



**QAA**

## **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

November 2009

Carmel College

SR49/2009

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2010

ISBN 978 1 84979 066 6

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

## **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 Carmel College carried out in November 2009

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 agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information 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:

- the management and integration of the College's higher education provision within its wider portfolio of activities
- the handbook provided to new teaching staff on the year zero programmes
- the quality of teaching and the level of support provided by staff to their students
- the College's Teaching Squares peer observation system
- the aspirational and results-focused attitude of the College's higher education staff which has been a significant factor in enthusing and encouraging students to engage with, and succeed in, their learning.

### 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 **desirable** for the College to:

- liaise with the University of Liverpool to ensure that its year zero provision is subject to an appropriate level of external scrutiny
- liaise with the University of Liverpool with a view to providing a certificate for students who successfully complete their year zero programme but do not progress to further higher education study with the University or elsewhere
- introduce an equivalent handbook to that provided for staff teaching on year zero programmes to staff teaching on year one programmes
- complete a mapping of transferable skills by programme to ensure that student learning needs are being met in a coherent way
- work with its awarding bodies to ensure that information published in programme and module specifications is accurately and consistently presented.

## 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 Carmel College (the 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 Liverpool and the University of Salford. The review was carried out by Professor David Eastwood and Professor Keith Johnson (reviewers), and Mr Grant Horsburgh (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 and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students and representatives of partner institutions and reports from inspections by Ofsted. 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. As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College was less than 100 at the time of the scope and preference exercise in 2007-08, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

3 In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree awards, Section D of the Summative review report would normally summarise details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College. However, as the College does not offer any Foundation Degree programmes, Section D of this report contains a statement to reflect this position.

4 Established in 1987, Carmel College is a Catholic sixth-form college based on a site in St Helens. The College is organised into five faculties: Science, Mathematics, Physical Education and Year Zero; Social Sciences; Business, Information, Communications, Technology and Vocational Subjects; Art and Design; and Communication and Culture. Higher education provision is located in the Faculty of Mathematics, Physical Education and Year Zero, and the Faculty of Art and Design. The College mission is to be a centre of educational excellence within a caring Christian environment. The College vision statement is: A Catholic College for the Community. The College has twice been awarded Beacon status and its 2007 Ofsted report graded the College's Effectiveness of Provision, Capacity to Improve, Achievements and Standards, Quality of Provision, and Leadership and Management as outstanding.

5 At the time of the review the College has 1,777 full-time students of whom 147 are studying higher education programmes on a full-time basis. The College offers the following programmes in partnership with the awarding bodies listed. The University of Liverpool guarantees progression onto year one for students who meet progression criteria in the following programmes. Programmes are indirectly funded, validated by the University and are wholly delivered at the College. There were 134 students enrolled on the following programmes at the time of the review.

- AZ00: Foundations to Health Studies Medicine and Dentistry leading to a Degree In Dental Sciences or Medicine
- C108: Biological Sciences leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- F108: Chemical Sciences leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- F308: Physical Sciences leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- F608: Earth Sciences leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- F808: Geography leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- G108: Mathematical Sciences leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- G408: Computer Sciences leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- G521: Computer Information Systems leading to BSc (Hons) including a Foundation Year
- H109: Engineering leading to BEng (Hons) including a Foundation Year.

The University of Salford offers progression onto year two of its BA (Hons) Graphic Design for students who successfully complete year one delivered by the College. This programme is indirectly funded and set up as a franchise with the College operating as a satellite campus of the University. At the time of the review there were 13 students enrolled on the programme.

### **Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies**

6 The College has been delivering year zero Foundation programmes in partnership with the University of Liverpool since 1995 and has formed a close working relationship with it. The more recent partnership with the University of Salford has built on the experience gained from working with the University of Liverpool. Both awarding bodies participated fully in the development of the self-evaluation and during the review visit and provided evidence to indicate that they value their partnerships with the College.

### **Recent developments in higher education at the College**

7 At the beginning of 2009-10 the College's higher education provision moved into a new building with dedicated learning and teaching facilities including quiet study areas for higher education students. The College is currently exploring with the University of Liverpool the feasibility of increasing student places or extending the number of degree programmes which will accept successful year zero students.

### **Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission**

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The College invited all higher education students to complete a questionnaire at the end of their examinations in 2008-09. Completed questionnaires were analysed by staff and a report produced. Student representatives commented on the report and the final version was submitted as a student written submission. The coordinator provided students with a briefing on the process during the preparatory meeting to the College on 21 September 2009, and the team met with two groups of current and former students during the visit. The team found that the students' written submission and the meetings with students were helpful and informative.



## **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?**

9 The College believes that the arrangements for assuring the quality and standards of its higher education provision should be as rigorous and transparent as those for programmes wholly within the College's responsibility. As part of the internal mechanisms of the annual College review procedure, the Degree Course Coordinator produces a self-assessment report for the higher education provision approved by each awarding partner. This report is first forwarded to an interview panel, before being presented as an annual report to the Teaching Quality Support Officer for Collaborative Provision, and subsequently incorporated into faculty and whole-College self-assessment reports. The self-assessment report includes information identified through 'student voice', a mechanism for gathering student views, and lesson observations. The reports also take account of awarding body requirements. The fact that the College uses its own quality procedures and meets awarding body expectations provides an effective mechanism for monitoring higher education provision.

10 The College's partnership agreement with the University of Salford sets out clear obligations for each party with respect to the delivery and management of the BA (Hons) Graphic Design year one. A Joint Board of Study, including staff from both institutions, meets each semester to discharge these obligations. The minutes of meetings feed into the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee and into the College's Faculty Board and Council. Annual programme monitoring and enhancement reports are considered by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee. Minutes from the Staff-Student Liaison Committee feed into the Joint Board of Study. College staff are members of the Board of Examiners and College students sit on the Joint Board of Study and the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. The College provision follows the programme and module specifications produced by the University of Salford. It follows the same protocols and is subject to the same quality procedures and academic regulations as other programmes within the University. The team's scrutiny of the evidence base indicated the effective management of the programme.

11 With the exception of the partnership agreement relating to medicine and dentistry, partnership agreements with the University of Liverpool are not as specific regarding the detailed responsibilities of each partner. However, as year zero provision has been offered by the College in partnership with the University since 1995, a considerable body of custom and practice has developed in relation to the responsibilities of the two institutions, and this was formally recorded in the report from the institutional renewal visit by the University in 2008 which contained a clear statement regarding the division of responsibilities. The College has been involved with the planning of the year zero provision from the outset, unlike the BA (Hons) Graphic Design which is solely designed by the University of Salford.

12 Reporting mechanisms in relation to the University of Liverpool are broadly similar to those in place for the University of Salford programme. The College Degree Course Coordinator is a member of the Board of Studies, Board of Examiners, Programme Management Team, Associate College Liaison Committee and Staff-Student Liaison

Committee. The University accepts the College format for quality assurance reports rather than insisting on standard university reports.

13 There are clear job descriptions for the College Degree Course Coordinator and Assistant Degree Course Coordinator. However, the differences between the year zero and BA (Hons) Graphic Design year one provision necessitate variation in the discharge of these duties. For example, the coordinator for BA (Hons) Graphic Design year one has a single point of contact, the course coordinator at the University of Salford, whereas the year zero coordinator has multiple points of contact reflecting the variety of programmes at the University of Liverpool that are receiving students. In both cases the College has effective communication arrangements in place for managing and delivering higher education standards.

#### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

14 College staff are aware of the various elements of the Academic Infrastructure and identify the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* as a particularly helpful point of reference. Discussions with staff indicated that the College's long experience of GCE A and AS Level work has strongly influenced their perception of academic standards. The University of Liverpool is working with the College to ensure that appropriate account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure when working with year zero provision. The University of Salford Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes make clear use of the FHEQ. Programme and module specifications are available for all programmes within the scope of the review.

#### **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?**

15 Although occupying only a relatively small component of the College's activities, higher education provision is well integrated into the overall College management structure. The Vice-Principal is responsible for quality assurance college-wide, and annual higher education objectives are reviewed at a meeting between the Principal, Vice-Principal and Degree Course Coordinator. The management of all higher education programmes follows the procedures outlined in the College Quality Assurance Handbook. The key features are lesson observations, student focus groups, key statistical data, review of course documentation and the annual self-assessment report. This combination of quantitative and qualitative information is used to identify key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Self-assessment reports are evaluative and critical and lead to clear action plans specifying performance indicators, responsibilities and deadlines. The management and integration of the College's higher education provision within its wider portfolio of activities ensures that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of the awarding bodies.

16 The College checks all examination papers prior to sending them to the University of Liverpool for approval. The University gives the College some latitude regarding the content of other forms of assessment. Major and minor modifications to approved assessments require to be submitted to the Board of Studies for approval. Marking schemes are used to ensure consistency between markers, and common assessment feedback sheets have recently been introduced to ensure consistency in the provision of feedback. Assessment is monitored by staff at the University but there is no evidence of any scrutiny of appropriate marking standards by external examiners. The team noted that College and University representatives had previously explored whether external scrutiny would be appropriate, and the team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to liaise with the

University of Liverpool to ensure its year zero provision is subject to an appropriate level of external scrutiny.

17 The team's scrutiny of the sample of student work indicated that an appropriate standard is being maintained. The College provides students with a variety of learning and teaching activities which enhances the vocational relevance of their studies. For example, BA (Hons) Graphic Design students conduct live briefs on behalf of real clients and the College has been able to provide extra curriculum work placements at a leading international fashion magazine.

18 Discussions with College and University of Liverpool staff indicated that year zero students who successfully complete their programme of study, but do not progress to further higher education study with the University or elsewhere, do not receive an award certificate to recognise the credit achieved. While acknowledging that the College and the University have started to explore this matter, the team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to liaise with the University of Liverpool with a view to providing such students with a certificate to recognise their achievements.

19 The College does not receive statistical information from its awarding bodies that would assist the College in tracking the progression of its former students through their studies. However, the team learnt from the meeting with current and former students that progression does occur and, in one particular case, covered the journey from year zero to successful PhD study.

20 Following their scrutiny of the evidence, the team concluded that the operational differences arising from the two partnership agreements have not prevented the College from fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of both awarding bodies. The College's most recent Ofsted report found the College's provision to be outstanding in all respects and the team was able to confirm that the College's higher education provision is embedded within this long-standing culture of excellence. University of Liverpool representatives indicated that the College is recommended to prospective students as it is able to influence course content and because the quality of teaching, especially in relation to mathematics which is important for engineering, is of a high standard.

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

21 The College has a variety of staff development mechanisms in place to support the achievement of academic standards. These include observation of teaching delivery, a mentoring system which enables new teachers to work alongside an experienced colleague, and team meetings at the beginning and the end of each academic year to provide guidance and share good practice. A College appraisal scheme includes identifying staff training requirements and the scheme records include a section to take account of specific year zero requirements. In addition, team teaching ensures that information from staff development events cascades to all staff involved in the delivery of higher education.

22 Staff development records indicate that the College provides staff with information and opportunities to attend a variety of internal and external development events and that these are attended by individual members of the teaching teams. Many of the external events are included for their distinct higher education focus and staff are given the opportunity to attend development events at both awarding bodies. In acknowledging the high level of attendance at staff development events, the team noted that most of the

events organised by awarding bodies have been focused on procedural rather than pedagogic matters.

23 New staff teaching on the year zero programmes are provided with a staff handbook. This clearly outlines the similarities and differences between the approach to year zero and the College's normal GCE A and AS Level provision. The team found this to be an example of good practice and believes that, as a means of providing a consistent learning experience for all higher education students, it would be desirable for the College to introduce an equivalent handbook for staff teaching on the BA (Hons) Graphic Design.

**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 bodies.**

## **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?**

24 Responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those for managing academic standards as described in paragraphs 9 to 13. Higher education reporting arrangements centre on the Degree Course Coordinator, but also dovetail effectively into the College's overall quality assurance management system. The team's scrutiny of self-assessment reports produced between 2006 and 2008 confirmed that these are evidence-based, rigorously self-critical, and that action is taken to address areas for development.

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

25 The procedures described in paragraphs 15 and 16 apply equally to the quality of the learning opportunities. In order to ensure that appropriate policies, procedures and resources are in place to deliver year zero programmes, the College is subject to a process of renewal review by the University of Liverpool. The last such review visit took place in 2008. The report was overwhelmingly positive, particularly with respect to both student support mechanisms and the commitment of the teaching staff, and led to a unanimous recommendation to renew the current provision for a further five years.

**What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

26 As noted in paragraph 14, the team found that the College is fully aware of the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure and that its awarding bodies provide sufficient advice and guidance to ensure the College takes appropriate account of Academic Infrastructure requirements.

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

27 All higher education teaching staff have been granted Recognised Teacher Status by the University of Liverpool. Student perception questionnaires operate at both module and year zero levels. A scrutiny of completed student questionnaires found that students consistently commented on the high quality of teaching. Students informed the team that the

dedication of the teaching staff and the quality of their teaching was the College's greatest strength. Former College students now studying at both awarding bodies informed the team of their appreciation of the high quality of the teaching provided by the College. University of Salford students, in particular, expressed the view that the College's year one provision better prepared them for university study in comparison with their university colleagues. The team found the quality of teaching and the level of support provided by staff to their students to be an example of good practice.

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

28 The College provides all students with a personal interview during their induction and operates both a personal tutor system and a subject-based tutor system of one-to-one and drop-in tutorials. The College operates a system of regular staff-student liaison meetings and topics discussed are effectively fed back to students by posting meeting minutes on programme notice boards. Mature students receive additional initial personal support to assist their transition back into academic work. Students with disabilities receive similar initial support. Students informed the team that the drop-in tutorials are used more frequently, and mature students emphasised their appreciation of the effectiveness of the support they received. In addition, after the examinations at the end of the first semester students are provided with feedback on their performance. Students informed the team that the interview and tutorial systems are effective mechanisms for providing them with academic support.

29 Assessment feedback is timely and an effective mechanism to enable students to develop their learning. Written common assessment feedback sheets are employed and the small size of student cohorts enables written feedback to be supplemented by the provision of informal more detailed oral feedback. BA (Hons) Graphic Design students receive additional assessment feedback from the awarding body. A scrutiny of completed student surveys found that students are very satisfied with the College's assessment feedback mechanisms.

30 All higher education students have dual College and University status, allowing them to access both college-wide support systems, such as the library's Learning Skills Programme, and University support services. The College operates a policy of not arranging timetabled teaching on a Wednesday so as to allow students free access to the University support systems. Student engagement with additional university resources is greater for BA (Hons) Graphic Design students than for year zero students. The team believes that this reflects the nature and the specific demands of the programmes governed by the two partnership agreements.

31 The College operates a rigorous student attendance policy for all of its students and this has been applied to the higher education programmes. Students are required to maintain a 90 per cent attendance record. Students who do not attend are contacted and invited to an interview with their tutor in an attempt to discover whether they require academic or pastoral support. If students fail to attend an interview, or their attendance record does not improve, the College has two levels of formal warning to inform students that if their attendance does not improve they will be required to be withdrawn from their course. Students are fully aware of the attendance policy and students met by the team could recall only one student leaving their course.

32 The mapping of transferable key skills has been undertaken for all year zero modules but not for each programme of study. The scrutiny of student work and other evidence indicated it was not clear that all year zero programmes provided the same opportunities for students to develop transferable key skills which would assist them in their future higher education study in their chosen subject. It would be desirable for programme teams to



complete a mapping of transferable skills by programme to ensure that student learning needs are being met in a coherent way.

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

33 The College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities are discussed in paragraphs 21 to 23.

34 Awarding body staff are invited to, and have observed teaching at the College. Observation of teaching delivery training is provided as part of the College's staff development programme. The College has recently piloted the use of Teaching Squares where four colleagues observe each others' teaching and share their reflections with their partners, and the pilot included the year one provision. Ofsted describes the College's peer observers as both perceptive and rigorous in their judgements. The team found the College's Teaching Squares peer observation system to be an example of good practice.

### **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?**

35 Following the College's recent building and refurbishment programme, the physical resources available for use by higher education students are excellent. Teaching space is generous, with provision for both independent learning and tutorial space; the new graphic design suite is especially impressive. Staff believe that their higher education budgets are generous and student perception questionnaires reveal negligible complaints about either infrastructure or equipment, other than ongoing car parking problems, and the transport problems associated with the distance and travel times between the College and the student residences in Liverpool. The College recognises this problem and has tried to address it by retimetabling higher education classes not to begin before 0930 hours.

36 Current staff-student ratios are high and class sizes are small which has contributed to the high quality learning experience delivered by committed, well-qualified and experienced teaching staff. The team found that the aspirational and results-focused attitude of the College's higher education staff has been a significant factor in enthusing and encouraging students to engage with, and succeed in, their learning.

**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 bodies, 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?**

37 While the College higher education policy is closely aligned to that of its awarding bodies, in most areas it has its own documentation which covers, for example, admissions procedures, student handbooks, programme specifications and student representation. The team's scrutiny of admissions information and student handbooks found excellent clarity and consistency. However, the same scrutiny identified some lack of clarity and inconsistencies within the College's programme specifications. For example, and as noted in paragraph 32, although transferable skills mapping and marking descriptors are clear and relatively specific in the programme specifications for year zero health studies, they are less

so in the year zero science and engineering specifications. The College's module specifications contain similar inconsistencies, for example in relation to skills mapping and marking descriptors. It would be desirable for the College to work with its awarding bodies to ensure that information published in programme and module specifications is accurately and consistently presented.

**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?**

38 The College has effective arrangements in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information that it publishes. Information produced by higher education course teams is checked by the Degree Course Coordinator to ensure that it meets College and awarding body requirements. A second check is undertaken by the Vice-Principal before College information is published. The College formally reviews the effectiveness of this procedure annually and makes adjustments for the management of specific documents as appropriate.

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

## **C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment**

39 As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College was less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

40 The College does not offer any programmes leading to the award of a Foundation Degree.

## **E Conclusions and summary of judgements**

41 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Carmel 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 bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, the University of Liverpool and the University of Salford.

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

- the management and integration of the College's higher education provision within its wider portfolio of activities (paragraph 15)
- the handbook provided to new teaching staff on the year zero programmes (paragraph 23)
- the quality of teaching and the level of support provided by staff to their students (paragraph 27)

- the College's Teaching Squares peer observation system (paragraph 34)
- the aspirational and results-focused attitude of the College's higher education staff which has been a significant factor in enthusing and encouraging students to engage with, and succeed in, their learning (paragraphs 34 and 36).

43 The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

The team agreed the following areas where it would be desirable for the College to take action to:

- liaise with the University of Liverpool to ensure that its year zero provision is subject to an appropriate level of external scrutiny (paragraph 16)
- liaise with the University of Liverpool with a view to providing a certificate for students who successfully complete their year zero programme but do not progress to further higher education study with the University or elsewhere (paragraph 18)
- introduce an equivalent handbook to that provided for staff teaching on year zero programmes to staff teaching on year one programmes (paragraph 23)
- complete a mapping of transferable skills by programme to ensure that student learning needs are being met in a coherent way (paragraph 32)
- work with its awarding bodies to ensure that information published in programme and module specifications is accurately and consistently presented (paragraph 37).

44 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 it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements, for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

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

46 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.



Carmel College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009						
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 <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the management and integration of the College's higher education provision within its wider portfolio of activities (paragraph 15)</li> </ul>	Discuss at Academic Board to identify specific examples of good practice which would be relevant to other College areas	March 2010	Principal	Examples of good practice identified and disseminated to Heads of Faculty	Academic Board	Feedback from Heads of Faculty indicates the value of dissemination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the handbook provided to new teaching staff on the year zero programmes (paragraph 23)</li> </ul>	Share year 0 Handbook with Graphic Design team	March 2010	Year 0 Coordinator	Graphic Design Handbook completed	Head of College Art Faculty	Feedback from staff teaching Graphic Design is positive

<b>Carmel College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009</b>							
<b>Good practice</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of teaching and the level of support provided by staff to their students (paragraph 27)</li> </ul>	Discuss at Academic Board to identify specific examples of good practice which would be relevant to other College areas	March 2010	Principal	Examples of good practice identified and disseminated to Heads of Faculty	Academic Board	Feedback from Heads of Faculty indicates the value of dissemination	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's Teaching Squares peer observation system (paragraph 34)</li> </ul>	Success of Teaching Squares peer observation system to be reviewed by Academic Board	May 2010	Vice Principal	Teaching Observation system updated in the light of review	Academic Board	Feedback from teaching staff	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the aspirational and results-focused attitude of the College's higher education staff which has been a significant factor in enthusing and encouraging students to engage with and succeed in their learning (paragraphs 34 and 36).</li> </ul>	Discuss at Academic Board to identify specific examples of good practice which would be relevant to other College areas	March 2010	Principal	Examples of good practice identified and disseminated to Heads of Faculty	Academic Board	Feedback from Heads of Faculty indicates the value of dissemination	

Carmel College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be <b>desired</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>liaise with the University of Liverpool to ensure that its year zero provision is subject to an appropriate level of external scrutiny (paragraph 16)</li> </ul>	Add to Board of Examiners agenda	Feb 2010	College Year 0 Coordinator	Appropriate method of external scrutiny in place	UofL Board of Examiners Head of College science Faculty	Examiners' reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>liaise with the University of Liverpool with a view to providing a certificate for students who successfully complete their year zero programme but do not progress to further higher education study with the University or elsewhere (paragraph 18)</li> </ul>	Add to Board of Studies agenda	Feb 2010	College Year 0 Co-ordinator	Production of a certificate of completion of Year 0 programme	UofL Board of Studies Head of College science Faculty	Students issued with certificate

Carmel College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce an equivalent handbook to that provided for staff teaching on year zero programmes to staff teaching on year one programmes (paragraph 23)</li> </ul>	Use UoL handbook as a template to design Year 1 Graphic Equivalent	April 2010	Graphic Design Coordinator	Production of University of Salford Graphic Design Handbook	Head of College Art Faculty	Staff feedback indicates successful implementation of handbook
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete a mapping of transferable skills by programme to ensure that student learning needs are being met in a coherent way (paragraph 32)</li> </ul>	<p>Add agenda item to UofL Board of Studies asking members to suggest a method for the mapping of transferable skills</p> <p>Add agenda item to UofS Board of Studies</p>	Feb 2010	College Year 0 Coordinator  College Graphic Design Coordinator	Complete map of transferable skills in individual programme specifications	Boards of Studies College Heads of Faculty	Programme documentation provides clear mapping of transferable skills

Carmel College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with its awarding bodies to ensure that information published in programme and module specifications is accurately and consistently presented (paragraph 37).</li> </ul>	Add agenda item to UofL and UofS Board of Studies	Feb 2010	College Year 0 Coordinator College Graphic Design Coordinator	Accurate and consistent information in programme and module specifications	Boards of Studies College Heads of Faculty	Quality assurance of specifications demonstrates that all information is accurate and consistent

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**  
Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Fax 01452 557070  
Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

RG 562 01/10