Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Barnet College

April 2011

SR 50/2010

Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

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

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

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding bodies 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 Barnet College carried out in April 2011

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership 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 structure for programme management and reporting is well supported by a number of proactive awarding body link tutors who have developed close and effective working relationships with College teaching staff
- the relationships that the College has developed with link tutors enable College staff to monitor and evaluate assessment practice effectively
- the College has been proactive in requesting its university partners to deliver specific staff development opportunities for the benefit of its higher education staff
- work-based learning for part-time FdA Early Childhood Studies students provides evidence of an effectively embedded system
- where a module is delivered by a number of partner colleges, a representative sample of marked scripts is taken from all providers and reviewed by representatives from all colleges involved in delivery to ensure standardisation
- a wide and effective range of assessment and feedback methods enable students from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate achievement.

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:

- confirm the recently articulated quality roles and relationships and to publish for staff a coherent, current and detailed higher education strategy and an effective and efficient quality cycle
- ensure that the quality cycle, together with the staff roles and relationships within it, are fully embedded and understood by all higher education staff
- develop an overarching higher education teaching, learning and assessment strategy to ensure the consistent interpretation of awarding body requirements across schools of study
- ensure that procedures for checking the accuracy and completeness of the information placed on the website are effective.

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

- introduce a system of version tracking to ensure that the date a document is produced and the person responsible are clear so that the management of public documents is transparent and effective
- continue to develop its virtual learning environment, particularly in relation to course and interactive content
- provide assessment regulations that students can obtain directly from the College website in a concise, user-friendly format.

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 Barnet College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Hertfordshire, Middlesex University, Sheffield Hallam University and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite, Mr Jonathan Doney, Ms Angela Maguire (reviewers) and Dr John Barkham (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review,* 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 representatives of 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* and programme specifications.

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

4   Barnet College is a large, general further education college that attracts learners from within and beyond the London Borough of Barnet. Its mission is 'Providing high-quality education and training for economic and social well-being'. As employment patterns require more people to be qualified to level 4 or above, the College is responding to both the local and government requirements to develop additional level 4 provision and Foundation Degrees. The College is based across three sites in the London Borough of Barnet and offers vocational education and training in a broad range of subjects and at many levels. The College specialises in effective learner support and guidance, coupled with high quality teaching and learning. The College has an embedded quality profile. The Ofsted inspection in 2009 identified as key strengths of the College its highly responsive provision to meet employer needs, outstanding partnership working, a very broad range of courses and progression, and strong leadership, management and governance. In order to increase the employability of its students and to ensure a more highly-skilled workforce, the Learning and Skills Council and the College have priorities for increasing apprenticeship programmes. Foundation Degrees offer the flexibility for a 'learn and earn' model, combining employment and study.

5   The College has no direct funding from HEFCE and is therefore dependent upon its awarding bodies who validate and award the degrees. In 2011, there are approximately 15,000 students registered for awards with the College, of which about 4,500 are full-time. Of the total number of students, 426 are in higher education (363 full-time equivalents). Of these, 288 are studying full-time and 138 part-time, providing an income in excess of £1 million. The higher education programmes, together with the full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets, are as follows:

Edexcel
- HND Computing (10), final cohort completing 2011

University of Hertfordshire
- Extended Engineering Degree (Initial Year) (12)

Middlesex University
- BA (Hons) Integrated Youth Work and Support, part-time (6.5)
- FdA Business, full and part-time (107)
- FdA Early Childhood Studies, part-time (65) (in partnership with colleges of North West London, Haringey, Enfield and North East London)
- FdA Creative Arts (10) (in partnership with Southgate College)
- FdA Fashion (44)
- FdA Graphic and Multimedia Design (21)
- FdA Performing Arts (34)
- FdSc Computing, full and part-time (22.5)
- Level 4, Accredited Common Core Training Programme (4) (in partnership with the London Borough of Barnet)
- Year '0' Science (30) (in partnership with the College of North West London)

Sheffield Hallam University
- E Top-Up BSc (Hons) Applied Computing (4)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6   The College is a partner with Middlesex University and a member of the Middlesex University Higher and Further Education Consortium. The College and University work closely in the development, planning and delivery of a number of joint and validated programmes, and the first year of a Science Extended Degree. Agreements are for a six-year period and operate within the standard and institution-specific conditions under which institutional approval was originally granted. Programmes remain the overall responsibility of the University but under the day-to-day direction of the College's programme leaders and teaching staff. Student admissions conform to the general requirements of the University with accreditation of prior learning according to the University's accreditation handbook. Students are not entitled to the University's student ID card. The College is a collaborative partner with the University of Hertfordshire in the provision of a programme in engineering, along with two other colleges from the Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium. In the mid 1990s, the programme was updated as an Extended Engineering Degree (Initial Year), for candidates who had not achieved the necessary grades in mathematics and physics GCE A-Levels to enter directly to an honours engineering programme of study. The College is currently running the second year of an HND Computing with Edexcel for learners who are interested in studying for a higher education qualification in information technology/computing. Sheffield Hallam University offers a distance-learning E Top-Up course enabling learners who have completed an HND, or Foundation Degree in Computing to progress to the BSc (Honours) Applied Computing, subject to meeting entry criteria. All learning resources and lectures are provided online by the University on the University's website, and students are enrolled learners of Sheffield Hallam University. The College is required to provide only a local centre to enable students to meet the examination requirements of the course.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7   The Foundation Degrees in Health and Fitness and Integrated Youth Work and Support are no longer running, the latter being replaced by the BA in Integrated Youth Work and Support validated by Middlesex University in 2010. The National Youth Work Association has now awarded this new programme professional recognition. The Edexcel HND in Computing is no longer recruiting and was replaced in 2010 by the Foundation Degree in Computing validated by Middlesex University.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a written submission to the Summative review team and duly did so. This was included within the College's self-evaluation document. Representatives from 16 Foundation Degree and other level 4 cohorts based at the Arts Depot and the College's Wood Street and Grahame Park sites participated in the design of a survey to gather information about the student experience in the current academic year. All five core sectors of study across years 1 and 2 of the courses were represented. The questionnaire they created was then completed by 244 higher education students, 59 per cent of the total. Students met by the team confirmed that this was a genuinely participative project. The document the student representatives produced from this survey proved most useful to the reviewers, helping them to prepare for their meetings with students during the review visit.

B   Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

9   The College's management and reporting structure for its higher education provision operates within an overarching quality system for both further and higher education. The system is modified as appropriate to meet the needs of its higher education programmes. As a member of the Senior Management Team, the Director of Curriculum and Quality is responsible for higher education at the strategic level. The Head of Quality, a newly-created post reporting to the Director of Curriculum and Quality, fulfils a cross-college role for both further and higher education and is responsible for maintaining and enhancing quality and standards. Working in collaboration with the Head of Quality, the Higher Education Co-ordinator is responsible for leading the development of higher education across the College and its integration with existing College systems. The Higher Education Co-ordinator is also responsible for liaising with and reporting to the College's awarding bodies on quality matters. The structure for programme management and reporting is well-supported by a number of proactive awarding body link tutors who have developed close and effective working relationships with College teaching staff. This was identified during the Developmental engagement and continues to be good practice.

10   Chaired by the Higher Education Co-ordinator, the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Group includes heads of school responsible for higher education programmes together with curriculum managers. This Group monitors the higher

education provision against data collected from performance indicators set by the College. Recommendations arising from the Group are implemented by the heads of school who meet the Head of Quality to discuss, review and monitor the quality of their provision. Heads of school are responsible for the management and delivery of all programmes within an area of study. Heads of school and programme teams meet regularly to monitor performance and learning and to ensure that robust systems ensure compliance and quality. Students are also invited to attend these meetings.

11   Each Head of School is responsible, in liaison with the appropriate link tutor, for producing annual quality monitoring reports which contribute to the College's self-assessment report and for taking action on comments from external examiners. From this, a quality improvement plan is produced by the Director of Curriculum and Quality which is passed to the appropriate awarding body which includes it in its annual quality monitoring processes for partner institutions. The plan details specific actions at programme level and is monitored by the College's Senior Management Team and Head of Quality on a quarterly basis. Updates are provided to the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Group. The awarding body annual reports are considered by the appropriate Head of School at the College who, in consultation with curriculum managers, implements any actions required.

12   In consultation with heads of school and programme teams, the Director of Curriculum and Quality implements higher education policy decisions relating to resources, teaching, learning and quality. The College's annual strategic planning process enables higher education curriculum developments to be brought to the attention of course management and/or school management teams.

13   The College has a particularly strong, close and effective working relationship with Middlesex University. The Higher Education Co-ordinator manages arrangements with this and the other awarding body partners, providing a direct line of communication between them and the College. Programme validations normally last for four or five years and are subject to full review at that point.

14   The College has experienced significant changes during the current academic year due to the loss of staff in some key quality posts. The team found that the quality structure and cycle outlined in paragraphs 9 to 13 are coherent. Due to re-organisational changes around the time of the visit, the team requested the College to produce an updated structure and quality systems diagram. The current quality structure is under review and will be updated in line with a revised higher education strategy. The team considers that it is advisable for the College to confirm the recently articulated quality roles and relationships and to publish for staff a coherent, current and detailed higher education strategy and an effective and efficient quality cycle.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15   Memoranda of agreement from awarding bodies detail the College's responsibilities for ensuring that the Academic Infrastructure is embedded in the management of academic standards across all programmes offered in its collaborative provision. The *Code of practice* is embedded in their policies, procedures and practices and the College follows closely the guidance provided by them. College staff are aware and speak knowledgeably of the Academic Infrastructure and their awarding bodies' academic requirements. The awarding bodies' link tutors also provide valuable input to College staff on these matters.

16   The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Group acts as a steering group for issues relating to the Academic Infrastructure. At the programme design and approval stage,

the College consults its link tutors and awarding bodies to ensure that there is appropriate engagement with *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and the *Code of practice*, and that the principles of relevant subject and qualification benchmark statements are embedded.

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 awarding bodies?

17   The College develops its Foundation Degrees and other undergraduate programmes in consultation with the relevant school of the university, whose academic staff provide guidance and support. To ensure standards are met, College staff undertake training sessions in the validation process put on jointly by the awarding body and the College's Higher Education Teaching and Learning Group.

18   The report of the Developmental engagement in assessment stated that the College has a comprehensive, overarching assessment policy and cited many areas of good practice. The report identified particularly the relationships that the College has developed with link tutors enabling College staff to monitor and evaluate assessment practice effectively. This continues to be good practice**.** The University of Hertfordshire's Extended Engineering Degree (Initial Year) is provided in partnership with four colleges, each setting their own assessments. These are moderated by the colleges individually and returned to the University for comment and approval. See also paragraphs 38 and 39.

19   The team found that the arrangements outlined in paragraphs 9 to 18, 38 and 39 show that the College is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of awarding bodies. Programme handbooks are updated annually and are scrutinised and commented upon by academics from the awarding body to ensure the requirements of the higher education institution and external panel members have been met.

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

20   The College is committed to continuing professional development which is regarded as an essential part of the College's commitment to delivering a high-quality service to learners. The College's Continuing Professional Development Strategy 2010-11, covers both further and higher education teaching staff and applies to all established and sessional teachers, part-time support staff and all levels of management. The Director of Human Resources reviews the Continuing Professional Development Strategy annually and advises senior management and the Corporation about the progress and impact of the consequent action plans. The College's staff development policy is for the College as a whole, with each school producing a staff development programme which emerges from its self assessment report and the quality improvement plan.

21   Led by the Director of Human Resources, the Professional Development Unit uses a central database to monitor and evaluate all staff development opportunities and the take-up of these by individual members of staff. The Unit devises and promotes activities with their university partners, or with external agents. Every school has a subject learning coach to work with and support staff in improving their performance. Subject learning coaches are also supported by the Professional Development Unit.

22   The College takes steps to meet training needs specific to higher education. College staff have access to university partners' continuing professional development

programmes and external courses. Overall, the take-up on these, for both full and part-time staff, is good. For the benefit of its higher education staff, the College has also been proactive in requesting its university partners to deliver specific staff development opportunities. This is an example of good practice. Part-time staff are invited to all course-related events and staff development sessions. Additionally, the awarding bodies invite College staff to their events. Staff commented that both Middlesex University and the University of Hertfordshire offer excellent programmes for link tutors, who meet four or five times each year. It was generally agreed by staff that these development opportunities are 'relevant, very good, and valuable'.

23   The College recognises that all teachers on higher education programmes should be involved in academic research related to their field of study and/or current practice. Applications by staff to attend courses are considered on individual merit by the Human Resources Department, and in the case of courses offered by a partner university successful applicants benefit from reduced fees.

24   At College level, all new staff undertake a comprehensive induction programme which includes an introduction to the College's quality procedures. New staff are also required to attend briefing and induction sessions within each school given by the Head of School. Staff working on programmes validated by Middlesex University are also required to attend an induction programme there. The College operates a mentoring scheme to support new staff which includes input from subject learning coaches.

25   Heads of school carry out regular staff performance reviews and appraisals. These appraisals form the basis of an individual's development programme. The College's quality improvement plan identifies college-wide staff development needs and the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Group identifies specific needs of higher education programme staff.

26   Overall, the team concludes that the College's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards are coherent and well supported by higher education teaching staff.

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?

27   The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 9 to 14 also apply to the College's management of the quality of learning opportunities. The College's self-evaluation refers to the strategic objectives set out in its higher education strategic planning document and explains that the Higher Education Co-ordinator reports directly to the Director of Quality and Curriculum. The newly-appointed Head of Quality, together with the Director of Quality and Curriculum, lead the development of higher education quality of learning opportunities across the College. The heads of school then translate these aims into key targets with measurable outcomes for their individual schools. The College updates its higher education quality assurance cycle continuously in order to embed these targets in its annual monitoring

processes. The College has undergone a number of changes in staffing and structure since October 2010. A linear, month-by-month higher education quality cycle has been produced. This is in the process of being developed into a complex annual circular diagram. The higher education reporting structure is currently under review. It is advisable for the College to ensure that the quality cycle, together with the staff roles and relationships within it, are fully embedded and understood by all higher education staff.

28   As indicated in paragraphs 9, 11, 15, 16 and 18, the awarding bodies monitor this process through their link personnel and through their annual monitoring processes as articulated in their memoranda of agreement with the College. There are parallel arrangements for Edexcel programmes.

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

29   The course programme teams ensure that the College fulfils its obligations to the awarding bodies that students receive appropriate learning opportunities. The university representatives and external examiners' reports confirm that the College does this effectively. Self-assessment reports are in line with the requirements of the universities and agreed with them before submission. The heads of school address learning opportunities and student opinions through their annual monitoring reports and higher education self-assessment reports. These are submitted to the Senior Management Team; describe retention, success and development; and include evaluation, identifying strengths and weaknesses together with planned action.

30   The College has well-developed progression opportunities both with the University of Hertfordshire and Middlesex University. The students were particularly complimentary about the quality of their experience of the Extended Engineering Degree (Initial Year) enabling them to progress to the first year of engineering degrees.

31   The College uses a range of methods to gather student opinion, including surveys, module feedback and higher education representatives' meetings. This information then feeds into the higher education quality assurance cycle, with action being reported back to the students through the class representatives and the tutorial system. Under the board of studies system, class representatives are invited to meet the teaching team of each course every term and to contribute views about the learning opportunities provided. The College participates in the National Student Survey through Middlesex University. Reponses to this are supplemented by focus groups and through class representatives on the college-wide Student Council.

32   Middlesex University and the University of Hertfordshire approve the appointment of staff through the validation process. The majority of lecturers have first degrees and/or excellent professional experience and many have higher degrees or postgraduate certificates. The College is required to inform the awarding bodies of staff changes.

33   Action arising from the Developmental engagement committed the College to develop effective strategies to ensure that its policies, procedures and expectations about the quality of assessment feedback given to students are consistent throughout courses. This has been largely fulfilled through staff development sessions devoted to sharing good practice. However, students report that there remains some inconsistency in the provision of timely of feedback.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

34   As indicated in paragraphs 15 and 16, the College has embraced the Academic Infrastructure throughout its programme documentation. Sections of the *Code of practice* underpinning the quality of learning opportunities are well embedded in course development. These include *Section 3: Disabled students* and *Section 10: Admissions to higher education,* as well as *Section: 6: Assessment of students.* This practice is well supported with a range of staff development opportunities in partnership with Middlesex University.

35   The College manages work placements and work experience for full-time students effectively and in line with the *Code of practice: Section 9: Work-based and placement learning.* Work-based learning for part-time FdA Early Childhood Studies students provides evidence of an effectively embedded system and is an example of good practice. In line with the guidance given in the *Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning,* the level 4 Accredited Common Core Training Programme is a continuing professional development programme developed in partnership with Barnet Borough Council, Middlesex University, the local NHS trust and Barnet Voluntary Service Council for People Working with Children and Young People. This programme offers full accreditation of prior learning within two programmes, the BA (Hons) Integrated Youth Work and Support and the FdA Early Childhood Studies.

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

36   At present, the College does not have an overarching higher education teaching and learning strategy. Teaching, learning and assessment policies are outlined in validation documents and in the student handbooks. The lack of a strategy means that it is difficult for the College to maintain oversight and to ensure consistency of experience for all learners. The review team found differing practices across the schools. It would be advisable for the College to develop an overarching higher education teaching, learning and assessment strategy to ensure the consistent interpretation of awarding body requirements across schools of study.

37   The College obtains regular student feedback from individual modules and from participation in the National Student Survey. Module questionnaires are fully completed by all programme areas. The students are on the whole very satisfied with the teaching and learning methods used.

38   The College's internal moderation strategy and reporting procedures are comprehensive and robust. Internal moderators are normally from within the same school as the student, but cross-college moderation also takes place to compare standards and share good practice. Prior to distribution to students, all assignments are moderated to ensure appropriate content and matching of intended learning outcomes. Completed assignments are double marked, a representative sample moderated and verification of feedback undertaken. Where a module is delivered by a number of partner colleges, a representative sample of marked scripts is taken from all providers and reviewed by representatives from all colleges involved in delivery to ensure standardisation. This is an example of good practice. Students said they were fully aware of these processes, understood them and found them to be open and fair.

39   Since the Developmental engagement, the College has successfully embedded grading criteria across its higher education provision. The assignment briefs enable students to engage effectively with assessment learning opportunities. The team confirms the good practice finding of the Developmental engagement that there is a wide and effective range of

assessment and feedback methods, including the use of e-learning, peer and self assessment, blogs, tutorials, formal examination, informal oral feedback and the Molenet Project which enables students from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate achievement. In the students' written submission, the majority of students saw feedback on assessment as helpful in enabling them to improve their knowledge and skills.

40   The College operates the same robust lesson observation scheme for both further and higher education, the results of which inform the annual staff appraisal system. The scheme works effectively. The College is exploring mechanisms to embed an effective process of peer observation across all of its higher education to enhance its teaching practice.

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

41   The College as a whole has a comprehensive system of support for its students. This begins after enrolment with a thorough programme-specific induction, which includes preliminary training in the use of computers and specialised equipment where appropriate. At induction, students are given all relevant programme information. They also meet their link tutor and visit the relevant university. Students have access to information on additional learning support and funding from the College's central student services.

42   Every student is allocated a personal tutor. In addition to group tutorials, students participate in one-to-one tutorials every six weeks, where performance and attendance is monitored. Students consistently applaud the College's tutorial process and comment on their helpful and supportive staff. Part-time and work-based students particularly value the opportunities provided for them to communicate informally with tutors using telephone, texting and email.

43   The College proactively manages widening participation, equality and diversity in line with the *Code of practice: Section 10: Admissions to higher education*, offering opportunities to learners from a broad range of backgrounds. The College is committed to and organised for the promotion of educationally and socially inclusive policies and practices and to widening participation from groups that are traditionally under-represented. Students with disclosed disabilities have access to suitable additional support. The College also provides support and guidance on student finance, careers, further study and academic progression, as well as counselling, childcare and varied sports facilities. Some of these services are supplemented by, or provided through, access to university facilities.

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

44   The arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities are as described in paragraphs 20 to 24 for academic standards. In partnership with the awarding bodies, there is a continuing programme of staff development activity specifically for higher education 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?

45   Schools offering higher education courses receive the full allocation of funding from the awarding bodies and are subsequently responsible for resourcing their curricular offer. Resource requirements for specific programmes are discussed and identified at management team meetings, course team meetings and boards of study. Decisions are then

made. The external examiner for the FdA Graphic and Multimedia Design reported that the lack of technical support within the area had had a deleterious impact upon student learning. This issue was identified by students on the programme and in the student written submission and, although the College is aware of the issue, it has not yet been followed through in action plans which form part of the quality cycle. The team considers that a number of negative comments, voiced particularly by art and design students about the Wood Street campus opened in September 2010, simply represent commonly experienced teething problems in new buildings.

46   There are well-equipped learning resource centres at each campus, serving the higher education provision effectively. Lecturers provide librarians with copies of reading lists. Librarians ensure that items on these are either stocked in hard copy or electronically. Students can access the electronic book collection internally and remotely through a password system. Each main higher education subject area has a link librarian to support the students. The students have visiting rights and reference access to the university libraries. The team was impressed by the high quality of the learning environment of the recently opened Wood Street campus. Students agreed that the opportunities provided for them allowed them to achieve their intended learning outcomes.

> **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   In line with its marketing policy and strategy, the College produces a range of information including a course prospectus, course profiles, information leaflets on learning resources and support, course advertisements and posters, student programme handbooks, module handbooks and newsletters. The College has published a higher education strategy, agreed by its Board of Governors and following the HEFCE requirement. This has recently been updated to take account of strategic changes, but has not yet been agreed formally by the Board of Governors. The team noted that this updated document and other documents were neither signed nor dated. It is therefore desirable for the College to introduce a system of version tracking to ensure that the date a document is produced and the person responsible are clear so that the management of public documents is transparent and effective.

48   The College produces an attractive prospectus covering higher education, professional programmes, and teacher training, available in both hard copy and to download from the College website. The website is easy to navigate and provides useful information about the content of the programmes and progression opportunities. In the 2011-12 printed edition of the prospectus, but not in the online version, the College has addressed the Developmental engagement recommendation to give details of the volume and nature of assessment. There are links from the website to course profiles for prospective students which cover the process of application. The prospectus and course profiles are prepared to a standard template, providing helpful, relevant information. Students confirmed that prior to enrolment they were able to obtain accurate information about their proposed course and fees, and they were clear about assessment demands.

49   The College's virtual learning environment provides students with easy access on or off site to a range of course and support materials. It has a dedicated area for higher education study with helpful flowcharts showing programme assessment processes, links to the virtual learning environment of the relevant validating university, and to College learning resources. Each programme has an area where useful documents are uploaded, including programme handbooks, assignment briefs, and module details. There is variation between programme teams in the level of development of programme pages, and in the use of the virtual learning environment by staff and students. Students recommended that work is undertaken to improve the availability of online information and ease of access, facilities and links to affiliated universities from the higher education pages. The College is monitoring usage, and aims to make provision more consistent across programmes. In the light of current variability, it is desirable that the College continues to develop its virtual learning environment, particularly in relation to course and interactive content.

50   Programme handbooks are given to students during induction and are also available on the virtual learning environment. However, knowledge and use of the handbooks varies between students. The handbooks are well presented in terms of design and layout. They contain programme specifications, essential information on assessment, and module narratives. The section on assessment regulations refers students to the validating university's regulations which can be accessed on their website. However, the memoranda of agreement for Middlesex programmes show that the University assessment regulations apply to some but not all programmes, with the variation depending on whether a programme is a validated programme or a joint programme. The team was informed that the College does not have its own assessment regulations and that the applicable College procedures and policies are indicated in the handbooks. To avoid any confusion on the part of students, it is desirable that students can obtain the assessment regulations directly from the College website in a concise, user-friendly format.

51   Through their involvement in programme validation and through partnership meetings with all higher education institution partners, teaching staff are familiar with programme management and delivery, including assessment regulations and student entitlements. New staff are given a copy of the programme handbook as part of induction, and the course leader acts as a mentor. Staff obtain up-to-date information through their staff teams and the higher education staff area on the virtual learning environment.

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?

52   Partnership agreements with validating universities stipulate the arrangements to ensure that programme information, advertising, and publicity, including the College website, are accurate. College heads of school are responsible for providing detailed copy and for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the partner university. They are also responsible for ensuring that publicity material, including advertisements and the prospectus, is sent to the relevant university before publication. The information to be included in programme handbooks is agreed during validation. For Middlesex programmes, the handbooks and programme specifications must be updated annually and provided to the University link tutor. The University provides a template for the handbook, while the College incorporates any material relevant to local circumstances and submits the completed version. In the case of the FdA Early Childhood Studies, which is delivered by a consortium of colleges, the programme handbook is drawn together through meetings of the partners and checked by both the university link tutor and its Marketing Department to ensure consistency. These procedures enable the College to know that the arrangements for checking programme information are effective.

53   Course teams update the information provided on the website, prompted by the Marketing Department at certain points during the year, with heads of school responsible for checking the accuracy of the information. However, the team did not receive the evidence of these checks they asked for from the College. Awarding bodies confirmed that they check the College website for appropriate use of their logo, but do not check the accuracy of information. Some students who applied through UCAS for programmes validated by Middlesex University reported that they were unaware that they would be based at the Barnet College site.

54   The team found gaps and inconsistencies in the information provided in website searches of course details, indicating that College arrangements for assuring accuracy are not always effective. For example, the online prospectus is undated and includes information about programmes which are no longer offered, such as the FdA Health and Fitness. The link to the FdA Integrated Youth Work and Support led to information on a BA programme in this subject area. The College launched a new website in January 2011. It also recently appointed a new Marketing Manager who is implementing a development plan to create a consistency of voice on the website and preparing procedures for checking the accuracy of information. In the light of variability in the accuracy of information, the team considers that it is advisable for the College to ensure that procedures for checking the accuracy and completeness of the information placed on the website are effective.

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

55   The Developmental engagement was conducted in March 2010. There were three lines of enquiry as follows:

- how far do processes of assessment monitoring and evaluation from all stakeholders ensure that academic standards are maintained and enhanced?
- to what extent are the quality, appropriateness and timeliness of assessment feedback and related resources effective in addressing the individual's learning opportunities?
- how far is the information provided to learners by the College, before and during the assessment process, comprehensive, consistent and accurate?

56   The Developmental engagement team reported a number of areas of good practice across all three core themes. The relationships that the College has developed with link tutors enable College staff to monitor and evaluate assessment practice effectively. The flexibility and commitment of staff in making themselves available to give personal support, advice and guidance to students about assessment is notable. The Foundation Degrees in the School of Arts encourage learners not only to feed back about how well they feel they have completed an assignment, but also to comment on the quality of the feedback they have received. The wide range of assessment and feedback methods enables students from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate achievement. Some programmes have helpful flowcharts available on the virtual learning environment to help students visualise the assessment process.

57   The Developmental engagement team made a number of recommendations. They reported that it is advisable for the College to develop effective strategies to ensure that the College's policies, procedures and expectations on the quality of feedback to students meet the high standards already established in some programmes. The Developmental engagement team also reported that it is desirable for the College to seek to ensure that the effective employer engagement in the context of assessment evident in some programmes is replicated across all Foundation Degrees; hold copies of all internal verification documentation in the College; review the settings in which group assignments for part-time students take place because of the problems of arranging meetings to achieve the intended learning outcomes; and give details of the volume and nature of assessment in the College's higher education prospectus.

D   Foundation Degrees

58   The College offers six Foundation Degrees, all validated by Middlesex University. These are the FdAs in Business, Early Childhood Studies (in partnership with the colleges of North West London, Haringey, Enfield and North East London), Creative Arts (in partnership with Southgate College), Fashion, Graphic and Multimedia Design, and the FdSc Computing. The Foundation Degrees in Health and Fitness and Integrated Youth Work and Support are no longer running, the latter being replaced by the BA in Integrated Youth Work and Support validated by Middlesex University in 2010. The HND in Computing is no longer recruiting and has been replaced by the Foundation Degree in Computing, also validated by Middlesex University in 2010. There are 215 full-time students and 187 part-time enrolled on Foundation Degrees.

59   The outcome of the review confirms that effective and well-defined structures are in place to deliver academic standards that are appropriate to the provision of Foundation Degrees. Student learning experiences, including work-based learning, are robust and align with the expectations of the awarding bodies.

60   This provision is closely integrated with the other higher education programmes by means of a common quality assurance process. The team concludes that the College has effective mechanisms for the management of Foundation Degrees. The areas of good practice and recommendations reported in paragraphs 62 to 65 apply equally to them.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

61   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Barnet 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: Edexcel, Middlesex University, Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Hertfordshire.

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

•   the structure for programme management and reporting is well supported by a number of proactive awarding body link tutors who have developed close and effective working relationships with College teaching staff (paragraph 9)
•   the relationships that the College has developed with link tutors enable College staff to monitor and evaluate assessment practice effectively (paragraph 18)

- the College has been proactive in requesting its university partners to deliver specific staff development opportunities for the benefit of its higher education staff (paragraph 22)
- work-based learning for part-time FdA Early Childhood Studies students provides evidence of an effectively embedded system (paragraph 35)
- where a module is delivered by a number of partner colleges, a representative sample of marked scripts is taken from all providers and reviewed by representatives from all colleges involved in delivery to ensure standardisation (paragraph 38)
- a wide and effective range of assessment and feedback methods enable students from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate achievement (paragraph 39).

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

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

- confirm the recently articulated quality roles and relationships and to publish for staff a coherent, current and detailed higher education strategy and an effective and efficient quality cycle (paragraph 14)
- ensure that the quality cycle, together with the staff roles and relationships within it, are fully embedded and understood by all higher education staff (paragraphs 27, 28)
- develop an overarching higher education teaching, learning and assessment strategy to ensure the consistent interpretation of awarding body requirements across schools of study (paragraph 36)
- ensure that procedures for checking the accuracy and completeness of the information placed on the website are effective (paragraph 54).

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

- introduce a system of version tracking to ensure that the date a document is produced and the person responsible are clear so that the management of public documents is transparent and effective (paragraph 47)
- continue to develop its virtual learning environment, particularly in relation to course and interactive content (paragraph 49)
- provide assessment regulations that students can obtain directly from the College website in a concise, user-friendly format (paragraph 50).

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 standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

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 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.

68   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.

Barnet College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2011						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the structure for programme management and reporting is well supported by a number of proactive awarding body link tutors who have developed close and effective working relationships with College teaching staff (paragraph 9)	Ensure that good practice is disseminated across the College and identify a set of expectations against which link tutor support and cooperation is measured twice yearly	Immediately and on-going - ensure a check is completed at the end of the academic year 2010-11	HE Co-ordinator to produce checklist - programme leaders to complete the check and share centrally	All link tutors are supporting and cooperating with programme leaders at Barnet College to the same very high standard	HE Teaching & Learning Group	Annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports
• the relationships that the College has developed with link tutors enable College staff to monitor and evaluate assessment	A checklist of positive actions by the link tutor to monitor and evaluate assessment practice are identified and each link tutor is evaluated against the list - with specific follow ups	Immediately and on-going - ensure a check is completed at the end of the academic year 2010-11	HE Co-ordinator to produce checklist - programme leaders to complete the check and share centrally	All link tutors are supporting and cooperating with programme leaders at Barnet College to the same very high standard	HE Teaching & Learning Group	Annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports

practice effectively (paragraph 18)	where they fail to meet a very high standard					
• the College has been proactive in requesting its university partners to deliver specific staff development opportunities for the benefit of its higher education staff (paragraph 22)	Each team to identify the type of staff development opportunities they feel they will benefit from and the request to be made to the university partners - response to requests followed up	Requests to be identified by the end of year 2011-12	Initially all course leaders - responses coordinated by the HE Co-ordinator and followed up with appropriate school at the university	A high proportion of the staff development opportunities identified are actioned	HE Teaching & Learning Group	Annual monitoring reports, school self assessment reports, quality improvement plans
• work-based learning for part-time FdA Early Childhood Studies students provides evidence of an effectively embedded system (paragraph 35)	The Head of Health, Education and Social Care is requested to talk about work-based learning at the next HE Teaching & Learning group and share good practice - methodology to be adopted on other programmes where relevant	Next meeting of HE Teaching & Learning group - Wednesday May 25 2011	Head of School, HESC	Where relevant, other schools adopt the same work-based approach	HE Teaching & Learning Group	Annual monitoring reports, school self assessment reports, quality improvement plans
• where a module is delivered by a number of partner colleges, a representative sample of marked scripts is	This approach has been adopted within the College where cross-programme standardisation has been introduced and continued in all relevant	Cross-college HE standardisation day - July 6 2011	Course leaders and HE Co-ordinator	An action plan following the standardisation day identified and circulated for implementation during 2011-12	School quality improvement plans	Annual monitoring reports, school self assessment reports, quality improvement plans

taken from all providers and reviewed by representatives from all colleges involved in delivery to ensure standardisation (paragraph 38)	aspects of programme management and delivery					
• a wide and effective range of assessment and feedback methods enable students from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate achievement (paragraph 39).	Each team requested to identify the full range of assessment and feedback styles utilised on each programme - this to be collated and circulated and to appear on HE College website	End of academic year 2010-11	Course leaders feeding in to HE co-ordinator	The action is implemented ensuring that all programmes reflect the good practice exhibited in some areas and offer a wide and effective range of assessment and feedback methods	HE Teaching & Learning Group	School quality improvement plans
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• confirm the recently articulated quality roles and relationships and to publish for staff a coherent, current and detailed higher education	A revised diagram of quality roles and relationships has been produced and circulated to all staff teaching on HE programmes - and posted on the College Quality website and HE website	Achieved	Director of Curriculum & Quality	The diagram to be circulated to all staff teaching on HE programmes. The diagram to be updated as changes occur - at least annually	HE Teaching & Learning Group	Achieved April 2011 The clarity of the diagram

strategy and an effective and efficient quality cycle (paragraph 14)						
• ensure that the quality cycle, together with the staff roles and relationships within it, are fully embedded and understood by all higher education staff (paragraphs 27, 28)	The HE Quality Cycle has been disseminated to all staff and will be reviewed prior to the academic year 2011-12. A further training session to be held for all HE staff where the annual quality cycle is presented and discussed and individual roles and responsibilities within it discussed and agreed	Training session to be held week beginning 22 August 2011 - in time for the new academic year	HE Co-ordinator/ Head of Quality	All staff understand the HE Quality Cycle. It is acted upon in a timely fashion and progress on all programmes is reviewed termly	Details of the training session are to be reported to Director of Quality & Curriculum and a report with quality outcomes	Achieved - dissemination April 2011
• develop an overarching higher education teaching, learning and assessment strategy to ensure the consistent interpretation of awarding body requirements across schools of study (paragraph 36)	A Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy has been produced and has been disseminated to all the teams. This will be followed up with a training session to ensure that all staff are clear about implementation	As above, training session to take place week beginning 22 August 2011	HE Co-ordinator	The HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is written, disseminated and implemented. An action plan is developed from the Strategy - to be reviewed and updated annually	The Strategy will be reported to SMT and the governors via the HE Bi-annual Updating Report	Achieved - May 2011
• ensure that procedures for	i) As part of the Barnet College Marketing	i) These steps have already		All information regarding HE	Follow up actions will be reported to	Annual monitoring reports, self

checking the accuracy and completeness of the information placed on the website are effective (paragraph 54).	Strategy, a process has been put in place whereby research is conducted with students, prospective students and other stakeholders, to ensure the information relating the HE (and all other) programmes on the College website and prospectuses is clear, accessible and accurate	been taken.		programmes appearing in College's prospectuses, leaflets, and on the College website is accurate, clear and easily accessible	SMT in Bi-annual HE Report	assessment reports, quality improvement plans
	ii) In addition, a communication has been issued within the College requesting all heads of school to check prospectuses and websites at least three times each year to ensure information is up-to-date, accurate and accessible. One individual in the Marketing Team has been allocated a role to implement immediate changes made by the relevant head of school iii) The HE Co-ordinator will take an overarching role - and	ii) Action immediately (May 2011) and follow up 3 times per year iii) Action immediately				Achieved May 11

	will undertake regular spot-checks on all programmes to ensure consistency and accuracy	(May 2011) and follow up 3 times per year				
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• introduce a system of version tracking to ensure that the date a document is produced and the person responsible are clear so that the management of public documents is transparent and effective (paragraph 47)	A list of documents - strategies, policies, procedures, diagrams, instructions etc - will be drawn up for HE programmes at the College. There will be a list of documents included on the HE website with the name of the originator and the date of update. Each document will be updated annually and approved at the HE Teaching & Learning Group. All documents will have a footer indicating the originator and the date of update. Out-of-date documents will be removed regularly from the website	Process to begin immediately and to be completed by the end of June 2011. Thereafter the website to be updated regularly (twice yearly) and every document checked annually	Activities to be coordinated by HE Co-ordinator	All documents relevant to HE provision are reviewed regularly (twice yearly) and each document has the name of the originator and the last update on the footer	Director of Quality & Curriculum	Achieved April 11 - version tracking in place for all documents. Annual monitoring reports, HE Teaching & Learning Group

• continue to develop its virtual learning environment, particularly in relation to course and interactive content (paragraph 49)	A set of instructions/expectations for a minimum standard of what should be available to students on the virtual learning environment for each programme to be issued within a timeframe by which the minimum standard should be met - the minimum requirement to include: student handbook, student module narratives, all assignments, assignment timeframes, lecturer notes on a week-by-week basis and any other teaching materials deemed appropriate for uploading	Minimum standards to be met by mid-August 2011 - to be ready for the start of the academic year September 2011	All lecturers contributing to the programmes	All programmes to have the minimum requirements for each programme and each module	HE Teaching & Learning Group	HE Co-ordinator to check progress and standards at end August 2011 and spot-checks throughout the academic year - in addition account to be taken of learning feedback at appropriate meetings/surveys throughout the academic year
• provide assessment regulations that students can obtain directly from the College website in a concise, user-friendly format (paragraph 50).	A document - HE Assessment Policy dated April 2011 - has been produced to set out clearly the requirements for assessment procedures on all programmes to ensure there is a high degree of consistency across the range of HE	April 2011	HE Co-ordinator	HE Assessment Policy is produced, circulated, discussed and training provided	Director of Curriculum & Quality	Achieved April 2011 Implemented April 2011 and onwards - compliance with the policy is monitored by heads of school and HE Co-ordinator. The policy will be

	provision in the College. The circulation of the document has been followed up by training sessions with all lecturers teaching on HE programmes					reviewed and updated yearly