



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Harlow College

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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 (FHEQ)* which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*
- 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 Harlow College carried out in May 2012

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:

- the cross-standardisation activities with Peterborough College ensure that academic standards in the BA (Hons) Journalism are being maintained and enhanced
- the detailed and constructive feedback students receive on assessed work gives them very useful guidance on how they might further improve performance in future assignments
- tutorials take place in the workplace in one module of the FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education where students and their mentors meet with the module tutor to discuss progress and action planning.

Recommendations

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

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

- review pre-course information to applicants to include clarification that they will be based at Harlow College and not on one of the main University sites.

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

- promote better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among subject staff and students
- develop a clear and explicit staff development strategy for its higher education staff.

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 Harlow 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 Anglia Ruskin University (the University). The review was carried out by Mr Wayne Isaac and Ms Elizabeth Shackels (reviewers), and Dr John Barkham (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 the awarding body, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, and reports from inspections by Ofsted. There was no Developmental engagement. 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*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ and programme specifications.

3 In order to help HEFCE in gaining information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College.

4 Harlow College is a medium-sized tertiary college located on a single site close to Harlow town centre, North West Essex. The College draws around half of its students from Harlow and the remainder largely from West Essex, North London and East Hertfordshire. The College's main work is vocational education and training. The Young People's Skills Agency and the Skills Funding Agency fund the majority of the College's further education provision. In July 2011, the College Corporation adopted the following 'strategic drivers' for its 2011-14 Strategic Plan: student achievement; preparation of students for work and higher education; financial security; positive impact on the community; growth; Ofsted grade; public and peer image; buildings and the estate; extend the influence of the College and promulgate its Teaching and Learning Strategy; and stability.

5 Some 1,900 students are enrolled on predominantly full-time 16-18 programmes funded by the Young People's Skills Agency. About 1,200 follow traditional adult further education programmes, while some 1,800 are enrolled on apprenticeship programmes, either directly with the College or through one of its partners in the APEX work-based learning consortium. Higher education enrolments currently number 168, all of whom are full-time.

6 The following programmes are offered by the College, under the name of the awarding body and with full-time equivalent number of students for each in brackets.

Anglia Ruskin University

- BA (Hons) Journalism (59)
- FdA Sports Journalism (28)
- BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems (year 2 only) (7)
- FdA Public Service (20)
- FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education (32)
- FdA Graphic Design (did not run in 2010-11) (11)

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

7 The College's higher education provision is accredited by Anglia Ruskin University. The partnership was originally discussed in 2005, following a long-standing one with Middlesex University centred round the College's flagship BA Journalism programme. An institutional review and audit conducted in June 2006 led to the approval of the College to run Anglia Ruskin University degrees on a franchise basis. Middlesex University ceased to be the awarding body at this time by mutual agreement. In 2009-10, approval was granted for construction of the new University Centre for higher education on the campus. The contract between Anglia Ruskin University and the College specifies that use by the College of the University Centre is currently tied to the University being its sole higher education partner. There is currently, therefore, no higher education provision validated by other awarding bodies. A successful institutional review and audit was conducted in May 2011.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 The first four academic years following the 2006 institutional review and audit saw the continuation of the single degree programme approved for Harlow, the BA (Hons) Journalism. However, in 2009 five new pathways were devised, four of which were approved for delivery in Harlow starting 2010-11. The College's Higher Education Strategy was developed following the HEFCE directive of 2009. It aligns higher education developments, particularly with reference to the new University Centre, with local and regional economic priorities. Although a University campus has been constructed on the Harlow site, provision continues to run on the original franchise basis. A further 100 student places, additional to the BA (Hons) Journalism ones already approved by the University were secured from HEFCE in 2010-11. Approval was granted by the University to recruit to the six pathways already approved and, in November 2011, to bid to HEFCE for 150 additional places for Harlow. Ninety places have been agreed. The growth in higher education, plus feedback from students and College audits, has led the College's Executive to substantially change the management structure for higher education with effect from March 2012 when a Higher Education Coordinator was appointed.

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. The IQER process was discussed by the College at all meetings with student representation. Although the writing of their report was led by students from the journalism courses, other students were able to contribute and their ideas were incorporated. Journalism students make up the majority of undergraduates at University Centre Harlow and have representatives in all years of both the BA and FdA degrees.

10 The written submission helpfully followed the main headings from the Summative review self-evaluation and report to facilitate its use by reviewers alongside the College document. The content of the submission proved most useful to the reviewers. In addition, the coordinator met students at the preparatory meeting while, during the visit, the reviewers met student representatives from all courses for an hour-long meeting. Together, these provided opportunities for the team to review the current student experience effectively.

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 Responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards are effectively delegated within the College's management structure. The College recognises that the current higher education strategy dating from the 2009 return to HEFCE is in need of review and amendment. Following the institutional review and audit, the management of higher education has been restructured and centralised with effect from March 2012 to deal with the rapid expansion in student numbers. Responsibilities rest with the Deputy Principal and are effectively exercised. This role involves the strategic development of higher education and the quality assurance and enhancement procedures which support the delivery of higher education academic standards. The Deputy Principal is supported by both the Vice Principal and the Higher Education Coordinator who deals with day-to-day operational issues, and assistant academy managers who also act as course leaders. The appointment of a Higher Education Coordinator is part of the College's recognition that higher education within the College needed significantly increased dedicated management time. In addition, all staff with a majority of higher education work in their timetables are concentrated into two teams. The new University Centre has also allowed higher education to be located on one site. This provides students with the opportunity to develop an identity distinct from further education students.

12 The Curriculum Management Committee prescribed by agreement with the University is the principal forum for reporting on academic standards. Committee minutes make clear reference to follow-up actions for the Higher Education Coordinator and other members of staff.

13 The College works effectively with the University, which has ultimate responsibility through its Senate for the academic standards of its awards approved for delivery in the College. The five-yearly Institutional Review and the Annual Monitoring Report ensure that academic standards, regulations and quality assurance procedures are being maintained and applied locally. Faculty boards, individual course and module reviews are carried out annually or more frequently to ensure that standards are also being maintained. Strategic development of the curriculum rests with the Joint Management Committee, which comprises the University's Deputy Vice Chancellor and Secretary and Clerk, and two deputy principals from the College. The Annual Monitoring of Delivery provides a formal opportunity to review, reflect on and evaluate the delivery of modules and courses within a subject department and identify actions for enhancement. The review is led by the University's appropriate head of subject department in conjunction with the College's Higher Education Coordinator and course team. Their summary report highlights actions to be taken by staff and any further concerns are discussed at a University subcommittee.

14 The College has been proactive in executing its responsibilities under its partnership agreement with the University. The College's internal audit team reviews the academic standards and quality assurance of all courses. The Departmental Assessment Panel is responsible for monitoring and revising modules and ensuring that standards meet QAA subject benchmark statements and *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Taken together, these arrangements successfully assure academic standards.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 The promotion of the Academic Infrastructure is primarily led by the University and through the five-yearly institutional review. The College's subject staff demonstrate only a limited awareness of the Academic Infrastructure. The College is aware that this is an area that requires greater focus and investment in further staff development. It is part of the new Higher Education Coordinator's role to ensure that this takes place. The team considers that it is desirable for the College to promote better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among subject staff and students.

16 However, the Academic Infrastructure is adhered to in course design and assessment practices and in the University's regulations which are heavily promoted to staff and students. The *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review* is embedded in the regulations provided by the University for the College. The focus on *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* is embedded in the College's procedures and assessment strategies.

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?

17 The College evaluates the effectiveness of its own management structures and processes for managing standards through feedback from students in module evaluations, student representatives' meetings and external examiners' reports. College staff attend departmental assessment panels which determine and confirm academic standards, and review, approve or amend marks awarded. This process has been welcomed and encouraged by the external examiner for communication, film and media, who highlighted how modules had been revised in relation to current industry standards and QAA subject and *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The report also emphasised the need for a pre-departmental assessment panel board to speed up processes when dealing with borderline cases and fail marks. The College is taking action to meet this need.

18 There is useful liaison between College partners, for example, outside the formal panel process to help standardisation of journalism assignments. The College engages in cross-standardisation activities with Peterborough College to internally verify assessments before the external examiner's visit. The colleges jointly compile a sample of evidence for the external examiner, write examination papers, and collaborate to provide a written response to external reports. The team considers that the cross-standardisation activities with Peterborough College represent good practice, as they ensure that academic standards in the BA (Hons) Journalism are being maintained and enhanced.

19 A key improvement in the College's ability to meet the awarding body's standards has been through the production of quantitative and qualitative information in the form of a spreadsheet of summary data. This data, produced in advance of the Annual Monitoring Review, have been beneficial in enabling the College to review the progress and retention of students.

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

20 College staff are encouraged to register with the Institute for Learning and to undertake at least 30 hours of staff development each year. Personal development agreements are also devised each academic year and consist of both performance targets and professional development needs. The learning observation feedback form provides

additional opportunities for staff to identify their training needs. This process is supported by a number of 'job coaches' who act as mentors. There is also evidence of positive working relationships with the University on staff development. For example, on the FdA Graphic Design, College and University staff collaborate over areas such as induction, training about academic processes and regulations, curriculum-specific training and work shadowing. However, the 2011 Institutional Review identified that the College needs to review its staff development policy to ensure that it promotes succession planning within delivery teams to safeguard subject expertise. The College agrees with this recommendation and is actively developing a staff development policy, which promotes continuous professional development and scholarly activity in higher education. The team considers it desirable for the College to develop a clear and explicit staff development strategy for its higher education staff.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities as set out in its partnership agreement, 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?

21 The quality of learning opportunities is managed by the College in line with the regulatory requirements of the awarding body, as outlined in paragraphs 11 to 14. The Higher Education Coordinator is assisted on a 0.5 full-time basis by the Head of Division for Guidance, who has a strong background in higher education guidance and applications. The assistant academy managers monitor the delivery of courses through regular team meetings, with discussion taking place on curriculum development and student progress. All higher education courses produce an annual report that feeds into the University's review process. The annual reports at course level include information about teaching and learning evaluation, examination board outcomes, external examiners' feedback and staff/student modular evaluation where this is available. These arrangements secure the quality of learning opportunities for students.

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

22 Recruitment to higher education courses is through the University's central admissions system, which may make provisional offers based on the UCAS application forms. For some courses, students are required to attend pre-offer interviews or portfolio assessment events. For the start of new courses in September 2010, a number of students were recruited late or through the UCAS clearing process. This contributed to poor retention in the first year on some courses. The process of selection was tightened up for the 2011 intake, with much closer scrutiny of those applicants considered to be marginal by the University and of students who did not meet the standard entry requirements. The process is being further tightened for the 2012 intake, with wider use of selection interviews. These interviews give applicants the opportunity to find out more about the course and to help them assess whether the course is the right choice for them, as well as allowing admissions tutors the opportunity to judge the suitability of applicants for their chosen course.

23 In addition, the College makes good use of higher education open events, which were valued by students to help them gauge how suitable the course was for them and how well they might cope with the workload. Applicants who receive offers for higher education courses at the College are invited to 'offer holder' days where they have further opportunities to meet course staff and look in more depth at College facilities and course content. This helps to ensure that the quality of learning opportunities will meet their needs.

24 The quality of induction arrangements varies significantly from one course to another. Students on the Early Years, Playwork and Education course were very complimentary about their experience at the start of their course. Other students had a much less structured or valuable experience. Most of the courses started more smoothly in 2011 than in the previous year, but there were still delays on some in getting rooms and resources organised. There was some confusing information about timetables and reading lists for some students.

25 Students feel that they have ample opportunity to feed back on the quality of their course and College experience. The response rate from students on formal surveys is low and not representative, and this is recognised by the College. However, it operates a range of informal mechanisms to ensure that the views of students on the quality of their courses are taken into account and acted upon when appropriate. The students as a whole were happy that they could contact staff in a range of ways, either at the end of a taught lesson or through email or by telephone. Group and individual tutorials are incorporated into all courses and provide additional mechanisms for student feedback. The College is currently introducing a more formal approach to module feedback. Student representative meetings are minuted and action points taken forward to higher education team meetings. Students are frequently reminded that managers in higher education have an open-door policy.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 This is considered in paragraphs 15 and 16 and applies equally to the quality of learning opportunities.

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

27 Course leaders see their responsibility as to provide a high-quality learning experience. The benefits have been felt by both lecturing staff and by students who have commented positively about their supportive and enthusiastic teachers. For all higher education courses, the focus is on the achievement of academic standards and assessment in line with the procedures set out by the University's Academic Regulations. The College observation system was praised by Ofsted in its 2011 inspection. The College has tailored the observation form and system for use on higher education courses, with observers expected to have higher education experience. The data for higher education observations indicates that 75 per cent of observations were 'good' or better. If any teachers are graded as less than 'good', they are supported and monitored by job coaches who work with staff to improve performance. This is a formal part of the College's Performance Development System. It requires an action plan to be prepared with the help of the job coach. This sets out agreed personal and corporate targets with individual staff who are monitored and supported throughout the year.

28 All teaching staff are either already trained as teachers or are required to undertake an initial teacher training qualification. They are well qualified and/or have industrial experience in their subject areas. Students consider their teachers to be enthusiastic and note that they employ a wide variety of teaching and assessment methods, which helps to

accommodate different learning styles and vocational areas. For example, public service and journalism students were very complimentary about the range of excellent specialist speakers brought in to add current industrial and vocational relevance to their studies. The team concludes that the College has comprehensive systems to ensure that the quality of teaching is maintained and enhanced.

29 Students are clear about assessment methods, including deadlines for the hand-in of assessed work. They are aware of the College policy that feedback on assessed work is given within 20 working days. Some students were unhappy with the time taken for feedback when, in a small number of cases, the 20-day deadline was not met. Staff provide detailed and constructive feedback to students on assessed work. Students are satisfied that this good practice gives them very useful guidance on how they might further improve performance in future assignments. Interim feedback on draft assignments is seen as valuable by students, helping them to improve the quality of their final submission.

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

30 There is a comprehensive and supportive tutorial system, with planned one-to-one tutorials taking place each semester and opportunities for additional meetings if appropriate. All students have an individual learning plan which requires them to set targets for improvement and progression. Their targets are monitored in one-to-one meetings with the tutor or sometimes electronically. This effective use of individual learning plans is additional to the professional development plans required and laid down by the University in the course specifications. Alternative tutorial and support arrangements are put in place, if needed, to meet the needs of particular courses or students. Students are also well supported by the central guidance unit, including higher education-specific support provided by the Head of Guidance. For one of the modules on the FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education, tutorials take place in the workplace during placements, and students and their mentors meet with the module tutor to discuss progress and action planning. Students value this good practice which is supported by their handbooks.

31 At the beginning of their course, all students are either issued with a course handbook or told about accessing it electronically through the virtual learning environment. The handbooks provide information on programme aims and outcomes, course specifications, programme administration, programme assessment regulations and progression opportunities. The module guides are thorough and are available for all modules. The content and depth of the course handbooks varies from one programme to another, but they are mainly useful documents. In addition to their detailed course handbook, students on the FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education make effective use of the student placement handbook and employers also receive an information booklet from the College to ensure placements run smoothly. Some students on other courses comment that they make limited use of their handbooks, preferring to seek tutor guidance instead. Both formal and informal student feedback about the information they receive is sought and obtained by the College, which responds effectively.

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

32 Key points that also apply to the quality of learning opportunities are outlined in paragraph 20. A number of higher education teaching staff are currently working on higher-level qualifications, if they do not already possess them, and, in doing so, have the full support of the College, which adjusts their timetables to make this possible.

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?

33 The degree course approval and review process sets out and monitors the adequacy of resources to support the achievement of appropriate standards. The Institutional Review and audit further scrutinised the quality of resources in June 2011. One weakness identified was the provision of software for the FdA Graphic Design. While this was fully remedied in January 2012, students were frustrated by the delay and timetable allowances were made to enable them to complete their coursework satisfactorily.

34 Higher education teaching takes place in the new University Centre Harlow, an endeavour shared with the University. It is quickly becoming a high-quality focus for the provision, providing high-quality classrooms, lecture theatre and computer accommodation. It will house the significant planned growth of higher education student numbers and courses from September 2012. Other resources include the Learning Resource Centre which caters for both further and higher education students. Higher education students have complained about the lack of suitable study space there. The College's attempts to respond to this are limited due to the layout and structure of the building. However, the availability of books and online materials is mainly good and there is effective liaison between Learning Resource Centre staff and the course teams, ensuring the suitability of resources to support courses.

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?

35 The College is responsible for publishing a range of information for current and potential higher education students. This includes the higher education content of the general College prospectus, web-based course-related information, course handbooks, course and module specifications and student application and induction materials.

36 Thorough scrutiny of the publications showed the information to be current, accurate and accessible. In a meeting with students, those who had used these sources of published information commented that the web content had been brief and not very helpful in helping them make their choice of course. They found the College's higher education information days of much more help. Some students claimed that pre-course information on the website and the recruitment process did not make it sufficiently clear that they would be based at the College. Staff have acknowledged this. This contributed to the higher levels of early drop-out in 2010-11 and was especially problematic for some overseas students who expected better availability of student accommodation. The team considers that the College should review pre-course information to applicants, including clarification that they will be based at the College and not on one of the main University sites.

37 The College website has a clear navigation link to a dedicated University Centre section. This provides links to information on courses and application processes. Course information is available in a summary form. Additional materials, student policies

and regulations are readily available through the virtual learning environment, including those relating to appeals, academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances.

38 The College currently does not engage much with higher education-specific marketing or advertising, although it intends to do more to create a specific identity for higher education as the provision expands in the next few years.

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?

39 Within the College, there are clear lines of responsibility for the marketing of higher education. Primarily, this is the responsibility of the Deputy Principal. Information contained in the College prospectus is checked for accuracy by the Higher Education Coordinator in conjunction with the subject teams. This information is also periodically checked for accuracy by the Head of Guidance, who will inform subject teams of any irregularities. The responsibility for the development of web-based information rests with the Head of Guidance, who liaises with both the Higher Education Coordinator and subject teams to ensure its appropriateness.

40 Student handbooks, which are approved at validation events, follow a prescribed University format but are customised appropriately with local information. Module guides and assignment briefs, with the exception of the journalism programmes, are the responsibility of the University and are checked and monitored for accuracy by it. These are available through the virtual learning environment which can be accessed remotely.

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 engagement in assessment

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

D Foundation Degrees

42 All Foundation Degrees are franchised by the University. These include four new pathways approved for delivery in the College during 2009-10, following agreement for the construction of the new University Centre higher education building on the campus. The Foundation Degrees are as follows: the FdA Graphic Design, which did not run in 2010-11 because of inadequate enrolment; FdA Public Service; FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education; and the FdA Sports Journalism. The College's Higher Education Strategy was developed following the HEFCE directive of 2009. It aligns higher education developments, particularly with reference to the new University Centre, with local and regional economic priorities. A further 100 student places were secured from HEFCE in 2010-11. The University gave the go-ahead to recruit to the Foundation Degree pathways already approved and, in November 2011, bid to HEFCE for 150 additional places for the College's Foundation Degrees. Ninety places have been agreed. These will be divided

between already established courses and five new ones, subject to validation. These include three honours degrees and two Foundation Degrees, the FdSc Engineering and FdSc Life Sciences.

43 The College's Foundation Degree provision is growing rapidly with the full support of HEFCE and the University. The College is adjusting its management structure appropriately to meet this challenge.

44 The conclusions reached by the team in relation to Foundation Degrees are the same as those detailed in paragraphs 46 to 49.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

45 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Harlow 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 Anglia Ruskin University.

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

- the cross-standardisation activities with Peterborough College ensure that academic standards in the BA (Hons) Journalism are being maintained and enhanced (paragraph 18)
- the detailed and constructive feedback students receive on assessed work gives them very useful guidance on how they might further improve performance in future assignments (paragraph 29)
- tutorials take place in the workplace in one module of the FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education where students and their mentors meet with the module tutor to discuss progress and action planning (paragraph 30).

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

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

- review pre-course information to applicants to include clarification that they will be based at Harlow College and not on one of the main University sites (paragraph 36).

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

- promote better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among subject staff and students (paragraph 15)
- develop a clear and explicit staff development strategy for its higher education staff (paragraph 20).

50 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

51 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

52 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

Harlow College action plan relating to the Summative review May 2012						
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the cross-standardisation activities with Peterborough College ensure that academic standards in the BA (Hons) Journalism are being maintained and enhanced (paragraph 18) 	<p>Share as part of higher education staff forum</p> <p>Establish similar activities for other (new) shared courses from September 2012</p>	<p>November 2012</p> <p>December 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Coordinator</p> <p>Higher Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Other courses have at least one cross-standardisation meeting before beginning of Semester 2</p>	Deputy Principal	Notes for Annual Monitoring Report on success of activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the detailed and constructive feedback students receive on assessed work gives them very useful guidance on how they might further improve performance in future 	<p>Share as part of higher education staff forum</p> <p>Pair up experienced/good practitioners with staff needing support</p>	<p>November 2012</p> <p>November 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Coordinator</p> <p>Higher Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Audit of feedback reveals that guidance on improvement is demonstrated across all courses</p>	Deputy Principal	Student survey

assignments (paragraph 29)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tutorials take place in the workplace in one module of the FdA Early Years, Playwork and Education where students and their mentors meet with the module tutor to discuss progress and action planning (paragraph 30). 	Share as part of higher education staff forum	November 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	Work-based tutorials occur in other courses where relevant	Deputy Principal	Notes for Annual Monitoring Report
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review pre-course information to applicants to include clarification that they will be based at Harlow College and not on one of the main University sites (paragraph 36). 	Ensure all marketing materials and joining instructions contain clear reference to Harlow location of courses	July 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	All materials contain relevant information Clear instructions in joining letters	Deputy Principal	2012-13 induction feedback

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among subject staff and students (paragraph 15) 	Higher education staff forum to meet termly and include training session on the Academic Infrastructure at least once a year	November 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	Staff demonstrate knowledge of Academic Infrastructure	Deputy Principal	Higher education self-assessment
	Student forum to include briefing session	Dec 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	Students have basic awareness	Deputy Principal	Student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a clear and explicit staff development strategy for its higher education staff (paragraph 20). 	Write a staff development strategy which incorporates IQER comments plus items arising from summer 2012 course validations by the University	Achieved June 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	Achieved - strategy written June 2012 and approved by Executive	Deputy Principal	Plan accepted by the University
	Get approved by Executive	Achieved June 2012	Higher Education Coordinator		Deputy Principal	

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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
Web www.qaa.ac.uk