

## **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

April 2009

Kingston College

SR25/2009

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ISBN 978 1 84482 986 6

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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 Kingston College carried out in April 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/or 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 College has made good use of the IQER process to introduce improvements in its management of its higher education provision, for example the introduction of an HE Forum, the organisation of a development day involving validating partners and the provision of workshops to progress the issues raised during the Developmental engagement on assessment
- the effective relationships between staff at the College and those within the awarding bodies facilitate the management of higher education programmes and ensure that issues can be identified and addressed promptly and effectively
- the use of a specially designed virtual learning environment on the BA Digital Arts which encourages dialogue between and among staff and students, and provides commendable opportunities for interaction between students and their tutors
- higher education programmes have been the focus of information systems projects aimed at providing students with flexibility in the ways in which they can access information.

### Recommendations

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

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

- more clearly signpost external examiners' reports and consequent actions in the self-assessment process and work with awarding bodies to establish a system for their centralised review
- establish a system for the centralised review of the valuable data arising from a range of student surveys
- ensure that staff responsible for higher education programmes gain a greater understanding of the purposes and nature of programme specifications, and provide them consistently to ensure that all students are provided with clear guidance on the aims, intended learning outcomes and structure of their programmes.

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

- develop the HE Forum further to enable it to provide a strategic framework for the progress of higher education provision and to act as a focus for the bringing together of a range of issues including higher education specific documentation and improvements in the consistency of personal tutorials
- continue the developments towards providing a clearer higher education focus and environment for staff and students including the development of a consistent tutorial policy.

## 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 Kingston 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 Edexcel, Kingston University, Thames Valley University, University of Greenwich, London South Bank University, Middlesex University and Birkbeck College, University of London. The review was carried out by Professor Jenny Anderson, Miss Maxina Butler-Holmes, Mr John Skinner (reviewers) and Mr Peter Clarke (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, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 The College is situated on a town centre site in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. It has five academic faculties, four of which offer higher education programmes ranging from foundation year to postgraduate certificates. The College has offered higher education programmes for many years. It has a very strong relationship with Kingston University, and has recently developed partnerships with other universities in the London area. It now offers programmes awarded by six universities and Edexcel.

5 Higher education provision at the College has grown substantially in recent years. It now has over 1,600 higher education students, a growth of some 50 per cent over four years. The College does not have a separate management structure for its higher education provision. Four of the five faculties have higher education programmes within their provision and these are managed alongside the further education programmes. The College does not have a designated HE coordinator. The Vice-Principal (Curriculum and Quality) oversees the delivery of both the higher and further education curriculum within each faculty. Deans of faculty oversee both the higher and further education curriculum in their areas. The self-evaluation document states that this structure has helped the College successfully expand the range of progression opportunities for students and enabled effective transition for students between higher and further education programmes. Responsibility for the management of the higher education provision is integrated into the reporting structure of the College.



6 The following outlines the programmes offered by Kingston College together with their awarding bodies.

### **Kingston University**

- BA Business and Management - 189 full-time students
- Foundation Year in Science - 264 full-time students
- Foundation Year in Technology - 151 part-time students
- Foundation Year in Computing and Maths - 150 full-time students
- BSc Sports Science - 78 full-time students
- FD Business and Professional Administration - 52 full-time students
- FD Management and Leadership in Early Years - 33 full-time students
- FD Early Years - 72 full-time students
- FD Children's Special Educational Needs - 12 full-time students
- FD IT for E-Business - 27 full-time students
- HND Business and Finance - 80 full-time students
- HND Computing - 56 full-time students
- HND Engineering - 32 full-time students

### **University of Greenwich**

- PGCE Certificate in Education - 97 part-time students

### **London South Bank University**

- FD Sports and Exercise Science - 20 full-time students

### **Thames Valley University**

- BA Digital Arts - 40 full-time students
- BA Music Technology - 12 full-time students
- BA Acting, Stage and Media - 97 full-time students
- BA (Hons) Fashion and Textiles - 12 full-time students

### **Edexcel**

- HNC Business and Finance - 14 part-time students
- HNC Photography - 8 part-time students
- HNC/D Computer Studies - 42 part-time students
- HNC Engineering - 59 part-time students
- HND Engineering Conversion - 6 part-time students

### **Middlesex University**

- FD/BA(Hons) Integrative-Relational Counselling - 52 full-time students

### **Birkbeck College, University of London**

- Certificate in Science - 27 part-time students.

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

7 For the Foundation Degrees in IT, and Business and Professional Administration, modules are developed and maintained by Kingston University with some input from partner colleges. The Foundation Degrees in Early Years, Management and Leadership in Early Years, and Children's Special Educational Needs have all been developed in conjunction with Kingston University and approved by the University's validation process. College staff have an extensive input into the development of all the modules. Modules delivered by the College on the BSc Sports Science were initially developed by Kingston University staff for validation purposes, but are maintained, updated, enhanced and modified, solely by College staff, to reflect changing curriculum needs. The College staff design the assessments within the HND Computing and the Extended Degree Foundation Year programmes for science, technology, and mathematics and computing. For other programmes most assessments are set by Kingston University.

8 For the University of Greenwich PGCE programme, the University provides the content and assessments in consultation with the network of colleges offering the programme. The University organises moderation meetings twice a year. College staff also attend meetings of annual subject assessment panels and progression and award boards. Network conferences and network centre committee meetings are held twice a year.

9 For the Birkbeck College programme, College staff contribute to the design and development of the programme and also to the setting of assessments. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the Birkbeck College programme manager.

10 London South Bank University administers admissions for the Foundation Degree in Sports and Exercise Science. College staff plan and deliver the modules according to aims and objectives set by the University. College staff design assessments which are moderated by the University appointed external examiner.

11 The link tutor at Middlesex University works with College staff in the development of the degree programme in relational counselling. College staff are responsible for the delivery of the programme and for the admission of students. College staff design assessments in consultation with the link tutor. Quality assurance is through termly moderation assessment boards and an annual programme assessment board.

12 Thames Valley University is responsible for admissions, through UCAS, for its programmes. The University is responsible for the design of assessments. Annual monitoring reports are produced for the University, and College staff attend moderation meetings and programme assessment boards twice a year.

13 The College has approval from Edexcel to deliver a range of Higher National programmes and determines the nature of these through its choice of standard Edexcel modules according to Edexcel rules. The College is responsible for the delivery and assessment of the programmes. Edexcel appoints external examiners for each programme.

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

14 From September 2008, all higher education students have had access to a newly developed higher education learning resources centre on the Kingston Hall Road site. This provides access to computers and a library, facilities for group work and private study space, and students can also borrow laptop computers.

15 An HE Forum has been established with two representatives from all faculties which deliver higher education courses. This formal committee oversees the progression of the Action Plan which has been implemented following the Developmental engagement and reports to the College's Academic Board. It is also charged with disseminating good practice across the provision and ensuring consistency.

16 The College has been involved in three projects funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee aimed at strengthening curriculum management and delivery of higher education programmes.

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

17 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A submission was made in the form of a collective statement based upon information from 21 questionnaire responses. The respondents represented eight of the programmes and covered five of the awarding bodies. The submission made a valuable contribution to the review.

## **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?**

18 Effective committee and management systems are in place to enable the College to assure the standards of its higher education programmes. Overall responsibility for the management of higher education provision lies with the College Academic Board and is well integrated into the reporting structure of the College. The Quality Improvement Handbook provides effective and well-presented guidance for managing the quality of higher education standards. Course managers have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring the quality of programmes. Subject Sector Self-Assessment Reviews inform the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document, which represents the College's main instrument for analysing the quality of higher education provision and for planning its improvement.

19 The Subject Sector Self-Assessment Review is informed by data gathered through an Annual Internal Quality Review. This is carried out through the scrutiny of documentation, from student feedback and from either peer observation of teaching or formal graded lesson observation. Student focus groups also provide a valuable source of feedback as part of this process. Subject Sector Self-Assessment Review is also an effective focus for monitoring student achievement.

20 Self-assessment is evaluative and action points are relevant; however, only limited reference is made to external examiners' reports in this process. Awarding universities send external examiner reports to the course leader at the College and this process has been slow in some cases. It has also meant that there has been limited opportunity for central scrutiny and analysis. The Quality Improvement and Professional Development Division is working with awarding bodies to ensure that these reports are sent to the Division's office, so that copies can be logged and scrutinised centrally as well as at course level. The team advises that the College more clearly signposts external examiners' reports and consequent actions in the self-assessment process, and works with the awarding bodies to establish a system for their centralised review.

21 The College has embraced the IQER process through diligent response to, and dissemination of, the Developmental engagement action plan to improve its approach to higher education. For example, workshops have been held to disseminate the good feedback practice seen in some areas and to encourage the linking of intended learning outcomes and assessment tasks; programmes have been rescheduled to address problems of attendance identified during the Developmental engagement. The use made by the College of the IQER process to introduce improvements in the management of its higher education provision represents good practice.

22 The College recognises that the recently formed HE Forum has focused on preparation for the IQER to date. Its terms of reference show that, in future, it is expected to provide a strategic framework and focus for emerging cross-college themes which arise, for example from external examiner reports, and meetings with collaborative partners and advisory bodies. It is recommended that the College now develops the Forum to meet its strategic goals.

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

23 All College policies have been matched to the Academic Infrastructure. Detailed guidance has been provided to heads of school advising them on how to match their Subject Sector Self-Assessment reports to the Academic Infrastructure. Heads found the matching of these reports to the Academic Infrastructure to be a useful opportunity to familiarise themselves with the various elements.

24 Responsibility for ensuring that programmes reflect *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and relevant subject benchmark statements lies with the awarding bodies. Where the College has responsibility for ensuring that practices take due note of, for example, the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*, it discharges those responsibilities appropriately.

#### **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?**

25 Academic standards are evaluated and monitored regularly through joint examination and assessment processes with partner institutions. Arrangements vary for different partners and courses. Different strategic and operational monitoring arrangements are in place for each partnership depending on the practices of the relevant awarding body. In all cases, the arrangements enable issues to be identified and resolved. The College's BTEC forum looks at recurring themes on Edexcel programmes across both further and higher education. Staff contribute to validations at awarding bodies. It is intended that the HE Forum will provide a useful overview of partnership practices. The team concludes that these processes are effective.

26 The partnership agreements outline responsibilities between the College and awarding institutions and are underpinned by the latter's' quality handbooks. A brief overview of reporting structures and details of each partnership provides a helpful summary for College staff. There are productive and effective relationships between key staff at the College and awarding bodies, particularly at course leader level; senior staff from the College and partner awarding bodies are represented on each other's high level committees. Each faculty holds termly advisory committees attended by awarding body partners, employers and members of the College governing body which have led to further course development and sharing of good practice. These highly productive working relationships between the College and its awarding partners represent good practice. They enable issues to be identified and addressed promptly and effectively and provide an opportunity for staff to contribute to programme development and to ensure that the programmes are informed by current developments at the awarding bodies in a timely manner.

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

27 The College ensures that staff involved in higher education are appropriately qualified, have opportunities for scholarly activity and are supported by adequate learning resources. All staff participate in a professional development review, and a panel assesses the alignment of an individual professional development support request in line with the College's strategic objectives. Additional funds are available to staff to support teaching on higher education programmes.

28 As a further example of the College's effective and positive response to the Developmental engagement, a development day was arranged which staff valued as an opportunity to share good practice across programme teams and university partners and this will be repeated. Higher education partners also provide valuable staff development opportunities.

**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?**

29 The College has responsibility for the operational management of the delivery of its higher education programmes, including the provision of teaching and learning, student support and learning resources. Each university awarding body monitors the delivery of programmes through boards of study. Effective relationships between staff at the College and its awarding bodies facilitate the management of the College's higher education provision.

30 The Subject Sector Self-Assessment Reviews address both further and higher education provision. They provide effective analyses of the quality of learning opportunities, to inform staff of strengths and areas for improvement. For example, student evaluation and staff reflection has led to changes in teaching approaches in some subjects.

31 The internal quality review and subject sector self-assessment reports inform the College Self-Assessment Report. Action plans arising from the Subject Sector Self-Assessment Reports are monitored at the termly meetings which are attended by the vice-principals, the Director of Quality Improvement and Professional Development, and deans of faculty. Since the Developmental engagement, the College has commenced producing an annual Higher Education Self-Evaluation Report. The team considers that it is desirable that the College continues this development as part of its larger aspiration to provide a clearer higher education focus and environment for staff and students. At the time of the visit, however, the only components of the action plan arising from the Higher Education Self-Evaluation were those which had been identified during the earlier Developmental engagement which had focused upon assessment.

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

32 Programme monitoring and evaluation follows the partner university approaches at either module or programme level, or the College approach for the Edexcel programmes. Meetings with students and staff confirmed that student responses and suggestions relating to the quality of learning opportunities are well managed. A recent university-facilitated workshop entitled 'Improving the Student experience' presented the opportunity for College and University staff to develop mutual strategies.

33 Staff-student interaction is promoted through a range of mechanisms. For example, students on Kingston University programmes provide representatives on the relevant staff student consultative committee. Effective use of student focus groups, as part of the internal quality review process, has led to issues being raised and positive feedback being gathered. Students on the Foundation Degree Early Years, make good use of a range of opportunities to make their views known. However, the College does not have a process for collating the information obtained from the range of student surveys. It is advised to consider the collation of all sources of feedback so that common themes can be identified and acted upon.

34 The team met with a group of employers supporting students on Foundation Degrees. They identified increased levels of confidence at work as the major positive outcome from the programmes. Feedback from employers relating to programme evaluation is limited. An evening meeting for mentors of students on the Foundation Degrees in Business and Professional Administration and Early Years to introduce them to their role, was highly appreciated by the employers. However, there was no evidence of subsequent feedback or dialogue. The College is encouraged to consider ways in which further guidance to mentors, engagement with the workplace setting and the gathering of feedback into the delivery of the programme could be enhanced and demonstrate adherence to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* statement and the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*.

35 Meetings with students and employers highlighted problems with the two year Foundation Degree in Early Years. It is proving very intensive for some students who are also in full-time employment. Both groups considered that this intensity detracts from the value of the programme for some students. There may be the opportunity to discuss a different mode of attendance with the awarding body.

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

36 The College has designed a template for the course file to enable each programme to identify sections of the Code of practice with internal documentation. This includes references to sections particularly relevant to the quality of learning opportunities such as *Section 3: Students with disabilities*, *Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters* as well as the sections relating to programme approval and assessment. The template demonstrates articulation with the Academic Infrastructure.

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

37 During 2008-09 peer observation is forming the focus for the classroom component of the internal quality review process. This is being embraced positively and presents the opportunities to share practice. Peer observation takes place across levels of study rather than being centred on the higher education provision. To date, the partner universities have not been involved in this approach. The College is encouraged to build on the peer-based model to promote the enhancement of teaching and learning across the higher education subject disciplines.

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

38 The College provides students with a range of informative handbooks explaining the arrangements for academic and pastoral support. Many are written collaboratively and provide information relating to both the College and university contexts. They are distributed at induction. In meetings, and within the written submission, students expressed positive views on the information provided to them.

39 The team concurs with the finding during the Developmental engagement that the use of the virtual learning environment within the BA Digital Arts programme represents good practice. It continues to develop, and provides an excellent opportunity for interaction between students and tutors. For example, it provides opportunities for discussion forums, for feedback on assessment and for tutorial support.

40 Students overwhelmingly agree that access to tutors is good and that feedback on assessments is constructive. The self-evaluation document produced for the Summative review noted differential practices towards the use of personal tutorials. Some programmes use individual learning plans; however, the most recent self-assessment of Business programmes noted an inconsistent approach to target-setting and inconsistency in tutorial provision. Following the recommendation of the Developmental engagement, staff development has taken place to begin to develop a consistent use of personal tutorials in the provision of feedback and the development of action plans to help students improve their performance. The College is undertaking an audit to identify how closely its practices match those within the QAA guidelines on progress files and personal development plans. Two examples of progress from this valuable initiative were seen by reviewers. As part of the aspiration to develop more higher education approaches, the College is advised to consider the production of a more consistent higher education tutorial policy.

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

41 The College publishes a range of documentation to demonstrate commitment to continuing professional development. An annual performance development review provides the opportunity to agree individual needs. The self-evaluation provided examples of relevant staff development, these included support for staff to obtain higher degrees, opportunities to share assessment experiences with awarding bodies and other colleges within the consortia, and contributions to published texts.

42 All teaching staff are required to register with the Institute for Learning and undertake the required continuing professional development. Staff may wish to consider the benefits which would accrue from becoming members of the Higher Education Academy, with its focus on higher education approaches towards teaching and learning.

43 Since the Developmental engagement, steps have been taken to share experiences and practice across the higher education portfolio through staff development days. This is regarded as good practice and should be sustained. The most recent event involved five higher education focused themes and also included facilitators from partner universities.

44 Three projects funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee are helping to develop higher education teaching. Between them they are helping to develop the use of mobile technologies to support students on higher education programmes within a further education context, helping to improve the College's curriculum management system and develop ways to present timetable information to students through a variety of channels, including email alerts and web-based formats, and developing and evaluating models of good practice in using technology to transform teaching, learning and assessment. Overall, these projects demonstrate the College's commitment to providing students with flexibility in the way that they can access information on a relevant range of issues and represent 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?**

45 The College has included a strategic aim to have a fully professionally qualified workforce by 2010. Approximately 40 per cent of the PGCE student cohort is made up of College staff, including those teaching on higher education programmes. Staff are also encouraged to enrol on the Kingston University postgraduate teaching programme. Staff delivering on awarding body programmes are subject to approval by the university partners.

46 The creation of the dedicated higher education facility demonstrates an appropriate response to some previously critical student comments relating to the Learning Resource Centre. Meetings with students showed that they were not all aware of this new resource. The facilities for students of sports science are of an excellent standard, and are augmented through access to laboratories at Kingston University.

**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?**

47 Except in the case of directly funded Higher National programmes, final responsibility for the accuracy of course specific information rests with the awarding body. The College, however, works in close cooperation with its awarding bodies to jointly author and produce course specific materials. In some cases, such as Foundation Degrees, the authoring is initially carried out by College staff, with the awarding bodies being responsible for the final checking and approval. Even for those courses where the responsibility for the handbook lies entirely with the awarding body, the College provides inserts and closely liaises with the University to ensure that students studying at the College are provided with appropriate information. For the directly funded courses awarded by Edexcel, course information is provided through the College's website. This is well maintained and easy to navigate with clearly signposted links to higher education courses. Overall, the processes in place ensure that students receive accurate and timely information.

48 The College has clear systems for managing its responsibilities. The HE Forum takes an overview of public information produced for all the higher education programmes offered by the College to ensure that responsibilities are clearly understood. It produces a public information checklist, which clearly sets out authoring, checking and approval responsibilities.

49 In most cases, programme specifications are provided by the awarding bodies. In the case of the directly funded Higher National awards, the limited programme specifications provided did not match QAA guidelines. Information at module level was much more complete. The College is advised to ensure that staff responsible for higher education programmes gain a greater understanding of the purposes and nature of programme specifications. This should help to develop their use to ensure that students are provided with clearer guidance on such matters as programme aims, intended learning outcomes and programme structure.

#### **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?**

50 Course handbooks for all directly funded programmes are authored, checked and approved within the College to ensure that they are accurate and complete. The authoring is at course team level with checking and approval being done by the head of school or the management team at faculty level.

51 Higher education students, where appropriate, are made aware, via course handbooks, tutorial support and other means, such as video materials produced by Kingston University, that they are subject to the policies and procedures of the awarding bodies as well as those of the College. The College's Quality Improvement and Professional Development Division reviews and checks that the College policies and statements remain up-to-date with current legislation and best practice. It also checks to ensure that they are consistent with the policies and statements of its awarding partners.

52 The College is becoming increasingly involved in disseminating information through a variety of new technological methods. Rigorous checks are made together with partner organisations to ensure that the production of online materials is of a high quality prior to its publication.

53 Reviewers scrutinised a range of documents and found them generally to be accurate and helpful. This was confirmed by students in meetings and in the written submission. In the majority of cases, students are clear where their programme of study will take place; however, in the case of Computing and Business Studies, some students indicated that they were expecting to be studying at the University. Admissions to full-time programmes are usually handled by the University; however, the College has become aware of the problem and now intervenes before students commit themselves to the programme to provide information on the College and to explain where students will be based.

**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**

54 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in June 2008 and involved a review of all of the College's higher education provision. The following lines of enquiry were agreed with the College.

- Ensure that the timeliness and content of feedback to students is supportive of their learning.
- The extent to which an appropriate range of assessment instruments is used to meet intended learning outcomes.
- Ensuring that group work is assessed in a fair and rigorous manner.

55 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. The BA Digital Arts students have access to a dedicated website that provides supportive formative and summative online feedback. The personal development module within the induction programme for the Foundation Degree in Business and Professional Administration provides an effective grounding in good academic practice. On the Foundation Degree in Early Years, students document and evaluate their progress against intended learning outcomes. There is effective collaboration between students and staff in the assessment of individual contributions to group work.

56 The Developmental engagement team made several recommendations. They considered it advisable that the College should devise strategies to address the impact that poor attendance and lack of participation have on the value of formative assessment; that the College makes the links between intended learning outcomes and assessment tasks more explicit and improves the links between feedback and intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria and that the evidence of internal moderation be made clearer. The review team considered it desirable that the College applies its policies relating to the timeliness and quality of feedback, and late submission more consistently and that more effective use be made of personal tutorials; that staff adopt a more critical approach to the review of assessment on programmes internally and in their dialogue with partner institutions and that they ensure that the criteria for assessing individual performance in group work are clearly articulated to students.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

57 The College has Foundation Degree programmes in business and management, education, sport and counselling. Employers supporting students on Foundation Degrees stated that the student's experience on their programmes has led to increased levels of confidence at work. Two employers have contributed guest lectures, and there was good preparation for the workplace mentors of students on the Foundation Degrees in Business and Professional Administration and Early Years. However, there was no evidence of subsequent feedback or dialogue. Employer contributions to programme development and evaluation have also been limited. Meetings with students and employers highlighted problems with the two year Foundation Degree in Early Years programme. It is proving very intensive for some students who are also in full-time employment. Both groups considered that this intensity detracts from the value of the programme for some students.

58 The College has identified a number of areas where it wishes to expand its portfolio of Foundation Degrees. It is currently working with awarding bodies to develop programmes in art and design, media, play-work and engineering systems and facilities management.

59 The Summative review team has identified the following areas of good practice in Kingston College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the Foundation Degree awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies:

- the use made by the College of the IQER process to introduce improvements in its management of the higher education provision, for example the introduction of an HE Forum, the organisation of a development day involving validating partners and the provision of workshops to progress issues raised during the Developmental engagement on assessment (paragraphs 21, 28, 43)
- the effective relationships between staff at the College and those within the awarding bodies which facilitate the management of higher education programmes and ensure that issues can be identified and addressed promptly and effectively (paragraph 26)
- the College's involvement in information systems projects aimed at providing students with flexibility in the ways in which they can access information (paragraph 44).

60 The team agreed the following areas where the College is advised to take action:

- the College should more clearly signpost external examiners' reports in the self-assessment process and work with awarding bodies to establish a system for their centralised review (paragraph 20)
- a system should be established for the centralised review of the valuable data arising from a range of student surveys (paragraph 33).

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

- the HE Forum should be further developed to enable it to provide a strategic framework for the progress of higher education provision and to act as a focus for the bringing together of a range of issues including higher education specific documentation and improvements in the consistency of personal tutorials (paragraphs 22, 34)

- the College should continue the developments towards providing a clearer higher education focus and environment for staff and students including the development of a consistent tutorial policy (paragraphs 31, 40).

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

62 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Kingston 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 Kingston University, Thames Valley University, London South Bank University, Middlesex University, University of Greenwich, Birkbeck College University of London and Edexcel.

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

- the College has made good use of the IQER process to introduce improvements in its management of its higher education provision, for example the introduction of an HE Forum, the organisation of a development day involving validating partners and the provision of workshops to progress the issues raised during the Developmental engagement on assessment (paragraphs 21, 28, 43)
- the effective relationships between staff at the College and those within the awarding bodies facilitate the management of higher education programmes and ensure that issues can be identified and addressed promptly and effectively (paragraph 26)
- the use of a specially designed virtual learning environment on the BA Digital Arts which encourages dialogue between and among staff and students, and provides commendable opportunities for interaction between students and their tutors (paragraph 39)
- higher education programmes have been the focus of information systems projects aimed at providing students with flexibility in the ways in which they can access information (paragraph 44).

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

The team agreed a number of areas where the College is **advised** to take action:

- the College should more clearly signpost external examiners' reports in the self-assessment process and work with awarding bodies to establish a system for their centralised review (paragraph 20)
- a system should be established for the centralised review of the valuable data arising from a range of student surveys (paragraph 33)
- the College should ensure that staff responsible for higher education programmes gain a greater understanding of the purposes and nature of programme specifications, and provide them consistently to ensure that all students are provided with clear guidance on the aims, intended learning outcomes and structure of their programmes (paragraph 49).

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

- the HE Forum should be further developed to enable it to provide a strategic framework for the progress of higher education provision and to act as a focus for the bringing together of a range of issues including higher education specific documentation and improvements in the consistency of personal tutorials (paragraphs 22, 34)
- the College should continue the developments towards providing a clearer higher education focus and environment for staff and students including the development of a consistent tutorial policy (paragraphs 31, 40).

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

66 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has confidence that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

67 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/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 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 College has made good use of the IQER process to introduce improvements in its management of its higher education provision, for example, the introduction of an HE Forum, the organisation of a development day involving validating partners and the provision of workshops to progress the issues raised during the Developmental engagement on assessment (paragraphs 21, 28, 43)</li> </ul>	<p>Progress improvements as follows:</p> <p>Developing sub-groups of HE Forum to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish policy on employer engagement via an HE Forum sub group</li> <li>establish HE Teaching &amp; Learning Strategy via an HE</li> </ul>	June 2009	HE Forum	<p>Positive feedback from employers and students</p> <p>Implementation of T&amp; L Strategy</p>	Academic Board	Annual HE Self-Evaluation Process and document

Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>Forum working party</p> <p>Provide dedicated HE activities on Staff Development Day</p>	12 February 2010	Quality Improvement and Professional Development Division (QIPD)	Embedding of good practice		Staff Development Day evaluation and feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective relationships between staff at the College and those within the awarding bodies facilitate the management of HE programmes and ensure that issues can be identified and addressed promptly and effectively (paragraph 26)</li> </ul>	Continue to develop relationships via link tutors, advisory committees, collaborative events at HEIs and Kingston College	Ongoing	Deans, Heads of School, Course Managers	Positive staff and student feedback	Deans of Faculty	Annual HE Self-Evaluation Process Qualification Self-Assessment Review (QSARs)

Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the use of a specially designed virtual learning environment on the BA Digital Arts which encourages dialogue between and amongst staff and students, and provides commendable opportunities for interaction between students and their tutors (paragraph 39)</li> </ul>	Share good practice through Staff Development Days and HE Forum.	February 2010	QIPD	Effective spread of good practice of use of VLE	Academic Board Deans of Faculty	Student feedback Annual HE Self-Evaluation Process and Document
	Include this good practice within HE Teaching and Learning Strategy	Oct 2009	HE Forum (T&L sub group)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>higher education programmes have been the focus of information systems projects aimed at providing students with flexibility in the ways in which they can access information (paragraph 44)</li> </ul>	Disseminate information about the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) projects across the HE teaching team - Staff Development Day  Include within Teaching and Learning strategies.	February 2010	Director of ILT QIPD  HE Forum (T & L sub group)	Successful completion of the Kingston Uplift for Business Education (KUBE) project	Academic Board	KUBE Project Report for JISC



Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be <b>advised</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College should more clearly signpost external examiners' reports in the self-assessment process and work with awarding bodies to establish a system for their centralised review (paragraph 20)</li> </ul>	<p>Liaise with HE partners to ensure that external examiners' reports are sent to QIPD</p> <p>QIPD to collect, analyse and monitor action by HE college teams</p>	Oct 2009	QIPD	<p>Consistent practice across all HEIs</p> <p>Better evidenced QSARs</p>	Senior Management Team (SMT) Academic Board Deans of Faculty	College HE Self Evaluation Review and Document
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a system should be established for the centralised review of the valuable data arising from a range of student surveys (paragraph 33)</li> </ul>	<p>Produce a report collating student feedback</p> <p>Establish a system for centralised review of</p>	January 2010	<p>QIPD</p> <p>Dean of Faculty of Business and Professional Studies BPS</p>	Actions taken as a result of analysis of survey data and communicated to students through HE-specific channels	SMT Academic Board Deans of Faculty	College HE Self Evaluation Review and Document

**Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009**

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	student survey data and feedback to students  Workshop to be held at February 2010 Staff Development Day		QIPD	(e.g. posters displayed in 11th floor HE centre)  Day programme		Staff Development Day evaluation and feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College should ensure that staff responsible for higher education programmes gain a greater understanding of the purposes and nature of programme specifications, and provide them consistently to ensure that all students are provided with clear guidance on the aims, intended learning outcomes and structure of their programmes (paragraph 49)</li> </ul>	Produce Staff HE Handbook with guidelines for content of course handbooks to include programme specifications  Embed use of standard documentation  HE Forum (T & L sub group)	September 2009  Academic year 2009/2010  October 2009	QIPD  QIPD  HE Forum (T & L sub group)	Consistent inclusion of programme specifications with intended learning outcomes in course handbooks	Academic board	College HE Self Evaluation Review and document  QSARs

Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The team agreed the following areas where it would be <b>desired</b> to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the HE Forum should be further developed to enable it to provide a strategic framework for the progress of HE provision and to act as a focus for the bringing together of a range of issues including higher education-specific documentation and improvements in the consistency of personal tutorials (paragraphs 22, 34)</li> </ul>	Develop the role of HE Forum to provide focus for progression of HE provision		HE Forum		Academic Board	Student Feedback Report
	Staff Development Day workshop for tutors	February 2010	QIPD			College Self Evaluation Process and Document
	Develop guidelines to improve the consistency of personal tutorials	Ongoing	Student Entitlement and Marketing (StEM) (Tutorial Improvement Facilitator)	Progression/ completion rates	Deans of Faculty	Student Feedback Report

**Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009**

Deisirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>● the College should continue the developments towards providing a clearer higher education focus and environment for staff and students including the development of a consistent tutorial policy (paragraphs 31, 40)</p>	<p>Revise HE Strategy to meet HEFCE guidelines to current and mapped to academic infrastructure</p>	<p>Dec 2009 Ongoing</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>HEFCE approved HE strategy implemented</p>	<p>Academic Board Governors</p>	<p>Annual review of strategies and policies</p>
	<p>Further develop HE Forum to set-up:</p>		<p>HE Forum</p>			
	<p>a Teaching and Learning in HE sub group</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>		<p>Implementation of T &amp; L Strategy</p>		<p>Staff feedback</p>
	<p>b Employer Engagement sub group</p>	<p>Nov 2009</p>		<p>Positive feedback from employers</p>		
	<p>Produce an HE prospectus, to include online version</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>	<p>StEM</p>	<p>Prospectus published</p>	<p>Management Board Academic Board</p>	<p>Student feedback</p>
<p>Produce an HE staff handbook</p>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>QIPD</p>	<p>Widespread use of handbook &amp; documentation guidance</p>		<p>Staff feedback</p>	

Kingston College action plan relating to the Summative review in April 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>Develop guidelines to improve the consistency of personal tutorials.</p> <p>Make self evaluation documentation more HE focussed</p> <p>Develop HE section on KC online</p> <p>HE specific Staff Development</p>	Ongoing	<p>QIPD/StEM (Tutorial Enhancement Facilitator)</p> <p>QIPD</p> <p>ILT/QIPD</p> <p>QIPD</p>	<p>Improved progression/ completion rates for students</p> <p>Effective QSARs with monitored action plans</p> <p>Implementation &amp; use of HE online section</p> <p>Appropriate range of continuing professional opportunities provided</p>		

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RG 508 07/09