



QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

May 2007

Burton College

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Linney Direct

Adamsway

Mansfield

NG18 4FN

Tel 01623 450788

Fax 01623 450481

Email qaa@linneydirect.com

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Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by the 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 Burton College carried out in May 2007

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 higher education strategy emphasises the need for engagement with employers in the development of programmes and in the maintenance of standards and enhancement of learning opportunities
- the College is an active participant in the development of partnership arrangements
- partner universities are active in supporting and developing College staff
- the use of staff exchanges and joint student activities are effective and should be shared across all faculties
- a specific survey of students' perception of their courses enhances induction
- the use of employer involvement in the design and grading of assessments is effective in Polymer Technology, Applied Technology and Teaching Assistants programmes and should be extended across the provision
- there is a high level of academic guidance and pastoral support from personal tutors
- students are able to access additional learning resources at partner universities effectively
- the new teaching and social centre will provide a focus for higher education on the campus
- easy access to management information supports the management and delivery of programmes
- the rapid validation of new programmes by SURF supports employer-led programme development.

Recommendations

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

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

- take measures to provide information such as progression routes from Foundation Degrees to articulated honours degrees that are made explicit in the documentation and clearly communicated to students
- take further measures to provide feedback that is timely, appropriate and consistent across the whole provision.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review conducted at Burton College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information on how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students for programmes funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) it delivers on behalf of Staffordshire University, Nottingham Trent University, the University of Derby and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mr Paul Monroe, Dr Elizabeth Briggs, and Ms Heather Barrett-Mold (reviewers) and Mr Nigel Hall (Coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for a pilot study of an integrated quality and enhancement review*, (the handbook) published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies; meetings with staff, students and partner institutions; reports of reviews by QAA, and inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment conducted January 2007. 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 benchmarks, *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 Burton College is the largest provider of further education in East Staffordshire and offers a comprehensive range of learning programmes. The College is situated in the centre of Burton upon Trent, which has a population of some 100,000. It serves the surrounding communities in East Staffordshire, South Derbyshire and North West Leicestershire. The College is committed to expanding higher education learning opportunities for the people in these areas and beyond. In the academic year 2006-07, there are 2,225 full-time and 3,901 part-time student enrolments. Of these, there are 123 full-time and 346 part-time students enrolled on higher education programmes funded by HEFCE. They are taught by 40 full-time staff and 10 part-time staff, which approximates to 35 full-time equivalent staff. In general, the staff teach on both higher education and further education programmes.

5 The College has four faculties, each offering a number of higher education programmes. The arrangements for monitoring and academic management are based at programme level and inform the following college-wide bodies: Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Committee, a sub-committee of the Academic Board; Higher Education Ethics Group; Standards and Quality Audit Team; Senior Management Team; Operational Management Team; Quality and Standards Committee; Students Committee (Governors); Information and Communications Technology Implementation Group; Information and Communications Technology Strategy Group, and Joint Performance Management Meetings.

Integrated quality and enhancement review

The HEFCE-funded higher education provision at the time of the review, together with the awarding bodies, comprised the following programmes:

Staffordshire University (SURF)

- HNC/D Construction
- HNC/D Civil Engineering
- HNC/D Applied Information Technology
- HND Software Engineering
- HND Internet Technologies
- HNC Computer Studies
- HNC Business
- HNC/D Sports Performance and Coaching
- HND Dance
- HND 3D Design
- HND Textiles
- HNC/D Graphic Design
- Foundation Degree Construction
- Foundation Degree Electrical Technology
- Foundation Degree Applied Technology
- Foundation Degree Polymer Technology
- Foundation Degree Teaching Assistants
- Foundation Degree Early Years
- Foundation Degree Performance & Small Scale Touring
- BSc (Hons) Polymer Technology
- BA (Hons) Business Management

Nottingham Trent University

- BA (Hons) Education
- Cert Ed/PGCE
- Cert Ed - Direct Access to Year 2

University of Derby

- BA (Hons) Combined Studies.

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The College works in partnership with Staffordshire University as a member of the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF), which comprises 10 colleges in Staffordshire and Shropshire. Edexcel programmes operate under the Staffordshire University licence as part of the SURF franchise. There are separate agreements with the University of Derby and Nottingham Trent University.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 The College is building a new centre for higher education provision at a cost of some £5 million, which will open in September 2007. There is a clear strategy for developing new higher education resources to support its provision and to provide an enhanced learning environment for the students. The College strategy for the development of higher education emphasises the need for engagement with employers, and the College has developed a number of Higher National and FD programmes to support the training and development needs of local employers. This contributes to the College's mission to widen participation for the benefit of the local and regional community.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8 The team met students studying on higher education programmes at the College. They were helpful in providing evidence to support the team's conclusions. Students were also invited to present a submission to the team. The College assisted the students by providing templates and advice. Students from the following three faculties submitted written submissions: the Faculty of Business, Leisure and Care; the Faculty of Creative Studies; and the Faculty of Technology. In addition, current and former higher education students made a valuable contribution to the review, as they did for the Developmental engagement through meetings held with the team. The views of current students were also available through the results of College student questionnaires.

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 Procedures for higher education quality assurance and enhancement at the College are carefully aligned to the requirements of the partner organisations that validate the college programmes. These arrangements are specified in a Memorandum of Cooperation with Staffordshire University, a Collaborative Agreement with Nottingham Trent University and a Collaborative Working Contract with the University of Derby. Procedures are robust within each partnership and clearly define responsibilities for the validation, assessment and annual monitoring of higher education awards.

10 Quality procedures are explicit in the documentation of all awarding bodies. For example, the SURF Quality Committee produces a Quality Assurance Handbook, which defines comprehensive procedures for its awards. The College adopts appropriate university documentation to comply with this. Similarly, both Nottingham Trent University and University of Derby programmes use documentation from the relevant university faculties to

ensure consistency of practice across all partners, compliance with the formal agreements, and to avoid any duplication within the College.

11 The College is represented on appropriate committees in the validating institutions. There is a hierarchy of internal committees, including the Senior Management Team and Operational Management Team that receive and review the minutes from the validating partners to ensure these are in accordance with College procedures. In particular, a Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Committee focuses on strategic issues, and a Higher Education Ethics Group deals with operational aspects. The maintenance and enhancement of standards is a significant feature of the College's management structure. For example, an Assistant Principal chairs the Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Committee, and both the Principal and Deputy Principal serve on university committees, such as the SURF Management Board. Partner universities reported that the College is a proactive participant in the development of partnership arrangements with its validating bodies, and reviewers confirmed this.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

12 The Developmental engagement team recommended that engagement with the Academic Infrastructure be enhanced, and the College has effectively addressed this. The action plan produced by the College following the Developmental engagement aims to: offer staff involved with validations additional training on all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure; encourage all staff involved with the SURF provision to gain associate lecturer accreditation by July 2007; run a pilot award at master's level with SURF on Teaching Higher Education in Further Education Colleges for 15 staff in September 2007; continue to support staff attending partner university staff development events; and to support staff to undertake scholarly research and work placements. The Summative review team noted that the understanding of staff has improved, and the College is now developing a staff guide on the Academic Infrastructure to consolidate this improvement.

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?

13 Annual reporting arrangements are designed to fit the cycles of both the College and its partner universities. The College uses internal documentation that matches the requirements of its partners to avoid duplication. Annual monitoring and review procedures apply to both programmes and to individual modules. Quality information is collected from external examiner reports, staff evaluation, student perception-of-course surveys, peer observation of teaching and learning, and employer forums. These data also inform the college-wide higher education self-assessment report and the curriculum area reports.

14 Annual monitoring reports include a development plan that is shared with and monitored by the relevant awarding body. This includes: feedback to external examiners on the actions taken as a result of their reports; identification of good practice for wider dissemination across the College; and the action required by the programme team, college managers and the partner university. The College recognises that feedback to external examiners has been inconsistent in the past and has adopted new measures to address this. Similarly, the team noted that the dissemination of good practice within faculties has been more effective than dissemination across faculties, and the College is now seeking to enhance this. For example, the Developmental engagement action

plan resulted in the production of a formal database containing a summary of comments from external examiners and guidance on good practice, which is now available to all curriculum managers.

15 There is an explicit assessment strategy that includes: standardisation meetings; moderation and internal verification procedures; and formal assessment boards to ensure consistent standards are maintained within individual programmes. Standardisation meetings for SURF awards involve staff from Staffordshire University and all further education partners to ensure a consistent approach to the design of assessments in advance of the distribution to students. Edexcel provision is checked through internal verification or moderation, and confirmed by external examiners. For university awards, there is anonymous marking of student work and a sample is double-marked internally before second marking by the awarding body. The Developmental engagement team noted some variations in the internal verification of assignment briefs, while the Summative review team noted an improvement in this area. The College action plan includes further training for staff on effective programme management and on the design of assessments to consolidate this improvement.

16 Student documentation is extensive and supports the maintenance of standards with a substantial array of programme, module and unit handbooks. The College aims to ensure that students in all faculties share the benefits of documentation that is easy to understand and advanced practitioners are expected to promote this. In general, the information is clear and comprehensive, but the team noted some inconsistencies in the information on progression to further study in some areas, including engineering.

17 The College strategy for the development of higher education emphasises the need for engagement with employers in maintaining appropriate academic standards. Local industries sponsor new programmes, provide work-based-learning activities and placements, and participate in the assessment of students. Engagement with employers is a notable feature of the provision.

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

18 Partner universities are active in supporting and developing College staff. In particular, teaching staff who contribute more than 24 hours each year to SURF programmes can undertake a module on Teaching Higher Education in Further Education Colleges and become Associate Lecturers of Staffordshire University. They attend annual development days to review their provision and agree a programme for the coming academic year. Those teaching on the Nottingham Trent University programmes attend franchise groups at the University. Staff involved with the University of Derby modules can attend an annual staff conference to review and plan the provision. Staff comment favourably on the value of such activities in maintaining academic standards, and in encouraging discourse with their academic peers. Effective use is made of staff exchanges on teacher training programmes and of joint student activities on sport studies programmes and it is recommended that such practices be shared across all faculties.

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?

19 Responsibility for managing the quality of learning opportunities on higher education programmes is delegated by the Senior Management Team to the Assistant Principal Standards and Development. Responsibility is then devolved through the four heads of faculty to the curriculum area leaders and, ultimately, to the programme leaders. Reporting arrangements are from the programme teams through heads of faculty to the Senior Management Team. Issues that arise from external examiners' reports, annual monitoring of modules and programmes, student feedback and action plans, are brought together and considered by the Higher Education Quality and Curriculum Committee, and by the Senior Management Team. The Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Committee also ensures that appropriate learning opportunities are available for students, and the Quality Manager keeps the awarding bodies informed about the range of learning opportunities.

20 The awarding bodies consider monitoring reports at programme meetings, which are attended by all partner colleges. Further monitoring of programme management is embedded in the College committee structure. Curriculum staff, link tutors, and managers from the partner universities stated that reporting arrangements are clear and effective, and scrutiny of documentation by the team confirmed this. The team noted that the strength of quality procedures is underpinned by the effectiveness of the link tutor system and by joint programme team meetings.

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

21 Feedback on the quality of learning opportunities is gathered both formally and informally. Representatives are elected to programme committees, but students reported that issues relating to delivery are generally raised and resolved quickly and informally through their tutors. They cited a rooming problem on the FD in 3D Design and a grading issue on the HND in Dance as typical examples of this. Perception questionnaires inform module and programme monitoring and are used to develop action plans, which provide valuable quality data for the College and its awarding bodies. In addition, students complete a specific perception questionnaire on their induction. Analysis of these questionnaires helps to ensure a thorough induction experience and demonstrates good practice in the use of student feedback in the enhancement of learning.

22 A new virtual learning environment is being developed with the aid of SURF funding to improve the quality and versatility of the system. This includes access to two virtual learning environments, one for links with the university and the other for access to further education resources. When students identify additional resource requirements, these are passed to the Learning Resources Centre for consideration. For example, students in the Faculty of Technology reported problems with limited availability of specialist software. This is being addressed.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

23 There is a clear strategy to inform staff about the Academic Infrastructure, especially those involved in the development of new FDs. Recent staff development included a training event led by one of the partner universities that has generated greater staff confidence in their understanding of such features as the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The College is now seeking further engagement with the Academic Infrastructure within faculties, and to disseminate good practice across its faculties.

24 Validation arrangements require the involvement of a link tutor from the Staffordshire University for each award. The link tutor works with the programme team to design a new award, and is the main contact point between the team and the partner university when the programme is running. This ensures that the programme complies with the requirements of the validating body and that it reflects the Academic Infrastructure. There are explanatory guides available from each partner to support this. The College uses document templates designed by its partner universities for the development of new programmes and these ensure that programme specifications and marking and moderation procedures acknowledge appropriate external reference points.

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

25 The College is currently developing a teaching, learning and assessment strategy for higher education that builds on established good practice within the provision. It has received positive external evaluations of its teaching quality. Student perceptions rate the quality of teaching as high, with appropriate learning methods and effective use of small group exercises. There is good practice in the informal process of peer observation, in addition to the formal observation of teaching. Advanced practitioners play an important role in ensuring the delivery of effective teaching. The Developmental engagement report noted good practice in the design of creative and imaginative assessments on the Higher National programmes in Applied Information Technology, Sports Performance and Coaching, and 3D Design, and on the FD for Teaching Assistants. The Summative review team confirmed this and also noted good practice in the involvement of employers in curriculum development, and in the design and grading of student assessments on programmes such as the FDs in Polymer Technology, Applied Technology and Teaching Assistants. This should be extended across all programmes.

26 The Strategic Plan expresses a commitment to the local and regional community and to employers, and draws on the strengths identified in recent reviews and inspections. For example, curriculum tutors involve local employers in programme design through forums that meet at least once each year. Employer requests for customised modules to meet specific skills requirements has resulted in a FD bridging course for the JCB company, and further higher education programmes that are being developed for Punch Taverns and Bombardier Transportation. Of particular significance is the strategic approach that informs the College's expansion of its FD portfolio and demonstrates the effective development of new learning opportunities.

27 The College Charter states that students are entitled to feedback within 15 working days of submission of their assignments. Staff make every effort to comply with the policy, but are constrained to some extent by moderation processes. Final moderated marks and full feedback may take a number of weeks and students understand these constraints. The Developmental engagement report expressed concerns about the timeliness and appropriateness of feedback to students on assessed work. The resulting action plan shows that the College has acted swiftly to improve feedback and students confirmed that

assessment feedback has improved. However, it reported that some inconsistencies remain, and the team recommends that the College and its validating bodies continue to develop measures providing feedback that is timely, appropriate and consistent across all higher education programmes.

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

28 The College has a policy of interviewing prospective students and assesses individual claims for the accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning. At induction students receive unit and programme handbooks that are broadly comprehensive and contain assessment schedules, briefs and grading criteria. There is some variation in the quality of documentation and the College is in the process of ensuring that all handbooks are modelled on those demonstrating good practice, such as the user-friendly and informative handbooks for students on the BA (Hons) Education; the Postgraduate Certificate in Education; HND Dance; and the FDs in Construction, and Polymer Technology. Some students reported that progression routes from an FD to an articulated honours degree are not always explicit in programme documents, leading to some confusion for students in engineering. Articulated progression routes should be made more explicit in the documentation and clearly communicated to the students.

29 Students confirmed a high level of academic guidance and pastoral support. Personal tutors review their progress and maintain personal development files. A recent survey found that some 80 per cent of full-time students had regular progress reviews. The proportion was somewhat smaller for part-time students. Tutors are aware of the need to ensure equitable support for all learners and have devised strategies to ensure that there is no disadvantage for students who spend less time at the College. For example, they use email to maintain contact and attested that improvements in the virtual learning environment benefit students who are not able to meet their tutors regularly. Student Services provides valuable pastoral support although, on key areas of financial advice for higher education studies, the information available was deemed to be inadequate by some students. The College has responded to this need, and the University of Derby has provided a training session for College advisers.

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

30 Recent staff development activity to enhance the quality of learning opportunities includes: access to the online resources at the University of Derby for staff on the Combined Studies programme; teaching experience at Nottingham Trent University for staff on the BA (Hons) Education; and workshops on widening participation and on the Academic Infrastructure with SURF. These are highly appreciated by staff. Further joint teaching is planned in the new higher education centre as additional degrees are launched. The support for staff development from the awarding bodies is a feature of good practice in the College.

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 Students commented favourably on the Learning Resources Centre. This incorporates the library, quiet study areas, access to a substantial computer network, and some research materials. Resource allocations are the subject of annual bids by faculties and service areas, with decisions being made at Information and Communications Technology Implementation Group meetings, which are informed by the Information and

Communications Strategy Group. The Learning Resources Centre is represented on both these groups. These management arrangements are sound.

32 Students are made aware of their entitlement to access further learning resources at partner universities, and the use of such facilities is increasing. For example, Sports Performance and Coaching students have undertaken physiology practical classes at Staffordshire University laboratories to enhance their learning. The new teaching and social centre that will open in September 2007 will provide further enhancement of learning opportunities for higher education students. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the College strategy in linking new developments to the provision of additional learning resources. The building includes breakout areas for small group discussions, dedicated technology production rooms and information and communications technology facilities. The centre will create a distinct focus for higher education activity on the Burton campus.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for of 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 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?

33 The College publishes a Higher Education Prospectus and individual programme leaflets to promote its provision. These are also available on its website. A range of handbooks is available in printed form. Reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the published information. The College and its awarding bodies recognise the need to monitor the reliability of public information and have clear procedures to ensure an annual review of relevant documentation. The information available to students and other stakeholders is produced in accordance with cooperation agreements between the College and its partners, and reflects the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*.

34 Within the College, the Marketing and Student Services section provides the major link with partner universities to ensure compliance with the provisions in the Memorandum of Cooperation with Staffordshire University, the Collaborative Agreement with Nottingham Trent University and the Collaborative Working Contract with the University of Derby. Content is agreed with partner universities prior to publication, and there are set procedures for checking the reliability and accuracy of all publicity, marketing and student materials, such as module handbooks and programme leaflets. Information on the performance of students is collected from annual monitoring reports, which are compiled by individual programme leaders and checked by the curriculum area leader. Scrutiny of documentation confirms the broad effectiveness of such procedures.

35 Students acknowledged that marketing information is generally clear and informative. The Higher Education Prospectus identifies the relevant partner by describing the programme as being in conjunction with a particular institution, and this is repeated on the website. However, scrutiny of the information by the team confirmed that documentation on progression routes was not always clear in the prospectus or in individual programme leaflets.

36 Handbooks are comprehensive and contain generic programme information from partner universities and user-friendly local supplements. As yet, these are not available on the student intranet and information is provided in printed form at induction. Students reported that the material is useful for reference rather than as a significant aid to learning.

37 Students are enrolled locally using documentation from the partner university to ensure simultaneous registration on both databases. The universities supply statistical data for annual monitoring reports when required. The Standards and Quality Audit Team monitor reports to identify information on students' performance and progression that can inform target setting within the College. Programme review data include information on the quality of teaching and learning, learning resources, and areas of good practice. These are accompanied by a development plan.

38 Staff confirmed that management information is easily accessible both within the College and from its partners. They use the information to support the management and delivery of programmes and the College has provided staff development on the use of statistical data. For example, staff use the data to check figures for admission, retention and progression, and to evaluate performance against targets. This informs their projections for the coming year. Staff are able to compare their performance to that of other partners within the same university network and SURF is currently devising benchmarks for retention, progression and achievement for all colleges within the Staffordshire University consortium.

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

39 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in February 2007. It was structured around the following lines of enquiry agreed with the College.

- How does the College ensure that there is a consistent approach in the design and implementation of the assessment strategy?
- How are assessment procedures made explicit and communicated to students?
- How does the College ensure consistency in the timeliness, quality and quantity of feedback to students across the provision?
- How do the arrangements for academic support on assessment ensure achievement of the intended learning outcomes?
- How are assessment data collected for publication to students, staff and outside bodies?

40 The Developmental engagement team identified areas of **good practice** that were worthy of dissemination throughout the College. These included: creative and imaginative assessment design; effective communication of assessment information through handbooks; the involvement of employers in designing assessments, and effective support for programme teams from partner universities in the development of assessments. Overall the team found a clear strategy for the development of higher education programmes.

41 The Developmental engagement team recommended that it was **advisable** for the College to take measures to improve the understanding of the Academic Infrastructure for curriculum staff, and to review its policy on feedback. The team also agreed that it would be **desirable** for the College to take action to strengthen the monitoring of internal verification; circulate a summary of the external examiner reports for consideration by the faculties, and to remind staff to comply with the College policy on the submission of assignments.

D Foundation Degrees

42 There are seven FDs validated by Staffordshire University currently running at the College. A further eight are planned for 2007-08, and five more in 2008-09. The FD in Creative and Cultural Industries that will be launched in the next academic year will have five individual pathways to further enhance student choice.

43 The College mission informs a clear strategy for the development of FDs within the SURF consortium. This emphasises employer engagement, part-time provision and meeting the needs of learners within the surrounding area of East Staffordshire, South Derbyshire and North-West Leicestershire. FDs are seen as a focus for higher education provision within local organisations and as a significant aid to career progression, which is achieved. For example, 12 of the 24 students from the JCB company who are studying for a FD and who will graduate in 2006-07, have been promoted by the company during their studies. Students confirmed that they would not have travelled to another area to study. They appreciate the opportunity to acquire higher education qualifications locally, which are closely aligned to their employment and are available by part-time study.

44 The College is developing a number of new employer-led programmes within the SURF consortium for organisations such as Coors Brewery and Balfour Beatty. It has appointed advanced practitioners in each faculty to assist with curriculum development and to promote employer engagement. Sector skills councils and professional bodies are involved in these developments and, as they are designed for a particular employer, the work-based learning element is assured. Individual modules will also be available on a flexible learning arrangement to meet specific training needs. The team noted that SURF approval procedures facilitate this process through the rapid validation of new proposals.

45 Early FD developments occurred within faculties and there was limited sharing of good practice across the College. Advanced practitioners are now seeking to disseminate information and good practice, and the College is undertaking a mapping exercise of all FD modules to avoid duplication. The transition from FD to honours degree is facilitated through an effective link tutor system, visits to Staffordshire University, and the use of compatible software. However, it was reported that some students who applied for a Higher National programme and were then accepted on the FD were not fully aware of the implications of this change. The team recommends that the College and SURF should monitor that documentation is explicit and that this is available to students at the introduction of a new award.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

46 The team identified a number of features of good practice in the 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 Burton College and its awarding bodies, Staffordshire University, Nottingham Trent University, the University of Derby and Edexcel.

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

- the higher education strategy emphasises the need for engagement with employers in the development of programmes, and in the maintenance of standards and enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraphs 7, 17, 26)
- the College is an active participant in the development of partnership arrangements (paragraph 11)
- partner universities are active in supporting and developing College staff (paragraphs 12, 18, 29, 30)
- effective use is made of staff exchanges and joint student activities, which should be shared across all faculties (paragraph 18)
- a specific student perception of course survey enhances induction (paragraph 21)
- the effective use of employer involvement in the design and grading of assessments in Polymer Technology, Applied Technology and Teaching Assistants programmes, which should be extended across the provision (paragraph 25)
- there is a high level of academic guidance and pastoral support from personal tutors (paragraph 29)
- students can access additional learning resources at partner universities (paragraph 32)
- the new teaching and social centre will provide a focus for higher education on the campus (paragraph 32)
- easy access to management information supports the management and delivery of programmes (paragraph 38)
- the rapid validation of new programmes by SURF supports employer-led programme development (paragraph 44).

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

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

- on measures to provide information such as progression routes from FDs to articulated honours degrees that are made explicit in the documentation and clearly communicated to students (paragraphs 16, 28, 35, 45)
- on further measures to provide feedback that is timely, appropriate and consistent across the whole provision (paragraph 27).

49 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.

50 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.

51 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.

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
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 higher education strategy emphasises the need for engagement with employers in the development of programmes, and in the maintenance of standards and enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraphs 7, 17, 26) 	<p>To review the HE strategy in line with government agendas, local needs and widening participation</p> <p>To develop short bite-sized validated HE Awards tailored for employers</p>	<p>October 2007</p> <p>June 2008</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development</p> <p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development</p>	<p>Updated HE Strategy</p> <p>Two new awards validated for employers</p>	<p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p> <p>He Curriculum and Quality Committee</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development</p> <p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development</p>

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College is an active participant in the development of partnership arrangements (paragraph 11) 	To continue to develop our partnership arrangements with HEIs by attending the Sub Committees of the HEIs; and to play an active part in all developments	July 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development	Growth in provision	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee He Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partner universities are active in supporting and developing College staff (paragraphs 12, 18, 29, 30) 	To encourage all staff involved in HE to achieve the Teaching HE in FE Award, and gain associate lecture accreditation To continue to support staff attending partner HEI staff development events and updating	July 2008 July 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development Quality Manager	15 staff achieved the Teaching HE in FE Award 50 staff are associate lecturers of HEIs Attendance at Staff	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development Quality Manager Head of Faculty Assistant Principal Standards and Development /Quality Manager

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	To support staff in gaining a first, second or higher degree	July 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development / Quality Manager	Development event Schedule of staff undertaking qualifications Industrial experience records	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development / Quality Manager Assistant Principal Standards and Development / Quality Manager
	To support staff to undertake scholarly research and/or work placements	July 2008				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective use is made of staff exchanges and joint student activities, which should be shared across all faculties (paragraph 18) 	Advanced Practitioners and HE course tutors to share and disseminate good practice design	April 2008	Quality Manager	Schedule of workshops taken place during year	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development Quality Manager
	To continue to support staff attending partner HEI staff	July 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development	Attendance at events	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	development events and updating To support staff to undertake scholarly research and/or work placements	July 2008	HOF	Records of Industrial updating	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	HOF
	Staff training on the Academic Infrastructure, Codes of Practice, Precepts, Benchmarking Statements and Validation process of Foundation Degree	July 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development /Quality Manager	Training Workshop	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development Quality Manager

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> students can access additional learning resources at partner universities (paragraph 32) 	To ensure that, where practicable, students have access to equipment and resources in line with industrial standards	July 2008	HOF	New University Centre operational	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	HOF
	Continue to have team teaching and shared resources with HEIs to enhance the learning experience	July 2008	HOF	Employer involvement in Advisory Groups and assessment practice	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	HOF
	To ensure that staff develop a blended learning approach and resources to support	July 2008	HOF	HE Development targets met	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	HOF

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	independent study/research and employer engagement Develop FD Provision	July 2008	HOF		HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	HOF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the new teaching and social centre provides a focus for higher education on the campus (paragraph 32) 	<p>To ensure that students have access to research facilities and learning resources</p> <p>Advanced practitioners and HE course tutors to share and disseminate good practice regarding assessment design</p>	May 2008	<p>HOF</p> <p>Deputy Principal Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development / Quality Manager</p>	<p>New University Centre</p> <p>Wide range and variety of assessment design as evidenced through course management file audit</p>	<p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p>	<p>HOF/Deputy Principal Corporate Services</p> <p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ Quality Manager</p>

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective use of employer involvement in the design and grading of assessments in Polymer Technology, Applied Technology and Teaching Assistants programmes, which should be extended across the provision (paragraph 25) 	<p>Advance practitioners and HE course tutors to share and disseminate good practice regarding employer engagement and involvement in assessment</p>	<p>May 2008</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ Quality Manager</p>	<p>Evidence of Employers involvement in assessment</p>	<p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ HOF</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a high level of academic guidance and pastoral support from personal tutors (paragraph 29) 	<p>To support unsatisfactory provision with low retention, achievement and success rate</p> <p>Provide regular and systematic monitoring of students' progress to</p>	<p>July 2008</p> <p>July 2008</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ Quality Manager</p> <p>HOF</p>	<p>Benchmarks exceeded by at least 5 per cent</p> <p>Positive outcomes for Faculty Health Checks; improving</p>	<p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p> <p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ Quality Manager</p> <p>HOF</p>

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>ensure they achieve qualification aims</p> <p>Staff training on effective course management and design (course files, assessments, IV, tracking students' progress)</p>	July 2008	Advanced Practitioners	success rates	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Advanced Practitioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a specific student perception of course survey enhances induction (paragraph 21) 	<p>To continue with SPOCS and unit module SPOCS for the students.</p> <p>To analyse SPOCS and identify what action needs to be taken</p>		Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ Quality Manager	Improved HE SPOCS results	<p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p> <p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p>	Quality Manager

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● easy access to management information supports the management and delivery of programmes (paragraph 38) 	<p>To continue to put support mechanisms in place for under-performing courses</p> <p>APS to continue to roll out Proachieve and train staffing its applications</p>	July 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development / Quality Manager / HOF	Improved retention, achievement and success of awards	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	Assistant Principal Standards and Development/ Quality Manager/HOF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the rapid validation of new programmes by SURF supports employer-led programme development (paragraph 44) 	To further develop the SURF awards to meet local community and industry needs.	July 2008	HOF	Three more FDS to be validated	HE Curriculum and Quality Committee	HOF

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take measures to provide information such as progression routes from Foundation degrees to articulated honours degrees that are made explicit in the documentation and clearly communicated to students (paragraphs 16, 28, 35, 45) take further measures to provide feedback that is timely, appropriate and consistent across the whole provision (paragraph 27) 	<p>To develop progression routes information for each award and distribute to students at induction and on exit of award.</p> <p>HE Ethics Group to work on an assessment policy for HE in liaison with partner HEIs</p> <p>To build an External Verifiers/Examiners database</p>	<p>July 2008</p> <p>June 2008</p> <p>May 2008</p>	<p>HOF</p> <p>Quality Manager</p>	<p>Production of progression routes information leaflets</p> <p>Increased progression routes</p> <p>Revised policy</p> <p>Database operational</p>	<p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p> <p>HE Curriculum and Quality Committee</p> <p>Operations Management Team</p>	<p>HOF</p> <p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development</p> <p>Assistant Principal Standards and Development</p>

Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	To provide access to the EV/EE database for all curriculum managers	May 2008	Assistant Principal Standards and Development	Reports/ summary in circulation	Operations Management Team	Assistant Principal Standards and Development
	To produce a number of reports that identify areas of good practice and areas requiring further development	May 2008		Reports/ summary in circulation	Operations Management Team	Assistant Principal Standards and Development
	Course teams should be reminded of the need to comply with the college policy on the handing-in of assignments via Student Services to ensure that the receipt of the assignment is recorded by the institution, and that a formal receipt is issued	June 2008		Compliance to policy	Operations Management Team	Quality Manager

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

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