

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

April 2010

Hadlow 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*, 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 Hadlow College carried out in April 2010

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information 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's engagement with its awarding bodies is efficient, effective and transparent.
- There are systematic processes for gathering student feedback about the quality of learning opportunities.
- There are positive and effective relationships with employers and professional bodies which inform teaching and learning.
- Staff development activity contributes positively to the maintenance of high-quality teaching.
- Specialist resources for learning are of high quality and are managed effectively.
- The way in which the College publicises its strong links with employers and commercial partners reflects the vocational ethos of the provision.
- The prospectuses for full and part-time programmes are produced to a high standard and the content is informative, well ordered and accessible.

Recommendations

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

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

- consolidate its quality assurance documentation into a dedicated higher education quality manual, accessible to all staff and students
- assess formally, at an appropriate date, the effectiveness of the new senior management structure with respect to the responsibilities of the post-holders for the higher education provision
- explore mechanisms to improve the timing of assessment feedback to students, in collaboration with the awarding body

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- explore the merits of a peer observation process to promote the enhancement of higher education focused teaching and learning
- develop a coherent policy to advance scholarly activity among staff
- continue efforts to expand the learning resource centre to meet fully the needs of students
- review the content and consistency of all student handbooks and ensure their full alignment with awarding body requirements.

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 Hadlow 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 Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Greenwich. The review was carried out by Professor Paul Brunt, Ms Ann Hill and Mr Mark Langley (reviewers), and Dr Richard Wheeler (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*, published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students and employers, 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 To assist HEFCE in gaining information to help it assess the impact of Foundation Degree awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College.

4 Hadlow is a land-based college situated on a 256-hectare estate with its main campus located four miles from Tonbridge in west Kent. Extensive specialist facilities include a working farm, garden centre and national plant collections. The College operates its own commercial operations in these areas which contribute financial support to the educational provision, provide business experience opportunities for students and strengthen ties with the local community. The College has recently purchased additional land to develop further its countryside and fisheries curriculum. Although there are also satellite operations, higher education is delivered only on the main site. The College mission from 2007 to 2010 is to be 'an outstanding land based college'. The College is a member of the Land Based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence (LANDEX) group.

5 There has been considerable growth in the number of students studying at the College over the last six years. In 2009-10, it has 910 full-time further education students. The higher education provision dates from 1990 and is well established. Higher education numbers have increased 25 per cent annually since 2004, with an increase from 265 to 589 in 2009-10. Currently, there are 496 full-time and 95 part-time students on programmes funded by HEFCE. The College has 230 residential students of whom approximately 55 are studying higher education programmes. They are taught by 75 full-time and 24 part-time staff.

6 The College offers the following higher education programmes, funded by HEFCE, in conjunction with the University of Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church University.

| University of Greenwich | Students (full-time equivalents) |
|---|---|
| Full-time | |
| • Higher National Diploma (HND) Garden Design | 10 |
| • BSc International Agriculture | 23 |
| • HND International Agriculture | 9 |
| • HND Medicinal Horticulture | 6 |
| Full and part-time | |
| • BA (Hons) Garden Design | 16 |
| • Foundation Degree (FdSc) Amenity Horticulture | 7 |
| • BSc (Hons) Landscape Management (Land Use) | 28 |
| • HND Landscape Management (Land Use) | 19 |
| • BSc (Hons) Horticulture (Commercial) | 2 |
| • HND Horticulture (Commercial) | 5 |
| • BSc (Hons) Medicinal Horticulture | 4 |
| • BSc Landscape Management (Countryside) | 8 |
| • FdSc Sustainable Land Management | 16 |
| • FdSc Fisheries Management | 25 |
| • FdSc Countryside Management | 31 |
| • BSc (Hons) Animal Management | 73 |
| • BSc (Hons) Animal Conservation + Biodiversity (top-up) | 7 |
| • FdSc Animal Conservation + Biodiversity | 61 |
| • BSc Applied Animal Behavioural Science and Welfare (top-up) | 15 |
| • FdSc Applied Animal Behavioural Science and Welfare | 71 |
| • BSc (Hons) Equine Management | 42 |
| • FdSc Equine Management | 23 |
| • BSc (Hons) Equine Science | 9 |
| • FdSc Equine Science | 6 |

Part-time

- Higher National Certificate (HNC) Garden Design 25
- HNC Horticulture (Commercial) 2
- HNC Medicinal Horticulture 7
- HNC Landscape Management 10
- Associate Undergraduate (Credit) Programme 12

Canterbury Christ Church University**Part-time teaching awards in the Lifelong Learning Sector**

- Preparing to teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector 14
- Diploma in teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector 20

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The partnership agreement with the University of Greenwich sets out the responsibilities of the University and the College as partners in widening participation and increasing access to higher education. The University is responsible for the quality and standards of the provision, including arrangements for the assessment of students and appointment of external examiners, award of qualifications and the monitoring, administration and reporting of these. The College is responsible for advertising, recruitment and student welfare. The day-to-day delivery of programmes is vested in the programme leader, the programme team and the programme committee. The College is responsible for the assessment of students and for annual monitoring of the provision.

8 The partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University is based on a Memorandum of Agreement, dating from 2007. An annex to the agreement refers specifically to teaching awards in the Lifelong Learning Sector, indicating that these are delivered through a consortium of further and adult education colleges. This sets out the arrangements for the delivery and management of the programme, for staff development and quality assurance, including the involvement of student representatives at programme management meetings.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9 The College has adopted a curriculum strategy designed to provide progression routes to higher education for all further education programmes. New programmes planned for delivery in September 2010 include a BSc Applied Behavioural Science and Welfare; BSc Animal Conservation and Biodiversity; FdSc Horticulture (Commercial); FdSc Horticulture (Medicinal) and FdSc Garden Management. Strategically, the College is committed to continued expansion of its higher education provision, subject to funding constraints.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10 Students studying on higher education programmes were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The team found the student written submission to be a helpful document in identifying areas for discussion at a meeting with students enrolled on programmes validated by the University of Greenwich. The submission was structured around the IQER core themes and derived from the work of a student focus group. This was facilitated by a member of the Student Support Services team who was responsible for drawing the findings together into a report. The team held a separate meeting with students enrolled on the Canterbury Christ Church University teacher training programmes as the students are all members of the College staff engaged in their own staff development. Both meetings contributed valuable information to the process of evidence gathering.

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 There are clear responsibilities and reporting arrangements for managing and delivering higher education standards. The Vice-Principal has responsibility for the strategic planning and development of the College's higher education programmes, and for ensuring that the policies and procedures of the partner universities are implemented. Heads of faculty are accountable for the everyday management of the programmes.

12 Since the self-evaluation was written, the College has created two new posts at senior management level, reporting to the Vice-Principal, which the team was assured would strengthen the management structure of the higher education provision, building on established good practice. The Associate Principal (Quality and Staff Development) is responsible for the implementation of the quality assurance processes and acts as a focal point of communication between the College and its awarding bodies. The post-holder will work closely with a newly-appointed Associate Principal (Curriculum) who will shortly take up the post and, among other duties, will line manage heads of faculty.

13 A Higher Education Managers Group is the key body for quality assurance and management. Used for consultation and communication to staff of policy and practice, the Group is facilitated by the heads of faculty who are members. Reporting arrangements operate within a well-defined Higher Education Quality Cycle. Interaction with the awarding bodies is facilitated by a series of structures which include the Principal's membership of the University of Greenwich Partner College Strategic Planning Group; other staff membership of the Joint Higher Education Committee; the Higher Education Liaison Group; and the individual programme committees, as defined in the partnership agreement. Equivalent meetings occur with the Canterbury Christ Church partnership.

14 Quality management is underpinned by various documents produced by the awarding bodies and the College, some of which are summarised in a draft Higher Education Assessment Policy. Other sources include the Partnership Agreements; University of Greenwich Collaborative Provision: Policy and Practice; separate policies for the University of Greenwich Schools of Science, and Architecture and Construction; and the Canterbury Christ Church University Assessment Handbook.

15 The format and requirements for programme review are set out in the contractual agreements with the awarding bodies. At the programme level, an annual programme monitoring report is completed for each award with the University of Greenwich. The team found these reports to be detailed, evaluative and comprehensive. The College is then required to submit an annual institutional review focusing on cross-college issues affecting the delivery of programmes. Equivalent processes occur for the Canterbury Christ Church University award. In addition, the College produces higher education self-assessment reports modelled on the review requirements for further education reporting. Overall, the team concluded that the College's engagement with its awarding bodies is efficient, effective and transparent.

16 The team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to consolidate its quality assurance documentation into a dedicated higher education quality manual, accessible to all staff and students. Such a manual would act as an important source of reference to supplement the information available on the College intranet. This would enhance the accessibility of policies and procedures for the assurance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

17 Overall, there are effective reporting and communication mechanisms and considerable thought has gone into the development of the revised management system. As the new associate principals become established in their posts, the team considers it desirable for the College to assess formally the effectiveness of the new senior management structure with respect to the responsibilities of the post-holders for the higher education provision.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

18 The team confirms the College's claim in its self-evaluation that the Academic Infrastructure is embedded in its practices, and noted in written evidence examples of alignment in the design, approval and delivery of programmes, in programme specifications, in its assessment strategy and in the conduct of examination boards. In discussions with the team, College staff indicated that their knowledge of the Academic Infrastructure had developed their understanding of higher education. Staff demonstrated familiarity with the *Code of practice* in their meetings with the team and through documentation.

19 Programme specifications are detailed and informative. They are presented in definitive documentation and summaries are included in student handbooks. The intended learning outcomes are carefully matched to subject benchmark statements and to the level of study, with subject knowledge and skills, assessments, and learning and teaching clearly explained.

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?

20 The validation of programmes by the awarding bodies is underpinned by internal College mechanisms, involving the scrutiny of proposals by the Curriculum Planning Review Group and the completion of a new course application form. Effective use is made of external advisers and employers in faculty industrial liaison meetings. The College assures itself that it is meeting the requirements of its validating partners through annual reporting, membership of joint committees, liaison with link tutors and through the universities' own procedures, such as the annual review meeting with the College undertaken by Canterbury Christ Church University. Awarding body representatives reported full confidence in the College's quality processes.

21 The Developmental engagement provided an in-depth analysis of assessment policy and practice. The report identified some good quality assessment feedback but made one advisable recommendation to improve the timing of feedback to students. Although the College has taken some action to address the problem, the turnaround times of feedback remain an issue of concern to students. Both the University of Greenwich and the College are aware of the assessment challenge presented by expanding student numbers. The College uses curriculum health checks, currently the responsibility of the Associate Principal (Quality and Staff Development), to monitor and enhance the consistency of the timing of feedback across programmes. The University is currently exploring this issue in terms of its requirements for, and timing of, internal verification and moderation of student work. University representatives indicated a willingness to work with the College to review the volume of assessment and share training events related to this issue. The team recommends that it is desirable to explore mechanisms to improve the timing of assessment feedback to students, in collaboration with the awarding body.

22 An analysis of external examiners' reports over the last three years confirms that the standards and quality of the provision are sound and students are achieving the intended learning outcomes. External examiners indicate that the internal verification process is robust. The College makes good use of external examiners' reports to enhance the quality of the programmes. The team concludes that there are robust procedures and detailed documentation accompanying the receipt of, and responses to, external examiner reports, the monitoring of progress in addressing concerns and signing-off the completed actions.

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

23 The self-evaluation indicates that staff benefit from the regular programme of events at the universities, and at the College, including activities on two afternoons each week, advertised on the College's virtual learning environment. All staff are required to undertake a minimum of 30 hours professional development each year. The staff development programme is planned and coordinated by the Associate Principal (Quality and Staff Development), working in conjunction with the heads of faculty and the Vice-Principal. Cross-college and faculty 'standardisation' days are normally led by the College's advanced practitioner tutor, or by four subject learning coaches. Cross-college activities include those to ensure consistency with assessment setting and referencing conventions. Faculty-based activities include the use of new equipment and both types may involve visiting speakers to ensure currency. Outcomes of staff development are measured through one-to-one meetings, appraisals, lesson observations and learner feedback. The College schedules higher education staff development separately from activities for further education to permit staff who teach in both to benefit. Staff provided examples of the way events hosted by each of the partner universities and other development activities, such as support for the completion of higher degrees, are being used to update knowledge and increase awareness of academic standards.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

24 The College delegates the management of the quality of learning opportunities through the same structure and reporting arrangements, as described in paragraphs 12 to 16. The team judges these arrangements to be effective with respect to the quality of learning opportunities as well as to academic standards.

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

25 The arrangements described in paragraphs 13 to 15 and 20 provide a secure framework for interaction between the College and the awarding bodies. For the University of Greenwich programmes, the link tutors, one of whom contributes to the teaching at the Hadlow Campus, play an important liaison role in ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities meets the requirements of the University. Similar collaborative links operate between the College and Canterbury Christ Church University.

26 The College assures the distinctive elements of its Foundation Degree provision in line with the awarding body's requirements. At validation and review events, the University looks specifically for the differences between Foundation Degree and BSc programmes. All the Foundation Degree programmes contain a large proportion of work-based learning and focus particularly on skill development. The College has agreed with the awarding body a new Guide to Work-Based Learning which sets out the main responsibilities of the employer, student and tutor, expectations and assessment of competence during the placement, and the principal stages of work-based learning.

27 The College has a clear system for capturing the learner voice. Each cohort elects a student representative who attends programme meetings, and a range of questionnaires and module evaluations allows students to comment on programme delivery, College systems and resources. Staff record major student issues in the relevant annual monitoring reports and student contributions inform the College's higher education action plan. Thus, there are systematic processes for gathering student feedback about the quality of learning opportunities which the team regards as good practice.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

28 As indicated in paragraphs 18 and 19, staff demonstrate significant knowledge and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure, indicating the success of the training events offered by both the College and the awarding bodies in raising staff awareness.

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

29 All teaching staff are required to undertake a teaching qualification to diploma level. The College entered into its partnership agreement with Canterbury Christ Church University to provide lecturers with the required initial teacher training. This makes an important contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.

30 New staff speak positively about their experience of the induction process, and their use of induction documentation. Most College staff teach on both further and higher education programmes. The College requires all staff to be members of the Institute for Learning. It recognises the need to focus on the specific demands of higher education. Staff are subject to an annual lesson observation which feeds into staff appraisal. Four subject learning coaches and an advanced practitioner support the process of lesson observation and provide staff with developmental training and support. The team noted references to the use of peer observation but saw no documentary evidence to suggest this is a formal College process. The team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to explore further the merits of a peer observation process to promote the enhancement of higher education focused teaching and learning.

31 The College has positive relationships with many professional bodies and has embedded relevant benchmarking criteria into the documentation of some of its programmes. Employers make inputs into the design and delivery of programmes through faculty industry liaison meetings, and support work-based learning. The Developmental engagement recorded that many staff are closely involved with current business practice in a part-time capacity in the animal, agricultural, equine, fisheries, horticulture and landscape industries. The team noted the important contribution that this makes to the quality of teaching and learning. The team regards as good practice the positive and effective relationships with employers and professional bodies which inform teaching and learning.

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

32 Students commented on the high quality of many staff. The campus is notable for positive staff-student interaction in its support arrangements. All students have easy access to learning support and counselling services. Every student has an entitlement to regular group tutorials and can arrange personal tutorials when required. The College is proactive in supporting students for whom English is a second language.

33 All prospective students are interviewed. The Developmental engagement identified some good practice at this stage. There is no formal process of assessing individual learner needs at the start of the programme, but staff take particular note of the first assessment submitted during the early part of the first term to identify such needs. An earlier initial assessment of individual learning needs would constitute an additional element of student support. Annual monitoring reports confirm that overall support for students is strong. Progression rates and external examiners' reports confirm high levels of achievement.

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

34 As indicated in paragraph 21, the College has effective systems for staff development which contribute positively to the maintenance of high quality teaching. This is confirmed in external examiner reports and acknowledged by students. The team regards this as an area of good practice. The ongoing business and professional experience of staff contribute to their own staff development and to the currency of teaching and learning. The College is a member of the LANDEX group which provides a wide range of materials and activities contributed by other practitioners.

35 The team noted examples of scholarly activity among staff. The College acknowledges that currently there are insufficient opportunities for such activity but the matter is under review. A college-wide scholarly ethos would enhance the quality of learning opportunities and teaching. The team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to develop a coherent policy to advance scholarly activity among staff.

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

36 All students benefit from access to a range of well-designed specialised, professional facilities. New residential accommodation is of a high quality. The campus offers some recreational space specifically for higher education students. The equipment and classroom resources are of a high standard. One-third of the College's income derives from business enterprises including tearooms, farm shops, a garden centre as well as contracts with major regional and national businesses. These provide excellent work-based learning opportunities and maintain the College's role at the heart of the local community. This commercial activity contributes to capital projects. The team concludes that specialist resources for learning are of high quality and are managed effectively.

37 The College has prioritised an expansion of the learning resource centre, which is cramped for space and places a limitation on stock, as phase two of its building plan but this has been deferred for the present. The work of the learning resource centre team is efficient and effective. However, the team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to continue its efforts to expand the learning resource centre to meet fully the needs of students.

38 Since the Developmental engagement, the College has evolved an effective strategy for electronic learning. The range of support materials, schedules and discussion groups on the virtual learning environment indicates a proactive approach to electronic learning. The continued development of electronic learning presents a challenge to both staff and students, as acknowledged by external examiners and by the awarding bodies. There are issues about access to various university portals and websites and the University of Greenwich representatives confirmed this.

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?

39 The College's mission statement 'to be an outstanding land-based college' is prominent in all its published information. Its brand and logos are highly visible on materials and physical resources and they are attractive, relevant and distinctive. There is a wide range of high standard commercially-focused leaflets which promote the College and its provision. The Student Charter is displayed prominently on-campus and provides a code of conduct embracing College expectations of students, and vice versa. The team regards as good practice the way in which the College publicises its strong links with employers and commercial partners which reflects the vocational ethos of the provision.

40 The prospectuses for full and part-time programmes are produced to a high standard and the content is informative, well ordered and accessible. This represents good practice. The excellent specialist resources are given a high profile. There is comprehensive programme information, including related career potential and employment opportunities and progression to other programmes of study. Amendments to programme information are available on the College's website. The welcome from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Greenwich reflects the long-standing and productive working relationship with the awarding body. The prospectuses also include details of short courses, open to College students, which are part of the Greenwich Summer University programme.

41 There is a wide range of published support materials accessible to students. The University of Greenwich publishes a useful brochure outlining services for partner college students. Students confirm that they are well supported. In line with the partnership agreement with the University, the College might wish to include this entitlement in all programme handbooks. The College draws appropriate attention to equality and diversity issues, deriving from an equal opportunity policy written in 2004 which is due for review in the light of recent legislation. The College commitment in this area is clearly evident in its public information.

42 The College's website is attractive, easy to navigate, accessible and easy to use. It is clear and uncluttered with an effective course-focused layout and pages for employers. However, the employers who met the team indicated that they did not make much use of the website. The College might consider further development of web pages, linked to relevant information for employers involved with work placements.

43 The College's intranet is comprehensive and accessible and provides a document repository for all College policies and plans. There are dedicated pages for higher education which include university academic regulations, assessment documentation, and higher education web links to relevant organisations, including the awarding bodies.

44 All students receive programme handbooks at the induction stage which are available on the College's virtual learning environment. An issue arising from the Developmental engagement related to the presentation and consistency of student handbooks. The College has taken action to address these problems, including the production of an institutional template, but the team still found inconsistency of practice with reference to content, including variations in reading and website references. Some assessment criteria are clear, others are implied, some assignment briefs include reading lists; others do not. It was not clear to the team, nor apparently to students who met the team, where or how all student cohorts receive copies of their reading lists. The handbooks should contain a clear statement on the intended timescale for the submission and return of student work and the student entitlement to tutorials, in line with both College and University of Greenwich policy. The team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to review the content and consistency of student handbooks and ensure their full alignment with awarding body requirements.

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?

45 There is a variety of formal mechanisms to assure the accuracy of information. The College's published materials are reviewed according to an annual cycle. Marketing materials are reviewed on a cyclical basis and are subject to scrutiny by identified managers to ensure accuracy of content and consistency. The virtual learning environment is quality assured by the E-Learning Co-ordinator. There is a comprehensive process for the updating of information on the website.

46 The awarding bodies review and check the accuracy of the programme information, and the College liaises effectively with them. The University of Greenwich has clear guidelines relating to publicity and marketing and there is explicit reference to the policy at all programme approval events. University partners are satisfied with the quality assurance procedures and reporting processes that assure the accuracy and completeness of published information.

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

47 The Developmental engagement took place in October 2008. The lines of enquiry agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit are set out below. The lines of enquiry reflected a broad range of assessment issues.

Line of enquiry 1: How effectively are the processes of second-marking, internal and external verification used to improve the assessment process and support student achievement?

Line of enquiry 2: How well do recruitment and induction materials/information accurately inform students of the nature of assessment to support student retention and achievement?

Line of enquiry 3: How well does staff induction and training (continuing professional development) support staff to maximize the opportunities for learner achievement through varied and innovative assessment methods?

48 The team identified a number of areas of good practice, including the effective relationship with the awarding bodies in the maintenance of academic standards, the active involvement of many staff with current industrial practice which informs the assessment of students, and the imaginative use of specialist physical resources in the assessment process. The team identified many examples of innovative assessment practice, including individual and group projects, many of which relate to real life situations, and assignments that require students to demonstrate higher-level skills, closely related to business and industry practice. In support of the provision, the team found evidence of good practice at the interview stage and some examples of detailed and informative student handbooks which provide accurate and helpful information relating to assessment.

49 The team made some recommendations. It advised the College to improve the timing of feedback to students. It concluded that it would be desirable for the College to review the balance of elements within dissertation marking schemes in some programmes and make more effective use of the prospectus and its website to inform students of innovative assessment methods. It should engage in more careful monitoring of the presentation of material given to students, including student handbooks, and improve consistency in the content of these. The College should formalise the sharing of good practice with specific reference to assessment through College staff development.

D Foundation Degrees

50 The College has developed a significant portfolio of Foundation Degrees in the land-based industries. It offers FdScs in Animal Conservation and Biodiversity, Amenity Horticulture, Applied Animal Behavioural Science and Welfare, Countryside Management, Equine Management, Equine Science, Fisheries Management and Sustainable Land Management. In September 2010, it intends to offer FdScs in Garden Management, Horticulture (Commercial) and Horticulture (Medicinal).

51 The Foundation Degrees provide students with an important progression route from the College's further education programmes. They are fully in line with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Employers are involved with the design, approval and delivery of programmes. Employers participate in faculty industry liaison meetings and provide guest lectures and lead visits for students to their premises. The College recognises the need to assure the distinctive elements of its Foundation Degree provision. At validation and review events explicit attention is paid to the differences between the Foundation Degree and the BSc programmes which run parallel with each other.

52 In the course of the review, the team identified areas of good practice and areas where it would be desirable for the College to take action. The conclusions listed in Section E of the report apply to the Foundation Degree provision.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

53 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Hadlow 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, Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Greenwich.

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

- the College's engagement with its awarding bodies is efficient, effective and transparent (paragraphs 15, 20, 25)
- there are systematic processes for gathering student feedback about the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 27)
- there are positive and effective relationships with employers and professional bodies which inform teaching and learning (paragraph 31)
- staff development activity contributes positively to the maintenance of high quality teaching (paragraph 34)

- specialist resources for learning are of high quality and are managed effectively (paragraph 36)
- the way in which the College publicises its strong links with employers and commercial partners reflects the vocational ethos of the provision (paragraph 39)
- the prospectuses for full and part-time programmes are produced to a high standard and the content is informative, well ordered and accessible (paragraph 40).

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

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

- consolidate its quality assurance documentation into a dedicated higher education quality manual, accessible to all staff and students (paragraph 16)
- assess formally, at an appropriate date, the effectiveness of the new senior management structure, with respect to the responsibilities of the post holders for the higher education provision (paragraph 17)
- explore mechanisms to improve the timing of assessment feedback to students, in collaboration with the awarding body (paragraph 21)
- explore the merits of a peer observation process to promote the enhancement of higher education focused teaching and learning (paragraph 30)
- develop a coherent policy to advance scholarly activity among staff (paragraph 35)
- continue efforts to expand the learning resource centre to meet fully the needs of students (paragraph 37)
- review the content and consistency of all student handbooks and ensure their full alignment with awarding body requirements (paragraph 44).

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

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

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

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's engagement with its awarding bodies is efficient, effective and transparent (paragraphs 15, 20, 25) | <p>The College will continue to maintain highly effective relationships with the Awarding Bodies through planned meeting structures strategically and operationally. The HE Managers' Group will continue to focus on dissemination</p> | <p>June 2011</p> | <p>AP Quality and Staff Development/ AP Curriculum</p> | <p>Feedback from HEIs regarding communications and completion of activities.</p> | <p>Senior Management Team</p> | <p>Termly meetings with Schools. UoG and CCCU to review effectiveness of meetings.</p> |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|---|------------------------|--|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| | across the organisation. Development of HE Programme Leader Meetings to be attended by Link Tutors. Minutes of Programme meetings shared with link tutors and directors of Learning and Quality. | May 2010 Sept 2010 | AP Curriculum AP Curriculum | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there are systematic processes for gathering student feedback about the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 27) | The Learner Voice Cycle is built into the HE quality cycle and through Curriculum Health Check (CHC). | Review mid year at CHC | AP Quality and Staff Development/ AP Curriculum | High quality Learner Voice reported by learners in CHC. | Senior Management Team | Reviewed through the Learner Voice Strategy evaluation and in Annual Monitoring Reports. |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| | Continuation of SMT Question Time and 'You Said – We Did'. Students informed of AMR. | Review June 2011 | | Changes evidenced in response to Learner Voice. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there are positive and effective relationships with employers and professional bodies which inform teaching and learning (paragraph 31) | Continuation of Senior Business Advisory Council and Faculty Industry Liaison Groups. Faculties to work with employers in curriculum delivery including work placement, work experiences and visits etc. Strong relationship with | June 2011 July 2010 | Heads of Faculty | Positive feedback from employers, business links and community partners in 'stakeholder feedback'. | Senior Management Team | Minutes of BAC and FILMs. Annual Monitoring Reports |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| | community projects and curriculum delivery. | | | | | showing community links. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff development activity contributes positively to the maintenance of high quality teaching (paragraph 34) | <p>Development of current CPD programme into 3 additional bespoke Staff Development days throughout the year in addition to two afternoons per week.</p> <p>Continued requirement for minimum of 30 hours CPD.</p> <p>Close links with HEI CPD. Staff engagement in HE specific CPD.</p> | September 2010 | AP Quality & Staff Development | | Senior Management Team | <p>Staff Development Review meetings to review programme and uptake.</p> <p>AMRs to review staff development and impact on learning.</p> |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|------------------------|---|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| | HE Advanced Practitioner to be appointed to promote high quality HE teaching and learning. | | | Community projects reported in AMR. | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> specialist resources for learning are of high quality and are managed effectively (paragraph 36) | <p>Use of Business Planning Cycle and Curriculum Planning Review Group to ensure appropriate resources are in place for curriculum delivery.</p> <p>Development of curriculum/ commercial meetings to ensure maximum usage of commercial facilities in curriculum delivery.</p> | <p>June 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p> | Vice Principal/ Director of Finance and Resources | Excellent use of resources for curriculum delivery reviewed through CHC and lesson observations. | Senior Management Team | Curriculum Health Checks. Annual Monitoring Reports. External Examiner Reports. |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the way in which the College publicises its strong links with employers and commercial partners reflects the vocational ethos of the provision (paragraph 39) | <p>Marketing materials and Public Relations to provide a high profile for events, activities and student successes.</p> <p>Newsletter 'Cultivate' to be distributed electronically.</p> | <p>June 2010</p> <p>Sept 2010</p> | <p>AD Central Operations/ Director of Finance and Resources</p> | <p>Presence in high profile publications locally e.g. Kent Life and educational publications.</p> <p>Website up to date.</p> | <p>Senior Management Team</p> | <p>Profile reviewed through Quality Health Check and through Self Assessment Process of Marketing/PR.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the prospectuses for full and part-time programmes are produced to a high standard and the content is informative, well ordered and accessible (paragraph 40). | <p>Production of high quality prospectuses through effective liaison with curriculum staff.</p> | <p>October 2010</p> | <p>AD Central Operations</p> | <p>Positive feedback from stakeholders</p> | <p>Senior Management Team</p> | <p>Quality Health Check.</p> |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|
| 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 desirable to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● consolidate quality assurance documentation into a dedicated Higher Education Quality Manual, accessible to all staff and students (paragraph 16) | <p>Higher Education Quality Manual to be produced.</p> | <p>October 2010</p> | <p>AP Quality & Staff Development/ AP Curriculum</p> | <p>Completion of manual and distribution to staff.</p> | <p>Senior Management Team</p> | <p>Feedback from practitioners and Heads of Faculty.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assess formally, at an appropriate date, the effectiveness of the new senior management structure, with respect to the responsibilities of the post holders for the higher education provision (paragraph 17) | <p>Review the effectiveness in quality of provision and relationship with the HEIs through strategic discussion with HEIs.</p> | <p>January 2011</p> | <p>Principal/Vice Principal</p> | <p>Positive feedback on effectiveness of new management structure internally and externally.</p> | <p>Senior Management Team</p> | <p>Feedback from HEIs.</p> |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● explore mechanisms to improve the timing of assessment feedback to students, in collaboration with the awarding body (paragraph 21) | Review group sizes in relation to marking load. | September 2010 | AP Quality & Staff Development | Improved turnaround times on feedback. | Senior Management Team | Learner Voice feedback – Curriculum Health Checks. |
| | Monitoring of turnaround times through the IV process. | September 2010 | | More manageable assessment load. | AP Curriculum/ Senior Management Team | IV reports. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● explore the merits of a peer observation process to promote the enhancement of higher education focused teaching and learning (paragraph 30) | Review the quantity of assessment with HEIs through revalidation of programmes. | June 2011 | | | AP Curriculum/ Senior Management Team | Annual Monitoring Reports. |
| | To introduce an Advanced Practitioner role dedicated to HE. To introduce a formalised Peer Observation process across the College. | January 2011 | AP Quality & Staff Development | Improvements in teaching and learning within HE Programmes evidence by an improved observation profile. | Senior Management Team | Teaching & Learning Observation profile improved. |

| Hadlow College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a coherent policy to advance scholarly activity among staff (paragraph 35) | <p>Scholarly Activity Policy to be written.</p> <p>Staff Development budget to ring fence funds for scholarly activity.</p> | January 2011 | Vice Principal | <p>Staff involved in scholarly activity as recorded part of CPD.</p> <p>Dissemination of 'good practice' generated from research.</p> | Senior Management Team | Scholarly activity undertaken, recognised and shared across organisation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue efforts to expand the Learning Resource Centre to meet fully the needs of students (paragraph 37) | The Learning Resource Centre to be priority in capital build programme | September 2012 | Senior Management Team | Resource Centre built to meet need of HE students | Governing Body | Completion of building and in use. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the content and consistency of all student handbooks and ensure their full alignment with awarding body requirements (paragraph 44). | <p>Handbooks to be standardised across College.</p> <p>Handbooks to be checked by SMT for accuracy and appropriateness.</p> | September 2011 | AP Curriculum | Standardised information for learners. | Senior Management Team | Positive learner feedback. |

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