

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

May 2010

Basingstoke College of Technology

SR87/2010

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ISBN 978 1 84979 173 1

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Preface

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

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

Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

Executive summary

The Summative review of Basingstoke College of Technology carried out in May 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 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 effective dissemination of good practice through the Higher Education Forum, resulting in improved assessment
- the College has responded effectively to the needs of employers by customising programme design, for example on the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Manufacturing Engineering which has been developed in collaboration with the Royal Air Force Odiham
- students on the HNC in Business have the opportunity to be interviewed in the workplace by employers from a range of companies, including major international businesses, so improving their employability skills.

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:

- ensure that all the provision has a programme specification as described in the College's Higher Education Teacher Handbook and QAA guidelines
- develop the quality assurance procedures to ensure that practice is consistent and effective across all Edexcel programmes
- publish suitable grading criteria for Edexcel programmes that wish to penalise late submission of assessments
- review resource allocation procedures, for example to ensure sufficient texts are available to support learning on the HNC/Diploma in Computing.

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

- ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision
- make student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and cover all the information that the College wishes to give to students.

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 Basingstoke College of Technology (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel and the University of Winchester. The review was carried out by Ms Mary Blauciak, Mr Rob Mason and Professor Danny Morton (reviewers), and Dr Peter Steer (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, separate meetings with staff including awarding body representatives, employers and students, the student written submission, QAA review reports and Ofsted reports. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)* and programme specifications.

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

4 Basingstoke College of Technology is a general further education college in the North Hampshire Borough of Basingstoke and Deane. The borough is largely rural with the exception of Basingstoke. The borough population is approximately 155,000, which includes a town population of 110,000. The College's vision is encapsulated in the words 'success through learning'. Its mission is to contribute to the social and economic development of North Hampshire through the delivery of vocational education and professional training that meets the learning ambitions and skills requirements of the region. The College is based mainly on a single campus either side of a main road close to the town centre. In addition, it has an engineering centre on the outskirts of the town. Since 2003, the College has leased an industrial unit to accommodate a major increase in the number of learners requiring construction programmes including a higher education programme. The unit is approximately half a mile away from the main campus and is the centre for brickwork, painting and decorating provision. In 2009-10 the College has 6,846 funded learners. Of these, 2,349 study full-time, and 1,937 are aged from 16 to 18 years. Forty three per cent of full-time and 73 per cent of part-time learners are on level 1 or 2 programmes.

5 The College is organised into eight curriculum departments, each managed by a head, with a manager responsible for each higher education programme. HEFCE-funded provision is based in five of the eight departments in the College. Two departments, Business, Leisure, Hospitality and Professional Programmes, and Creative Arts and Technologies, provide both full and part-time programmes with the University of Winchester and Edexcel as awarding bodies. Two departments, Construction and Interior Skills, and Engineering and Automotive Technologies, provide part-time Higher National Certificate (HNC) programmes. A fifth department, Health Care, Early Years and Applied Sciences, has this

year begun to deliver level 4 provision for the University of Winchester's Foundation Degree (FdA) in Childhood Studies. The Department of Hair, Holistic and Beauty Therapies will deliver some practical units on the University of Winchester's FdA in Management: Hair, Beauty and Spa. HEFCE-funded enrolment was 130.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2008-09, and is 137 FTEs in 2009-10, consisting of 68 full-time and 138 part-time students. These figures do not include students on the FdA Childhood Studies, who are University of Winchester students being taught by the College. The higher education provision offered by the College is as follows (FTE student numbers are in brackets):

Edexcel

- HNC Business (15.5)
- HNC Computing (6.5)
- HND Computing (22)
- HNC Construction (13.5)
- HNC Electrical Electronic Engineering (4)
- HNC Manufacturing (6)
- HNC Manufacturing Engineering (RAF Odiham) (3)
- HND Sport and Exercise Science (14)

University of Winchester

- FdA Childhood Studies (level 4 only) (10)
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (14)
- BA Education (6.5)
- FdA Management; Hair, Beauty and Spa (not yet started; part of award only)
- BA Textiles for Fashion (32).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The operation of Edexcel programmes is governed by the Centre Handbook for BTEC Higher National Qualifications Levels 4-7. For University of Winchester programmes the relevant academic regulations apply. The College works closely with the University in terms of the approval of assignments and delivery methods, processes for verifying and standardising marking procedures, and standardised methods of giving and recording student feedback. The College has recently been validated to teach parts of two University of Winchester Foundation Degree programmes. Both partnership agreements put the main responsibility on the College to provide the resources to support learning and provide clear guidance as to the responsibilities of the partners.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 There have been significant changes to the structure for overseeing higher education. Since September 2009, the Director of Curriculum for Higher Education has assumed overall responsibility for both the operational and strategic aspects of the provision, whereas previously it was divided between two managers.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team and did so in March 2010. Students from most levels of the programmes in the provision completed a College-designed questionnaire, although numbers were not large; a student collated the results. Students met the team during the review and also contributed to the preparatory meeting. The team found all the students' contributions useful.

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 College programmes are validated by two awarding bodies, the University of Winchester and Edexcel. Responsibilities for ensuring the standards of the University's higher education provision are clearly specified in the signed agreements. For Edexcel programmes, external examiners monitor standards. Awarding bodies give the College comprehensive support in fulfilling its responsibilities for the management of academic standards.

10 The responsibilities and reporting arrangements for managing and delivering higher education standards are clearly set out in the College's higher education reporting structure. The College is organised into eight curriculum departments, five of which provide higher education programmes. Each department is managed by a head, with a manager responsible for the teaching, learning and assessment of each programme. A senior manager, the Director of Curriculum, has operational and strategic responsibility for higher education at the College. The Head of Quality and Standards has responsibility for the management of further and higher education quality systems. The Higher Education Development and Partnerships Manager is responsible for Foundation Degree development.

11 The Higher Education Panel meets monthly and oversees the management of strategic developments, programme planning and quality, and awareness of the Academic Infrastructure. Chaired by the Director of Curriculum, membership includes department heads, the Quality Manager, and heads of Student Services and Student Administration. Members value the ability to contribute effectively to higher education developments.

12 The Higher Education Forum is chaired by the Director of Curriculum and meets monthly. Membership includes the Quality Manager, appropriate heads of department, programme team representatives, the Learning Resource Centre Manager, and a Student Registry representative. Its terms of reference include the oversight of the delivery of higher education programmes and to facilitate the sharing of good practice and generic staff development. The dissemination of good practice is effective. Staff value the meetings and cite a number of successful assessment practices that have been discussed, such as the wording of assignments, innovative assessment methods, and electronic submission of assignments. The team considers the use of the Higher Education Forum for disseminating successful features of assessment between different programmes to be good practice. Reports from both the Higher Education Panel and the Higher Education Forum are presented to the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Group, which meets fortnightly and is chaired by the Deputy Principal.

13 Each department reports the progress of its quality improvement plan termly to the College's Academic Board, chaired by the Principal, which then reports to the Quality Committee of the College Corporation, chaired by a governor and attended by a representative of the University of Winchester; this process works effectively.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14 The Academic Infrastructure is outlined in the College's Higher Education Teacher Handbook. Staff are clearly aware of it and use it, for example the FHEQ and the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. However, the use of the Academic Infrastructure in the area of programme specifications is less robust. Although there is a recommendation in the Developmental engagement and advice in the Higher Education Teacher Handbook about programme specifications, the use of the term is applied to unit and module specifications in some Edexcel handbooks. For example, for the HNC Electrical Electronic Engineering, there is little documentation of the overall programme outcomes, curriculum or assessment strategy. It is advisable to ensure that all the provision has a programme specification as described in the College's Higher Education Teacher Handbook and QAA guidelines.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of validating partners and awarding bodies?

15 Annual programme review and evaluations are comprehensive and, in many cases, contain a detailed evaluation of performance. Most clearly summarise the actions required, including those from external examiners. The College expects that actions are monitored in termly team meetings; however, this process is variable. In the better practice, for example on the HND Sport and Exercise Sciences and HND Business, action plans are monitored thoroughly; in other programmes monitoring is less rigorous or regular.

16 Programme managers are responsible for ensuring that the internal verification of assessments is carried out according to College procedures. The proportion of assessments which undergo standardisation varies from a representative sample to the whole programme. Edexcel external examiners for the HNC/D Computing and HND Sports and Exercise Science indicate the need for adjustments to the verification process, while the one for the HNC Business finds it effective. Appropriate double-marking and standardisation is carried out for University of Winchester programmes. Students met by the team indicated that written feedback is generally clear, fair and consistent. Many receive verbal feedback which they value. Written feedback is usually given within the 10-day College deadline.

17 There is no overall College policy for late submission on Edexcel programmes. Some programmes limit the students to a pass grade if there is late submission, in line with Edexcel regulations, which, however, state that this position must be documented in the written grading criteria given to students; staff confirmed that this has not always been the case. Students met by the team indicated that they knew about the penalty for late submission through being told verbally by staff. It is advisable to publish suitable grading criteria for all Edexcel programmes that wish to penalise late submission of assessments.

18 External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies in line with the partnership agreements. As well as monitoring academic standards, examiners meet with staff and students, and attend boards of study. There is also representation from the University of Winchester at the board of examiners' meetings at which awards are agreed. External

examiner reports for all programmes are received by the Head of Quality and Standards, appropriate heads of department, and programme team leaders. Heads of department return the required action plans to external examiners for Edexcel programmes. An annual report which includes progress on the external examiner action plans is sent to the University of Winchester.

19 Edexcel external examiners' reports over the last three years indicate variations in the effectiveness of College procedures between programmes. For example, these include differences in the quality of feedback, the rigour of internal verification and failure of teams to formally respond to their reports. The team concludes that the College procedures, while in place, have not always been followed through sufficiently vigorously to ensure weaker practice is eliminated. The College recognises that its procedures are still developing. It is advisable to develop the quality assurance procedures to ensure that practice is consistent and effective across all Edexcel programmes.

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

20 A proportion of income is set aside by the College for higher education staff development. A departmental business plan prepared by heads of departments identifies staff development needed to deliver the objectives of the strategic plan. Appraisals establish the need for individual staff development. There are also opportunities to attend development events at the University of Winchester. Staff who attend find them helpful. Two members of staff in the education team are being supported by the College to follow higher degrees. Edexcel has provided staff training for specific issues related to the quality of the programmes they award, for example the structure of assignments. There has been a variety of other staff development events since the start of the academic year. Most are focused on further education and the proportion related to higher education, in particular subject-specific development, is limited. The need for staff development is noted by the external examiner for the HNC/D Computing in the 2008-09 report. It is desirable to ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision.

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?

21 The College's Senior Management Team sets the strategic priorities for the College. A recent example is the College's decision to set up the Higher Education Study Centre. Heads of department then create a departmental business plan to meet the strategic plan objectives. Heads of department also submit capital bids through the College's annual business planning process. Resulting allocations for 2009-10 include investment in specialist equipment for the programmes in the Departments of Creative Arts and Technologies and Business, Leisure and Hospitality.

22 Heads of department receive funds based on overall student enrolments to cover routine educational supplies and they make operational decisions about how to use them. The Learning Resource Centre purchases materials based on its centrally determined budget and requests from heads of department.

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

23 The College provides all the teaching on the provision, together with student support. It is also responsible for ensuring that learning accommodation and resources are appropriate and that the programmes are delivered by appropriately qualified teaching staff. The College's processes for gathering and evaluating its provision are described in paragraphs 15, 16, 18 and 19. The decision-making processes for academic matters are considered in paragraphs 10 to 13, while resource allocation is determined through the processes described in paragraphs 21 and 22.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

24 The College uses the *Code of practice* constructively in the development of its policies and procedures. This includes an admissions policy in line with the *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education*, an accreditation of prior and experiential learning policy, and an inclusive learning policy in line with the *Code of practice, Section 3: Students with disabilities*. Staff development has taken place and is continuing to support the understanding and use of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

25 The College has an overarching Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy Statement and a newly developed Higher Education Teaching Strategy. The Higher Education Teaching Strategy reflects aspects of the *Code of practice*, but does not fully identify all the overarching attributes being developed in a higher education student, including progress to independent learning. Additional guidance would help support the clarification and embedding of a common understanding of a higher education ethos.

26 The College operates three processes for observation of teaching and learning. They are observations during specific themed reviews, line management observations which inform performance review, and newly emerging peer observations to share and promote good practice. The observation results are entered on a centrally coordinated tracking system, together with action plans for the further development of effective learning and teaching strategies. Student feedback is gathered in a number of ways, including programme team meetings, programme surveys and the National Student Survey. Other methods include module evaluation, focus groups and tutorials. Students are aware of the channels of communication within the College. Generally, students met by the team find the quality of teaching high.

27 The effectiveness of the student learning experience in preparing for employment is enhanced in a number of ways. The College has developed programmes specifically designed for particular employers, like the HND Manufacturing Engineering for RAF Odiham. Employers met by the team value these customised programmes. The team consider this to be good practice. There are also assessment briefs provided by employers and industry lecturers, for example on the BA Textiles for Fashion. Students on the HNC

Business use their workplace and work colleagues in research projects. On most programmes students produce personal development portfolios, which are potentially helpful for gaining employment, although the content and standard varies considerably.

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

28 Students take part in an effective induction on the majority of programmes and individual and group tutorials are held regularly to provide guidance, feedback and support on academic work. A budget has been set aside for student support and an enhanced approach to initial screening has been adopted in the current academic year. One-to-one, small-group and end-of-unit support sessions have been put in place to maximise achievement. Students met by the team indicated that the level of support they receive is high.

29 Students receive guidance on gaining employment and promotion. For example on the HNC Business, students have the opportunity to be interviewed in the workplace by employers from a range of companies, including major international businesses. Their interview is videoed to allow students to evaluate their technique so improving their employability skills. The team considers this to be good practice. Programme leaders delivering part-time programmes, for example on the HNC Construction, ensure employers are regularly and fully informed about employee progress.

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

30 Under the terms of the validation agreement with the University of Winchester, staff teaching on its Foundation Degree programmes are required to work-shadow University colleagues for first-year lessons. College staff value this experience, enabling them to share good practice and information, both pedagogical and vocational. There is also shadowing of the admissions process. For staff involved with teacher training programmes there is a productive reciprocal lesson observation process between the University of Winchester and the College. Financial support is available towards study for higher education and professional qualifications including teaching qualifications. Priorities are decided by the heads of department.

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?

31 The College's virtual learning environment provides a valuable platform for learning on many programmes and is particular support to students working off-site, for instance, RAF students on the HNC Manufacturing Engineering, who may be stationed abroad. Not all programmes engage fully with the virtual learning environment. Students on programmes validated by the University are made aware of their entitlement to access resources at its main site and materials available online through the University portal.

32 The College has recently provided specialist resources, described in paragraph 21, and continues to upgrade its facilities generally, including the provision of the Higher Education Study Centre, which includes an interview room, more computers and enhanced access solely for higher education students. The College Learning Resource Centre has invested in materials specifically for higher education students including study skills books and specialist subject-related resources. Subscriptions are maintained to periodicals. Reading lists are not reviewed regularly on all programmes. The book stock for HNC/D Computing is small with

some old editions and does not fully support students in their learning. Resource allocation procedures have not been effective. It is advisable to review resource allocation procedures, for example to ensure sufficient texts are available to support learning on the HNC/D Computing.

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?

33 The partnership agreement between the University of Winchester and the College identifies the joint responsibility between the College and the University for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of published information. Under the standard Edexcel agreement, the College has responsibility for the preparation and publication of publicity and programme information. Both the agreements cover materials such as the prospectus and website; programme documents given to students, such as programme and student handbooks; and information published on the College's virtual learning environment. The College has responsibility for programme specifications, which is examined in paragraph 14.

34 There is a dedicated higher education prospectus entitled Higher Education and Professional Development for both full and part-time programmes covering a two-year period from 2008 to 2010. The prospectus is a comprehensive guide giving generic information about the College. However, not all programmes listed are currently being delivered by the College. A number of the programmes are listed subject to validation and did not run. Some current programmes are not included in the prospectus. Staff indicated that, for next year, individual programme sheets for programmes of study will replace the prospectus so that information is more up to date and can easily be modified. Students met by the team indicated that they received sufficient information prior to enrolment.

35 There is a separate section on the College website dedicated to higher education. It provides valuable information about entrance requirements, programme content, assessment and progression and contains generic advice about issues such as student support, finance, careers, counselling and accommodation.

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?

36 The University of Winchester provides a protocol for publicity and marketing which gives guidance on the preparation of materials including the requirements for corporate identity and branding. There is also a process for approval of published information which must be adhered to before formal publication can take place. For Edexcel programmes, the College has its own protocol for the production of publicity and marketing material, which includes a standard template for the provision of information for programme sheets and the website. The template is issued to heads of department, who provide the information, which is then checked by the Customer Services Department before being released to the Marketing Department for production of marketing material. The final draft of published

information is returned to heads of department for final checking before publication. These procedures generally mean that published information is accurate.

37 While handbooks are available for all programmes of study, there is significant variability in their format and the type and level of information provided. The College acknowledges this variability and confirmed that, as part of the development of the virtual learning environment, it was in the process of implementing a system to ensure greater consistency of information provided to students. It is desirable to make student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and cover all the information that the College wishes to give to students. Students receive appropriate information for individual modules.

38 The virtual learning environment used for all programmes gives students access to useful information on assessment and assignment schedules and is developing as a significant information portal for students, although at this stage it is not being used universally by all students. The College has developed, and is implementing, a tracking and audit tool to monitor the effectiveness and use of its virtual learning environment. The tracking tool logs content and usage of the virtual learning environment. Monthly reports are sent to heads of department giving information about student usage for each programme of study, resulting in enhanced provision of information for students. An annual audit is also being implemented to identify strengths and weaknesses of the virtual learning environment. This will result in an action plan, sent to heads of department, identifying areas for improvement and further development.

39 The Higher Education Strategic Plan presented by the College identifies areas for future higher education programme development, based on local information and employer needs. It is, however, lacking in quantifiable evidence in some cases and particularly lacks key performance indicators by which future delivery of the plan can be monitored. The document is, however, an important vehicle for developing and growing the provision in response to local needs and employer demand. The College recognises that certain aspects will have to be changed in the light of the reduced availability of funding.

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

40 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in May 2009. It addressed the following lines of enquiry, agreed with the College:

- How effective are the College systems related to assessment in maintaining academic standards and how effectively are staff and students informed about assessment procedures?
- How well does the College use feedback from external examiners and students to improve the quality of learning opportunities?
- How does feedback to students assist in the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities?

41 The areas of the good practice identified during the Developmental engagement were the assessment regime on the BA Textiles for Fashion; the use of student focus groups; the responsiveness to external examiner comment; the establishment of a higher education

forum; a variety of methods for feeding back to students all operating in a timely manner; a high level of accessibility of staff for students; and regular reporting on progression of Higher National students.

42 The Developmental engagement indicated that it was advisable to make more use of the Academic Infrastructure, especially the FHEQ; define the expected outcomes of student assessments; and review the teaching of modules involving students from different levels. It was considered desirable that students be provided with a consistent level of written information on all modules; assignment schedules optimise learning opportunities; all programmes have a full programme specification; the staff development programme and programme review processes be developed to enhance assessment practice; and that formative feedback be part of all delivery and its use encouraged through the peer observation of teaching scheme.

D Foundation Degrees

43 In 2009-10 the College began teaching the first year of the FdA Childhood Studies. It is planning to provide the full award, reflecting local demand and staff expertise. The University of Winchester has validated the College to provide some vocational elements of the FdA Management: Hair, Beauty and Spa using the College's specialist resources; teaching has not yet started. The FdSc Logistics has not recruited in 2009-10. In the Strategic Plan for Higher Education there are plans for a significant expansion of Foundation Degrees with a number of awarding bodies, subject to additional student numbers.

44 Because of the start dates, the team could not consider any Foundation Degree assessments that had gone through all the relevant processes including consideration by the external examiners. For the FdA Childhood Studies, useful student and employer documentation is available based on the equivalent programme at the University of Winchester. The early stages of the assessment procedures are thorough.

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

- the effective dissemination of good practice through the Higher Education Forum, resulting in improved assessment (paragraph 12)
- the College has responded effectively to the needs of employers by customising programme design, for example on the HNC Manufacturing Engineering which has been developed in collaboration with RAF Odiham (paragraph 27).

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

- ensure that all the provision has a programme specification as described in the College's Higher Education Teacher Handbook and QAA guidelines (paragraph 14)
- review resource allocation procedures, for example to ensure sufficient texts are available to support learning on the HNC/D Computing (paragraph 32).

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

- ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision (paragraph 20)
- make student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and cover all the information that the College wishes to give to students (paragraph 37).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

48 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Basingstoke College of Technology'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 and the University of Winchester.

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

- the effective dissemination of good practice through the Higher Education Forum, resulting in improved assessment (paragraph 12)
- the College has responded effectively to the needs of employers by customising programme design, for example on the HNC Manufacturing Engineering which has been developed in collaboration with RAF Odiham (paragraph 27)
- students on the HNC Business have the opportunity to be interviewed in the workplace by employers from a range of companies, including major international businesses, so improving their employability skills (paragraph 29).

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

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

- ensure that all the provision has a programme specification as described in the College's Higher Education Teacher Handbook and QAA guidelines (paragraph 14)
- develop the quality assurance procedures to ensure that practice is consistent and effective across all Edexcel programmes (paragraphs 15, 16, 19)
- publish suitable grading criteria for Edexcel programmes that wish to penalise late submission of assessments (paragraph 17)
- review resource allocation procedures, for example to ensure sufficient texts are available to support learning on the HNC/D Computing (paragraph 32).

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

- ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision (paragraph 20)
- make student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and cover all the information that the College wishes to give to students (paragraph 37).

53 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.

54 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.

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

Basingstoke College of Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010							
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective dissemination of good practice through the Higher Education Forum, resulting in improved assessment (paragraph 12) 	Adapt minutes of HE Forum to record comments on assessment-specific good practice	30 June 2010	Director of Curriculum HE	References to good practice in assessment in HE Forum minutes 2010 - 2011 Changes in practice recorded in course team minutes	Quality Manager/ Director of Learning	Number of references Number of pieces of good practice moved from one course to another Changes in assessment recorded on Course Review and Evaluation 3 2011	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College has responded effectively to the needs of employers by customising programme design, for 	Identify potential local employers	31 October 2010	Director of Business	Number of local employers responding	Director of Curriculum HE	Employer satisfaction Course Review and Evaluation 2A results 2011	

Basingstoke College of Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>Manufacturing Engineering which has been developed in collaboration with RAF Odiham (paragraph 27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students on the HNC Business have the opportunity to be interviewed in the workplace by employers from a range of companies, including major international businesses, so improving their employability skills (paragraph 29). 	<p>employers indicating opportunity for customisation</p> <p>Heads of department to request participation of their partner employers in development of learning of HE students</p>	<p>31 December 2010</p>	<p>Heads of department</p>	<p>Employer involvement in every HE programme</p>	<p>Director of Learning</p>	<p>Number of employers involved</p> <p>Number of students benefiting on each course</p>

Basingstoke College of Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010							
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that all the provision has a programme specification as described in the College's Higher Education Teacher Handbook and QAA guidelines (paragraph 14) 	<p>Produce overarching programme specification and exemplar which reflects specification from HE Teacher Handbook for each programme</p> <p>Check that handbook has appropriate specifications</p>	<p>16 July 2010</p> <p>1 September 2010</p>	<p>Course team leaders</p> <p>Heads of department</p>	<p>Appropriate specifications on all programmes included in handbooks</p>	<p>Quality Manager</p>	<p>Consistency of quality across all handbooks</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the quality assurance procedures to ensure that practice is consistent and effective across all Edexcel programmes 	<p>All HE course teams to present external examiners,</p>	<p>31 December 2010</p>	<p>Course team leaders</p>	<p>Evidence of shared good practice and areas for improvement</p>	<p>HE Forum</p>	<p>Consistency of standards of external examiner reports 2011</p>	

Basingstoke College of Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
(paragraphs 15, 16, 19)	reports to HE Forum in the autumn term Establish working party of Edexcel course team leaders to agree standardised processes	30 June 2010				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publish suitable grading criteria for Edexcel programmes that wish to penalise late submission of assessments (paragraph 17) 	Produce common statements of grading criteria to encourage timely completion for inclusion in student handbook and assessment briefs	30 June 2010	Working party of Edexcel course team leaders	Common grading criteria incorporated into all programmes	Quality Manager	High level of student awareness of the role of timely completion as a criterion of high grade success

Basingstoke College of Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review resource allocation procedures, for example to ensure sufficient texts are available to support learning on the HNC/D Computing (paragraph 32). 	<p>Ensure that HE resource requirements are included in business planning process and new course validation process</p> <p>Ensure that course team leaders liaise with Learning Resource Centre Manager to provide adequate textual and online resource support</p>	<p>Annual business planning process and termly new course validation process</p> <p>1 September 2010</p>	<p>Heads of department</p> <p>Course team leaders</p>	<p>Adequate resources available for all HE courses</p>	<p>HE Forum and HE Panel</p>	<p>85% + positive student response through module feedback, focus groups and Learner Satisfaction Survey</p>

Basingstoke College of Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 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 desired to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision (paragraph 20) 	<p>Identify the staff development needs for each member of staff delivering on HE Programmes through the professional development review process</p>	<p>1 October 2010</p>	<p>Heads of department/ Director of HR</p>	<p>Continuing professional development records of members of staff</p>	<p>Director of Curriculum HE/ Director of Learning</p>	<p>Impact on learners as evidenced through lesson observations and Learner Satisfaction Survey</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and cover all the information that the College wishes to give to students (paragraph 37). 	<p>Update HE student handbook framework Ensure that all course handbooks reach required standard</p>	<p>30 June 2010 1 September 2010</p>	<p>Director of Curriculum HE Director of Curriculum HE</p>	<p>Content of student handbooks</p>	<p>Quality Manager</p>	<p>Consistency of quality of information in course handbooks</p>	

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RG 640 08/10