative agreement. The team found that these routes are provided for all Foundation Degrees and that progression is guaranteed for every student gaining a pass at level 5. Good practice is evident in the management of progression. Where students change direction during their studies the

collaborative partnership is strong enough to be able to provide alternative, more suitable progression routes. This might involve a transfer to a course in a related subject or even, with the aid of a bridging programme, to another discipline.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of validating partners and awarding bodies?

16   Regular monitoring and revalidation procedures are clearly defined in the self-evaluation and in supporting documentation. Course teams maintain active engagement with link tutors to ensure that they meet these requirements. There is a robust set of practices at course level within the single awarding body partnership which support standards. The records of key meetings confirm the College's own statements that higher education is managed in the first instance through the course teams.

17   Strategic management of academic standards is conducted through arrangements that oversee the entirety of the College provision. While the University maintains oversight, for instance of marking standards, the College maintains its own internal college-wide procedures to assure rigour. The Developmental engagement found good practice in internal second-marking and the management of the assessment process.

18   The University forwards external examiner reports to the Higher Education Manager who, in turn, reviews them and distributes them to heads of department. The information informs the College Business Planning and Reporting Cycle. Centralised scrutiny of these documents allows the College's higher education management to make informed decisions regarding the whole of the higher education portfolio. There is, however, scope to strengthen the systems of cross-college management of higher education to develop a stronger strategic responsibility for enhancing standards. It is desirable that the College extends the specific overview of its higher education provision to foster a more collective and strategic approach to the review and enhancement of standards.

19   External examiner reports are not routinely shared with students. Student representatives are invited to field meetings, which are part of the awarding body's quality system. The meetings are held at the University and involve representatives from all partner colleges. There is no student participation in College higher education course committees. Students report that they find it easy to approach their tutors and to discuss day-to-day matters, but that there are no formal meetings at course level as part of the annual monitoring process. National Student Survey results for the College are below average for overall satisfaction with the quality of the courses on offer and with organisation and management. It is advisable that the College establishes more formal student participation at course level to allow the expression of the student voice and to facilitate the sharing of information such as external examiner reports with student representatives.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards?

20   The partnership agreement states that academic standards are maintained at programme level through staff development support from the awarding partner. The University also approves new appointments to the teaching teams. Link tutors work closely with course team leaders to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and up to date. Professional development events offered by the awarding partner are open to College staff. In addition to regular professional development, this offer includes free access for College staff to both degree and postgraduate qualifications. A significant number of College staff have taken the opportunity to develop their qualification profile.

21   The College has effective arrangements for monitoring training needs and the effectiveness of its related practices and procedures. In addition to in-house and awarding partner programmes, the College allows individual staff to engage in self-directed development through an approval process at department level. The College has a professional development recording system that is used to monitor scholarly activity such as research, action learning and subject specific updating. The College system allows external elements to be recorded, and thus provides a comprehensive portrait of each staff member's qualifications and continuing professional development. The College places a significantly lower demand on the contact hours of established teachers than is the sector norm. This allows greater opportunity for teachers to engage in professional development, research and other scholarly activity. The team considers the high overall level of support for staff development, from the College and the awarding body, to be an example of good practice.

22   The Higher Education Manager, in collaboration with the University Partnership Office, is conducting a 'training needs analysis' to help inform future training for higher education tutors. Part of this is a consideration of the use of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice.

> **The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body.**

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

How are responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

23   The partnership agreement places the principal responsibility for the quality of learning opportunities on the College. This is discharged as outlined in paragraphs 11 to 13, through departmental management and reporting with an additional overview of some higher education specific matters.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding body to ensure that students receive appropriate learning opportunities?

24   The College is primarily responsible for the quality of teaching and learning, student support, work-based learning and the resources to sustain student learning. The management and assurance mechanisms for these functions are outlined in the paragraphs below. The self-evaluation details how the College has responded to the Developmental engagements, particularly sharing good practice through the quality and development committee meetings and responding to recommendations through management action. There remains scope to develop existing higher education specific management and committee structures to provide more strategic oversight of higher education across the course portfolio. It is desirable that the College extends the specific overview of its higher education provision to foster a more collective and strategic approach to the review and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

25   The Academic Infrastructure is embedded into course design and operation as outlined in paragraph 14. Staff are confident in their application of the *Code of practice* in relation to assessment feedback; disabled provision; and career information, advice and guidance. Full account is taken of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. Significant areas of good practice were identified in the relationship to employers, and support for students in work and in placements in the Developmental engagement in work-based learning.

How does the College assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

26   There is a college-wide teaching and learning strategy, in the form of an operational manual, to guide staff in their teaching. The strategy is comprehensive but has a further education focus. An established teaching observation scheme requires all teachers to be observed and graded at least once in each academic year. There is provision in the reports of observations for comment on the level of teaching and the relevance of the teaching methods to higher education students. Higher education observations are carried out by staff with higher education teaching experience. Improvement is supported by subject learning coaches who also have experience of higher education.

27   Students appreciate the variety of methods used in sessions, including lectures, demonstrations, discussions and group work, tutorials and workshops, and the opportunity to work independently. They are positive about the quality of teaching they receive. The level of support for learning provided by tutors is considered excellent by most students. There are some reservations about course organisation. On one course, students reported some discontinuity in tutoring due to staff changes, which has adversely affected their learning. Further disruption to student study has been caused by rooming difficulties. Late feedback on assignments is an issue for some students, although this is regarded as an isolated instance among the students and not representative of the overall support for learning.

28   The College undertakes a twice-yearly survey of students that elicits views on the quality and type of teaching and learning activities. The results of these are processed through the reporting cycle, with outcomes made available to students. A dedicated higher education survey has recently been undertaken, but it is acknowledged that the sample was low and further efforts are required to gain meaningful information about the students' perceptions of their courses. Student representatives have been elected, but are not trained. The awarding body makes provisions for students to attend formal field committees as described in paragraph 19. It would be beneficial if higher education students exercised the same responsibilities in the College. Further efforts should be made to encourage students to express their views through formal college structures.

How does the College assure itself that students are supported effectively?

29   Systems for the support of students are established across the College provision. Students on higher education courses benefit from well-developed further education srategies which are laid down in College documentation and monitored through the self-evaluation process. The team considers that the range of provisions support students effectively.

30   Students are given pre-entry course information through attendance at open days or by internal progression presentations to level 3 students. Initial guidance is available to

students at these events. All students receive an initial induction, the content of which is laid down in the teaching and learning strategy. All full-time students are expected to attend a dedicated programme of activities including events at the University.

31   All first year students are offered a four-week higher education research and study skills programme to help them to settle into their studies. This covers key study skills and promotes good academic practice. It is delivered as part of the Personal, Professional Academic Development unit, which is compulsory on all Foundation Degrees, by an experienced tutor from the Additional and Learning Support Department. Subsequent support is concentrated on assessed and identified learning needs and statemented disabilities.

32   All students are assigned a personal tutor who is responsible for checking that they are being supported effectively and to ensure targets are established to support their progress on the course. For full-time students, personal tutors provide regular one-to-one tutorials and weekly group tutorials. Students who are at risk are identified and support strategies are put in place. The College has a Guidance and Learning Support Service accessible at all campuses. It provides a range of services to support the non-academic needs of students, including financial advice, a counselling service, careers guidance, and childcare.

33   Students undertaking work-based and placement learning are generally required to find their own placement, though opportunities to work on live briefs and for competitions are also available. Students are well-supported by tutor visits and employer mentoring arrangements. Good practice identified in the Developmental engagement has been disseminated. A comprehensive Work Based Learning Handbook is provided that highlights the responsibilities of the learner, the College and the employer. It includes a placement checklist, a student contract and a learning plan.

What are the College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

34   The College has an Organisational Development Strategy that identifies the crucial role that staff play in delivering good quality learning opportunities. It determines how they will be supported in their endeavours. The strategy outlines the support available to ensure staff can conduct their roles effectively. All staff are involved in their training needs analysis through an appraisal scheme that provides access to relevant training opportunities. The College provides ample opportunities for staff development in its priority areas. This enables staff to achieve their 30 hours mandatory continuous professional development. Staff records show full participation in these programmes.

35   Subject learning coaches are a recent initiative and a number of higher education specialists have been identified as coaches. Their role is to enhance the quality of teaching through the use of coaching techniques with tutors. The coaches provide effective support for higher education tutors.

How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programmes?

36   The College operates a devolved annual operating budget system to each curriculum area. There is also a capital equipment allocation which is bid for each year. Building resources are reviewed centrally and this process ensures facilities for higher education are appropriate. A new higher education centre has passed the design stage and

buildings are subject to a rolling programme of updating. Facilities are shared with further education but provide specialist support to particular programmes, such as a make-up design studio and sports therapy clinic. With growth in higher education student numbers in certain subject areas, such as sports therapy, resources need to be matched to increasing numbers.

37   Libraries are situated on all the campuses where higher education is delivered. Book collections are adequate to sustain the courses and all libraries provide quiet study or higher education areas. Access is considered appropriate, though students make the point that longer opening times would be helpful. The library takes over 100 journals considered relevant to higher education, some of which are available electronically, and thus remotely. The main portal for electronic journals is through the University virtual learning environment where students have full access rights.

38   Students have access to the College and University virtual learning environments. They are actively encouraged to use them as part of the teaching and learning strategy. At the Developmental engagement for assessment there was a concern that the University system was insufficiently used. Increasing usage by students and staff to support work-based learning was noted at the subsequent Developmental engagement. The University virtual learning environment now functions as an effective repository of academic information for all Barnfield College courses. Feedback from students endorses its usage. Staff are trained in the use of the system, and on some courses it is compulsory for students to use its interactive facilities. On other programmes there is further scope to develop interactive uses. It is desirable that the use of interactive facilities within the virtual learning environment continue to be developed.

> **The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities, as required by the awarding body, to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

Core theme 3: Public information

What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?

39   In partnership with the University, the College produces a range of publicity materials, both online and paper-based. Much of the content is originated from the University, but dual branding identifies the College's joint responsibility.

40   The College website is easily navigated to find higher education information on courses, funding, accommodation, learning resource facilities, relevant professional qualifications and some success stories. The College is not presently printing a higher education prospectus, preferring to maintain online course leaflets and associated information. The majority of students initially obtain course information from the website, through level 3 course presentations or at open days.

41   At enrolment, students are provided with a course handbook that includes assessment requirements, guidance and assessment submission dates. Each course handbook also provides details of the University grading system. Course handbooks are jointly created and renewed annually by the course team leaders and University link tutors. The course handbooks and unit handbooks are produced by the College, using a standard University template. Content is taken from the University course information form and the

unit information form respectively. They are customised to include specific College information.

42   Reference to work-based learning is made on the College website. Unit handbooks provide further information about the intended learning outcomes, assessment requirements, feedback opportunities and paperwork to be completed for work-based learning. Since the Developmental engagement, the College has disseminated good practice in the use of work-based learning handbooks for both the employer and the students to all courses. They include a tripartite agreement, with responsibilities of the College, employer and students clearly defined or, where appropriate, arrangements to support and mentor reflective practice.

What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing? How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?

43   The partnership agreement sets out the process by which information is quality assured. There is a defined management process and clear responsibilities to ensure that information is accurate and up to date. College information is produced in conformity with University requirements. Publications are customised to include College information, checked by the course team and link tutor, and produced under a joint imprint. All College course and unit handbooks and leaflets are checked for accuracy firstly by the course team leader and the link tutor. They are subsequently checked by the College Higher Education Manager.

44   The University marketing team and faculty staff verify and approve the content of marketing materials before the College marketing department produce the draft copies. The Higher Education Manager approves all documents. The College Vice-Principal for Curriculum and Standards meets regularly with the Marketing Manager to approve all public information. The clearly defined verification process ensures that the College and awarding body together approve all marketing and formal course documents, with the University taking overall responsibility for all public information relating to its courses.

45   The College consults students and employers in the development of public information, where appropriate. For example, employers were involved in developing the employer handbooks; and student feedback influenced the decision not to produce a full higher education prospectus.

The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

C   Summary of findings from the Developmental engagements

Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

46   A Developmental engagement in assessment was held in at the College in October 2008. The lines of enquiry were:

Line of enquiry 1: Do the developing policies and structures for managing the implementation of higher education assessment practice in the College take sufficient account of the Academic Infrastructure?

Line of enquiry 2: How does the College ensure that it provides part and full-time students with learning resources that enable them to prepare for assessment?

Line of enquiry 3: To what extent can students rely on the public information on assessment available to them throughout their student journey?

47   Good practice was identified in the College management of assessment processes. This was particularly evident in relation to marking, feedback on assignments and the employer contribution to the assessment of work-based learning. Student handbooks provided very clear information about assessment.

48   Recommendations included the need to continue supporting students to develop good academic practice, develop the use of the University virtual learning environment, and strengthen College processes to ensure the accuracy of information to students. It was also recommended that the College should ensure that it was properly informed of changes by the awarding body which impacted on students enrolled at the College.

Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in work-based learning

49   A Developmental engagement in work-based learning was held at the College in November 2009. The lines of enquiry were:

Line of enquiry 1: How does the College provide part-time and full-time students with learning resources and technologies that support the needs of work-based learning?

Line of enquiry 2: To what extent does the development of work-based learning assignments, assessment and review processes meet the needs of both employers and students?

Line of enquiry 3: How far does public information about work-based learning meet the needs of all stakeholders?

50   Good practice was identified in the contribution of employers in mentoring and assessing students. Other good practice included the information provided to employers, mentors and students about work-based learning, the tutorial support provided to students in the workplace and training and support for mentors. There was good use of the virtual learning environment to support students working remotely and in work settings.

51   Recommendations largely related to making the observed good practice more consistently available to all students, including students on different types of work-related experience and in different programmes. The College was encouraged to standardise the best examples of student information about work-based learning and to market the quality of work-based provision more strongly.

D   Foundation Degrees

52   The majority of the College higher education provision is offered as Foundation Degrees, currently comprising 15 programmes. These include programmes in the construction, design, information technology, early years, well-being and specialist beauty

vocational areas. The range of Foundation Degrees being offered has contracted since the Developmental engagement in assessment, but the number of students following the programmes has increased. A small number of professional and educational qualification courses at level 4 are also offered.

53   Foundation Degrees meet the expectations of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the Developmental engagement in work-based learning identified particular strengths in the quality of employer engagement and the contribution of employers to mentoring and assessment. Further strengths are now identified in the flexible progression arrangements provided by the agreement with the awarding body.

54   All the conclusions below apply to Foundation Degrees.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

55   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Barnfield College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body the University of Bedfordshire.

56   In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice**:

- where students change direction during their studies the collaborative partnership is able to provide alternative, more suitable progression routes (paragraph 15)
- there is a high overall level of support for staff development, from the College and the awarding body (paragraphs 21 and 35).

57   The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding body.

58   The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:

- establish more formal student participation at course level, so as to allow the expression of the student voice and to facilitate the sharing of information such as external examiner reports with student representatives (paragraphs 19 and 28).

59   The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:

- extend the specific overview of its higher education provision to foster a more collective and strategic approach to the review and enhancement of standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 18 and 24)
- continue to develop the use of interactive facilities within the virtual learning environment (paragraph 38).

60   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation and other documentary evidence, and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement, for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding body.

61   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation and other documentary evidence, and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has

confidence that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement, for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

62   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation and other documentary evidence, and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Barnfield College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2011						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• where students change direction during their studies the collaborative partnership is able to provide alternative, more suitable progression routes (paragraph 15)	Continue to ensure a named progression route to honours level is provided for all Foundation Degrees and that progression is guaranteed	Ongoing	HE Manager Course team leaders Link tutors	Students progress to their chosen honours level pathway	HE Quality & Development Group HE Strategic Team	Increase in students progressing to top-up year at University Progression to honours level for Oct 2011 80 per cent
• there is a high overall level of support for staff development, from the College and the awarding body (paragraphs 21 and 35).	Maintain the quality processes established between the University and Barnfield College to enable staff to access higher level qualifications to meet validation, QAA academic standards and CPD requirements Continue to monitor	Ongoing	Collaboration between the University of Bedfordshire Dean of Partnerships and the Barnfield College Associate Principal for Higher Education, Learning & Development	Engagement with professional qualification programmes, INSET events, departmental sharing best practice, relevant external training events Implementation of	Centre for Teaching & Learning, Learning and Development Department Senior Leadership and Senior Management Team	Teaching staff fully engage with staff development activities and continue to access relevant HE professional development opportunities Scholarly activity is captured

	staff development needs and access Barnfield Central Learning and Development Budget Organise, coordinate and capture scholarly activity Ensure that course teams share best practice in research and scholarly engagement Continue access to learning resource centres across Barnfield College and through the main portal for the University for electronic journals and books		Manager, HE Manager, Heads of department (HoDs), Learning Resource Centre managers	conditions within leave policy for study leave, exam time and scholarly engagement Membership of professional bodies Monitor staff access to University BREO, College staffNET and Moodle VLEs		centrally CPD records reflect regular engagement in scholarly activity Feedback from external examiners Data from qualitative surveys set after training events Student perception surveys on the quality of teaching and learning
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• establish more formal student participation at course level, so as to allow the	Review the established Barnfield student/programme review process to meet the needs of	Dec 2011	HE Manager, Curriculum Quality Manager, Course team leaders (CTLs)	Participation in student/programme review process	HE Manager, Senior Management Team, HoDs	Analysis of data and response to student/staff issues and concerns

expression of the student voice and to facilitate the sharing of information such as external examiner reports with student representatives (paragraphs 19 and 28).	higher education learners					
	Establish a central HE student forum from elected programme representatives	Nov 2011	HE Manager and Curriculum Quality Manager	70 per cent of programmes represented at a minimum of two forums during each academic year	HE Quality and Development Group, HE Strategic Team, Senior Management Team	Effective response to the student voice
	Provide enrichment opportunities to enable HE students to be elected members of the Barnfield Teaching and Learning Quality and Improvement Team (QIT)	Nov 2011	Associate Principal for Higher Education, HE Manager	Elected HE students take part in identified Barnfield Teaching and Learning QIT activities	Barnfield Teaching and Learning QIT team, HoDs, Senior Management Team, Barnfield governors	Improved grade profile Student satisfaction levels with the quality of teaching and learning
	HE students to be represented at course team meetings and/or curriculum cluster groups	Nov 2011	HE Manager, HoDs, CTLs	Students engage with the quality processes	HE Quality and Development Group, HE Strategic Team, Senior Management Team	Student contributions and views are valued within the management structure
	Increase participation in HE dedicated student survey	Feb 2012	HE Manager, Curriculum Quality Manager,	20 per cent increase in student partition in surveys	HE Quality and Development Group,	Analysis of data and response to actions arising

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
			CTLs		HE Strategic Team and SMT	
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• extend the specific overview of its higher education provision to foster a more collective and strategic approach to the review and enhancement of standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 18 and 24)	Review the existing management structure and develop a new reporting framework to strengthen the strategic and operational overview of HE Provide specific HE management and committee reporting structures Further develop terms of reference for each level of reporting within the management framework	Sept 2011	Associate Principal for Higher Education, HE Manager, Head of Quality and Improvement Planning	New framework in place for 2011-12 academic year Improved self assessment cycle	Senior Management/ Leadership Team	Identification of strengths and areas for improvement across HE programmes
• continue to develop the use of interactive facilities within the virtual learning environment (paragraph 38).	Provide public information in a variety of media, for example paper-based and electronic HE programme related information for 2012-13	Oct 2011	HE Manager, Marketing Manager, HoDs, CTLs	Access to a variety of HE related media to inform the general public	Senior Management Team	Analysis of distribution data

		Provide a range of higher education awareness events to support transition to HE, for example: enquiry open days, taster days	Oct 2011	HE Manager, HoDs, CTLs	Increased participation by staff and prospective students	Senior Management Team	Analysis of data recorded from events and comparison with previous years
		Increase the interactive use of virtual learning environments through learning and development activities for students and staff	Jan 2012	Learning and Development Manager, HE Manager, CTLs	Increased access to and management of assessment and learning resources through virtual learning environments	HE Quality & Development Group HE Strategic Group Senior Management Team	Improved learning experience and access to high quality resources to support students Monitor impact of training, usage statistics and obtain feedback from students Increased confidence and usage of VLEs