

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

June 2009

Carshalton College

SR30/2009

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2009

ISBN 978 1 84979 011 6

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 Carshalton College carried out in June 2009

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- strong, reflective and evaluative leadership, which fosters effective relationships with awarding bodies and provides strong support to staff and students
- the College's positive engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, which ensures that it is well embedded in practice
- the use of research to inform the development of the higher education learning and teaching strategy, which provides a well-informed focus on the needs of higher education students
- the development of higher education specific-teaching observation, which is closely aligned to *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) through its focus on the development of learning skills appropriate to level
- staff new to higher education teaching receiving an excellent level of support
- the management of the virtual learning environment relating to Roehampton University programmes, which enhances learning and teaching, and supports staff 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 address the following issues.

- the current arrangements for meetings of programme boards should be reviewed to help facilitate attendance by employer and student representatives and hence improve transparency and their effectiveness
- the recently developed mechanisms for obtaining the views of employers need to be embedded
- as the new Higher Education Learning and Teaching Strategy develops, the College should seek to align it with its Higher Education Quality Strategy Policy
- while most published information is well produced and accurate, there is a need for improved systems, to ensure consistency and accuracy of all published information and to ensure effective version control.

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 Carshalton College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Roehampton University and Canterbury Christ Church University. The review was carried out by Ms Maggie Carroll, Ms Jane Durant, Mr David Fallows (reviewers) and Mr Peter Clarke (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions and reports of reviews by QAA. 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 Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College.

4 The College is a general further education college located in the London Borough of Sutton. It is the only provider of higher education programmes within the borough. It is a centre of vocational excellence in the childcare and early years, and electrotechnical curricular areas.

5 The College has some 5,000 students, overall. Of these, 222 are on HEFCE indirectly funded higher education programmes. A further 100 students are on higher education-level professional courses. The majority of students on the programmes leading to teaching awards in the lifelong learning sector teach at the College. All students on the teaching awards and the Foundation Degrees are in relevant employment.

6 The HEFCE funded higher education provision consists of the:

Roehampton University:

- FD Early Years Childcare and Education - 114 part-time students
- FD Supporting Learning and Teaching - 58 part-time students

Canterbury Christ Church University:

- Cert Ed/PGCE - Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) - 50 part-time students.

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 FD in Supporting Learning and Teaching was developed by Roehampton University in collaboration with the College. The FD in Early Years Childcare and Education was designed by College staff and validated by Roehampton University. The programmes are delivered at both institutions. The College is responsible for the delivery, administration and management of the programmes at Carshalton. Under the partnership agreement with Roehampton University, the College is responsible for ensuring that the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based learning* is followed, and for relationships with external agencies providing placements.

8 The College is part of a large consortium delivering lifelong learning teaching qualifications awarded by Canterbury Christ Church University. The programme is validated, approved and reviewed by the University. The College is responsible for responding to annual reviews and for implementing any conditions arising from the review process. It is also responsible for arranging and conducting assessment in accordance with the University's regulations. The University approves staff who teach on the programme.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9 The Vice-Principal reports on higher education matters to the Board of Governors and is responsible for the strategic management of higher education. In addition, the College has recently appointed a Deputy Director Higher Education, who is responsible to the Vice-Principal for the operational management of quality and development and for overseeing the work of curriculum directorates. While small, higher education provision is growing. An FD in Electrotechnology, in collaboration with London South Bank University, was validated recently and will commence in September 2009.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The submission was produced from the outcomes of meetings of student groups with members of staff and focused on responses to pre-printed discussion points. It was a helpful document, which served as a basis for discussions with staff and students during the visit.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

11 Programme teams' responsibilities for academic standards are clearly articulated in the College's assessment strategy, and delegated responsibilities are set out in the institutional agreements with the awarding bodies. Within the College, the Deputy Director Higher Education takes an active leadership role for the establishment and maintenance of standards, underpinned by an evaluative and evidence-based approach. The FD programme teams have a strong relationship with Roehampton University; the programme team for the teaching awards comprise full members of the Canterbury Christ Church

University consortium. Representatives from both awarding bodies expressed their full confidence in the college and its teaching staff. There are also strong links with employers and representatives of relevant professional bodies. The Deputy Director Higher Education sits on the national Children's Workforce Development Council Committee.

12 The College has adopted a higher education strategy and a management structure that strongly underpin its provision. The recently formed higher education steering group is chaired by the Principal, and is a powerful forum for the consideration of both strategic and operational issues. The Vice-Principal reports the outcomes of the group's discussions to the Board of Governors. The steering group is making a valuable contribution to the development of a higher education culture within the provision.

13 The significant and positive steer provided by the Deputy Director Higher Education and the two curriculum managers, enables the programme teams to share and fulfil their responsibilities for academic standards. Weekly programme team meetings are used effectively to promote a consistency of approach and to support staff in meeting the expectations set out in the College's higher education quality strategy policy. The College's support for staff, which enables them to develop a knowledge and understanding of current subject and generic higher education requirements, is to be commended as good practice.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14 The programme development process involves close consultation with employers and liaison with the awarding higher education institutions. Programmes are subject to rigorous validation by the awarding bodies. Programme specifications show that programme intended learning outcomes are aligned with the FHEQ relevant subject benchmark statements and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* where appropriate. The programmes are also delivered and assessed in accord with the precepts of the *Code of practice*. In particular, the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* is well referenced in the College's assessment strategy. The Developmental engagement in assessment, undertaken by QAA noted the successful integration of theory and practice and alignment of the Foundation Degrees to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The report also noted that standards of achievement are aligned with the FHEQ and the programme specifications.

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 The programmes are subject to institutional agreements that articulate clearly the internal quality assurance processes required of the College. Each validated award has a set of definitive documents and validation reports, which are held at the programme team level, as well as in the higher education administrative office of the College.

16 The College has an extensive system of programme monitoring and review, which is closely overseen by the Deputy Director Higher Education. Each of the Roehampton University programmes produces a programme annual review, which takes account of student feedback, external examiners' reports, the University moderator's reports and student data. Each module is thoroughly evaluated through the use of a comprehensive set of evaluation forms that focus on all aspects of academic standards, including academic literacy.

17 Employer feedback on standards occurs, currently, through the strong informal networks that have been established by the programme teams. There is, in addition, an extensive evidence base derived from employer or mentor comments on student achievement in the workplace as part of their professional development planning. In response to the recommendations of the Developmental engagement, the College has developed mechanisms for the Roehampton University programmes to ensure that students and employers provide summary annual feedback. The team recommends that the College develops this further and ensures that formal means of obtaining employer views are more fully embedded. On the Canterbury Christ Church University teaching awards programmes, the College itself is the main employer of students and the Vice-Principal is a member of relevant committees at the University. Students confirm that they are aware of enhancements made as a result of student feedback. Current scheduling of meetings of programme boards has resulted in a lack of attendance by employer and student representatives. It is recommended that the College reconsiders the timing of these meetings, to encourage and enable attendance by student and employer representatives and hence improve the transparency and effectiveness of the boards.

18 The programme annual review is reported to Roehampton University. A joint University and College scrutiny panel agrees the final review and action plan and the formal response to external examiners' reports. The College's quality arrangements enable the reports of external examiners to be considered carefully and acted upon. The Canterbury Christ Church University provision is currently reviewed through the University annual review process, with outcomes being reported to the College. The College's review processes are highly regarded by the awarding bodies.

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

19 Staff development is a key component of the higher education quality strategy policy. Effective processes identify individual and institutional needs. All staff participate in the annual cycle of appraisal and professional development. The staff training and development policy clarifies the scope of the commitment the College will make in supporting the training and development of its staff, and the processes that are used to manage and implement development needs. Priorities for staff development are identified for each member of staff and form part of an annual personal development plan. The activities are evaluated against criteria relating to relevance and impact of the person's learning to his/her higher education role, and its contribution to the College's strategic objectives. Additionally, however, as other individual needs arise, requests are considered by the Deputy Director Higher Education and appropriate action is taken.

20 Programme staff teach on higher education programmes only, and this is a major contributing factor to the quality of the higher education provision, as it focuses staff development on the College's strategic goals for higher education. This approach has provided a secure base for the further planned development of the higher education strategy and for building the College's higher education capacity.

21 Staff teaching on the Canterbury Christ Church University programmes are required to complete the University's associate teachers' short course, and they are observed teaching by University staff as part of their induction. The University requires that its own staff contribute 25 per cent of the teaching on the teaching awards programmes. This gives the opportunity for staff to compare standards in teaching and assessment, as well as to ensure currency of material and alignment with the Academic Infrastructure.

22 There are extensive staff development programmes for staff teaching on the Roehampton University awards. College staff have taken full advantage of internal, university, and external opportunities for attendance at courses and conferences. The College has also developed a distinct higher education teaching observation form, which focuses strongly on appropriate elements of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

24 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those for managing the delivery of academic standards through both the strategic and operational groups as described in paragraphs 12 and 13. The development of a focused higher education strategy has provided a framework for the effective management of the quality of the students' learning in the context of the particular requirements for study at levels 4 and 5. This has been supported by the constructive guidance provided by the Deputy Director Higher Education and the two curriculum managers.

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

25 The memoranda of agreement with Roehampton University and Canterbury Christ Church University define the expectations for the quality of learning opportunities. These relate to resource provision for the day-to-day running of the programmes, referring in particular to any resources committed at validation or subsequent programme review. It is through the programme annual reviews that continuing dialogue on the quality of learning opportunities with the awarding bodies is sustained. The programme annual reviews, in conjunction with external examiner reports and university moderator reports, enable the awarding bodies to have confidence in the quality of the students' learning experiences.

26 The College has substantial delegated responsibility for the delivery and quality assurance of learning opportunities. Both awarding bodies assure themselves of the quality of the College staff who teach on their programmes through consideration of their qualifications and experience at validation and subsequent review.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

27 In addition to informing programme design and implementation, as noted in paragraph 14, the Academic Infrastructure has informed the continuing development of a specifically higher education-focused learning and teaching strategy, which is in its final stages of development. It is recommended that during this phase, the College considers its alignment with the broader Higher Education Quality Strategy Policy.

28 The defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees, including employer involvement, accessibility, and articulation and progression, are particularly significant in the learning and teaching strategy's development. It takes as its starting point students' learning needs; it recognises that a significant majority are non-standard entrants and seeks to value the

positive contribution all students can make to the programmes. The Deputy Director Higher Education's research to identify perceived and likely barriers to learning has served to inform the strategy's design, articulation and implementation. This use of self-evaluation and research to underpin the College's higher education provision, is considered to be good practice.

29 The precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* are clearly addressed and are embedded in all the higher education programmes. The mentors' handbooks provide detailed guidance to all stakeholders on the aims and intended learning outcomes of the work-based study, how these will be achieved, and the management of the quality of the learning to be gained from the experience. Roles and responsibilities are defined explicitly and mentors, employers, students and college staff understand these well.

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

30 A range of methods is used to monitor and review the quality of learning opportunities. The weekly team meetings for each of the programmes enable the staff to keep close contact with the delivery of the higher education provision. The student voice is an important focus for managing the quality of learning and teaching. Module and annual evaluations from students, plus student representation on programme boards, form effective, formal procedures for monitoring the student experience. These, combined with the strong informal links students have with the staff, serve to assure the College of the good quality of learning and teaching opportunities.

31 The standard operating procedures for the evaluation and development of learning, teaching and support consist of graded, moderated and developmental observations with clear procedures, and fast track support for any teaching graded 3 or 4. The observations form a key data set that informs the annual College self-evaluation, and also feeds directly into the College's staff development policy.

32 In the current academic year, the College has initiated a programme of teaching observations specifically focused on higher education teaching, recognising the particular qualities required of potential graduates embodied by the FHEQ. These observations are carried out by senior staff who are fully trained in this role. The philosophy of the new approach is determined by a focus on a tutor's capacity to foster learning skills appropriate to potential graduates. Observation records seen by the team verified the alignment of both the tutor's work and their subsequent reflections, and the observer's feedback, to the FHEQ. The outcomes of these observations will feed into the programme annual reviews at the end of the academic year. The development of higher education-specific teaching observation is seen as an aspect of good practice.

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

33 External examiner reports testify to the rigour and effectiveness of recruitment processes which enable appropriate support to be identified at the pre-enrolment stage for students who may need this. The Transition to Higher Education course, which runs in the term prior to the start of the programme, has been developed to bridge the gap for students whose study needs are noted at interview. Uptake is strong, especially from students on the FD in Early Years Childcare. The College recognises that the course has a positive impact on work-based learning and on retention. The development and implementation of the Transition to Higher Education course is considered to be good practice.

34 The Developmental Engagement team recommended that the College should provide greater support to mentors in fulfilling their roles in work-based learning. The mentors' handbooks now have clearer guidance on the students' assessment requirements, and provide a consistent vehicle for good quality student support which mentors and employers value.

35 The learning resource centre provides initial and continuing support for students' learning. The centre supports students in developing research techniques, information technology skills and related study skills to enable them to meet the intended learning outcomes of programmes. The centre also offers self-referral support and students report favourably on the high-quality support afforded to them. Staff respond flexibly to students' needs, offering one-to-one support as necessary. Students' numeracy and literacy needs are met through dedicated surgeries, and there is a weekly session for students whose first language is not English.

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

36 Overall strategies and procedures relating to staff development are as outlined in paragraphs 21 and 22. All staff are engaged in some form of professional development which will inform their input to the programmes. The range of activities includes enrolment on higher degree programmes at Canterbury Christ Church University and Roehampton University, collaborative training with the awarding bodies on matters such as assessment and moderation, external conference attendance, in-house workshops and updating on professional and legislative changes. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit at Roehampton University and the Associate Lecturer Scheme and Consortium Staff Development Forum at Canterbury Christ Church University provide continuing developmental activities for the College's higher education staff.

37 Staff new to higher education teaching, have full and continuing induction into all aspects of their roles, including shadowing, coaching, and observations. They work very closely with their teams and managers to ensure their capabilities are harnessed effectively. The Roehampton University moderator reports comment on the high level of support for new staff and the ways in which this impacts positively on the academic rigour of the programmes. The support for new staff is seen to be an aspect of good practice.

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

38 Requirements for learning resources are set out at validation with the awarding bodies. Subsequent awarding body reviews of the programmes will continue to address the adequacy and sufficiency of resources. Within the College, resources are allocated through the yearly 'Courses and Resources' process, which begins in February and is agreed by the Senior Management Team and the Governing Body. This includes staffing, allocation of teaching rooms and other teaching resources.

39 The module evaluation and review processes, which feed into the programme annual reviews, and subsequently to the College's self-evaluation document, provide evidence of the quality of the resource base for the programmes. The level of attainment of students, the positive views of students about the high quality of their programmes, and the underpinning support for the work-based learning are indicators that resource provision is sufficient for students to be able to meet the intended learning outcomes of their programmes.

40 Learning resource centre staff are members of programme management teams and this facilitates their involvement in decision-making in learning support and in quality assurance. Students are able to access the library provision at Roehampton University and Canterbury Christ Church University both on-site and online.

41 In order to improve learning opportunities, the College is investing in a new virtual learning environment. This will offer greater flexibility than the current system and will be a platform for further development of the College's e-learning strategy. Staff training is in place in readiness for its launch in September 2009.

42 The Developmental Engagement identified the use of the College's virtual learning environment on the Canterbury Christ Church University programmes as good practice, but this has been less prominent in the current year owing to a change-over to the Canterbury Christ Church University's system. On the Roehampton University programmes, however, the further development of learning opportunities through the virtual learning environment has been marked. This has resulted from the designation of a staff team member as its manager and strong commitment from the teaching team. Learning resource centre staff have been highly responsive in providing support for staff to help them develop their understanding and use of this facility. Students access the system regularly and report positively on its role in supporting their learning. The embedding of the use of the virtual learning environment in the Roehampton University programmes, as a vehicle for student learning and staff development, is considered to be good practice.

43 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?

44 The College is responsible for producing the higher education prospectus, promotional leaflets, advertisements, press releases, and policy documents for prospective students. Prospectus details are available in hard copy and on the College's website. In addition, the College provides written information to prospective students at higher education open evenings and career events for school pupils. Information in the higher education prospectus, on the College website and in promotional leaflets is standardised, accessible, current and clearly referenced to relevant partner higher education institutions. Key documents are available in large print, DVD and other formats. The College has customised the content of these public documents so that they are effective in addressing the College's target groups.

45 Information issued to current students includes programme and module handbooks, and module briefing sheets. Handbooks are provided for students in hard copy, as well as being available through the virtual learning environment. College students on programmes validated by Canterbury Christ Church University are issued with handbooks from the University. Students on programmes validated by Roehampton University are issued with handbooks created by the College. Both sets of documents display logos of the College and the respective University. In particular, handbooks for programmes validated by Roehampton University indicate high levels of shared ownership through, for example, a shared welcome statement to students from the College and the University. Programme handbooks are well structured, providing students with detailed information relating to course content, assessment methodology, grading criteria and suggested reading.

46 Students confirmed that the use of handbooks is embedded throughout their programmes of study. Some students on teacher education programmes expressed concerns over the large amount of information contained in programme handbooks, particularly at the start of their studies. They acknowledged that College staff had been responsive to these concerns and had effectively integrated handbook content into programme delivery. Comprehensive handbooks are also produced for mentors of students, including information on mentor roles, quality assurance systems and goal-setting.

47 Programme tutors produce and publish course materials on the College virtual learning environment. The virtual learning sites for all programmes provide easy access to College documents and/or links to relevant university documents. A wealth of information is available. In addition to use as a repository for information, the virtual learning environment sites for the FDs in Early Years Childcare and Education, and Supporting Learning and Teaching are used effectively for continuous dialogue between staff and students, among students, and as an assessment platform. Both staff and students on these programmes enthused about this facility.

48 The College produces an informative, timely annual calendar. This lists key activities for the review and production of marketing materials, assessment deadlines, quality assurance activity, self-evaluation and review processes.

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?

49 The College checks systematically for accuracy in promotional and marketing material. There is an annual cycle for the review of documentation within the College that involves scrutiny and approval by partner higher education institutions prior to publication. College staff demonstrated good knowledge of the relevant protocols and their implementation. Additional rigour in the checking of the College prospectus is sometimes applied through the deployment of an external proofreader.

50 A strong link exists between members of the College's marketing staff and the College's Vice-Principal, and Deputy Director Higher Education. Monthly meetings are used to ensure a regular, evidence-based appraisal of marketing strategies and materials. In particular, these monthly reviews influence the content of the College prospectus and promotional leaflets.

51 Programme handbooks and briefing sheets are proofread by programme leaders at the College. An additional layer of checking is provided by the Deputy Director Higher Education, who approves information prior to release. However, in some of the documents reviewed, there was evidence of inconsistent terminology, typographical errors and inaccurate referencing. Key publications such as the prospectus are clearly dated. There are some inconsistencies in practice for ensuring the currency of documents uploaded to the virtual learning environment, and in aspects of version control of some core documents. Tutors responsible for teacher education programmes rely on material uploaded to the virtual learning environment as the source of the most current version of documents. A named tutor has responsibility for ensuring the currency of documents uploaded to the sites for the Foundation Degrees. The team recommends that the College reviews its systems for the careful proofreading and version control of all internal documents.

52 The College has made good progress in addressing issues relating to published information raised in the Developmental engagement report. Staff and students are provided with accessible, detailed information of key assessment issues. Tutors and students confirmed clear understanding and application of procedures relating to assessment submission, plagiarism and referral systems. In addition, the College has made good progress in providing more realistic timescales for the publication of assessment feedback. Students, College staff and university staff expressed satisfaction with current arrangements.

53 Student evaluation forms specifically request feedback on the usefulness of the information provided for them by the College. This feedback information is analysed and used to inform subsequent amendments to the published material.

54 The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

55 The College had one Developmental engagement which took place in May 2008 and concentrated on assessment. The lines of enquiry were:

- the extent to which the College assures the appropriateness of assessment methods to intended learning outcomes and the level of programme
- the extent to which timely and developmental feedback is provided to students in support of academic and vocational learning
- the effectiveness of the College's approach to work-based learning and its assessment in supporting the students' development of theoretical and vocational learning.

56 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. Collaboration between staff and students encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning, through requiring them to map their work to intended learning outcomes before submission. Mentor and employer reports on student performance in the workplace offer valuable assistance to tutors in arriving at assessment judgements. The use of the virtual learning environment as a discussion forum for students on Canterbury Christ Church University programmes prompts debate among students, facilitates peer learning and serves an effective formative assessment role.

57 The Developmental engagement team made several recommendations. They considered it advisable that the College should ensure that students and staff are provided with, and understand, regulations relating to key assessment issues including referral and resubmission of work. The team also considered it desirable that the College instigates a systematic review of assessment methods to inform future practice; that it ensures that information provided to students on the timeliness of feedback is realistic; that it provides a consistent level of support to mentors to match the good practice seen on Canterbury Christ Church University programmes; and that it endeavours to involve employers in the continuing monitoring and development of assessment.

D Foundation Degrees

58 At the time of the review, the College had Foundation Degrees in Early Years Childcare and Education, and Supporting Learning and Teaching, both of which are awarded by Roehampton University. In addition, it had recently achieved validation of a Foundation Degree in Electrotechnology, in collaboration with London South Bank University. This is due to begin in September 2009. It evolved from a research project, in conjunction with South London Lifelong Learning Partnership, which identified a demand from students who have completed apprenticeships, but who find limited opportunities for further progression. The College has also received funding through the Partnership to develop a Foundation Degree in Social Care, and is seeking a partner to validate the programme.

59 The precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* are clearly addressed and are embedded in all the higher education programmes. The mentors' handbooks provide detailed guidance to all stakeholders on the aims and intended learning outcomes of the work-based study, how these will be achieved, and the management of the quality of the learning to be gained from the experience.

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

- strong, reflective and evaluative leadership, which fosters effective relationships with awarding bodies and provides strong support to staff and students (paragraphs 11 to 13)
- the College's positive engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, which ensures that it is well embedded in practice (paragraphs 14, 27)
- the use of research to inform the development of the higher education learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 28)
- the development of higher education-specific teaching observation, and its alignment to the FHEQ through its focus on the development of learning skills appropriate to level (paragraph 32)
- the level of support provided to staff new to higher education teaching (paragraph 37)
- the management of the virtual learning environment relating to Roehampton University programmes, which enhances learning and teaching, and supports staff development (paragraph 42).

61 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:

- to review the current arrangements for meetings of programme boards, to help facilitate attendance by employer and student representatives, and hence improve transparency and their effectiveness (paragraph 17)
- to embed the recently developed mechanisms for obtaining the views of employers (paragraph 17)
- as the new higher education learning and teaching strategy develops, to seek to align it with its higher education quality strategy policy (paragraph 27)

- while most published information is well produced and accurate, to improve systems, to ensure consistency and accuracy of all published information and to ensure effective version control (paragraph 51).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

62 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Carshalton College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, Canterbury Christ Church University and Roehampton University.

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

- strong, reflective and evaluative leadership, which fosters effective relationships with awarding bodies and provides strong support to staff and students (paragraphs 11 to 13)
- the College's positive engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, which ensures that it is well embedded in practice (paragraphs 14, 27)
- the use of research to inform the development of the higher education learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 28)
- the development of higher education-specific teaching observation, and its alignment to the FHEQ through its focus on the development of learning skills appropriate to level (paragraph 32)
- the level of support provided to staff new to higher education teaching (paragraph 37)
- the management of the virtual learning environment relating to Roehampton University programmes, which enhances learning and teaching, and supports staff development (paragraph 42).

64 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:

- to review the current arrangements for meetings of programme boards, to help facilitate attendance by employer and student representatives, and hence improve transparency and their effectiveness (paragraph 17)
- to embed the recently developed mechanisms for obtaining the views of employers (paragraph 17)
- as the new higher education learning and teaching strategy develops, to seek to align it with its higher education quality strategy policy (paragraph 27)
- while most published information is well produced and accurate, to improve systems, to ensure consistency and accuracy of all published information and to ensure effective version control (paragraph 51).

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

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

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

Carshalton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the college:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● strong, reflective and evaluative leadership which fosters effective relationships with awarding bodies and provides strong support to staff and students (paragraphs 11,12,13) 	<p>Share good practice with team delivering the Electrical Foundation Degree which is due to commence September 2009. Ensure the good practice is embedded in any future planning for Foundation Degrees</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Deputy Director, Higher Education</p>	<p>Learner feedback should indicate good support for students. Further programmes and provision validated with the Awarding Bodies</p>	<p>HE Steering Group</p>	<p>Programme Annual Review</p>

Carshalton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's positive engagement with the academic infrastructure which ensures that it is well embedded in practice (paragraphs 14, 27) 	Continue to ensure that the academic infrastructure is systematically reviewed and embedded through all existing and future practice	Ongoing	Deputy Director Higher Education	Academic staffs' autonomous understanding and implementation of the Academic Infrastructure	HE Steering Group	Module and Programme Annual Reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of research to inform the development of the higher education learning and teaching strategy (paragraph 28) 	Wider dissemination of research findings within the College and external audiences as appropriate. Develop a research based approach to the quality mechanisms operating with the College	Ongoing	Vice Principal/ Deputy Director, Higher Education	Research evidence that underpins the key quality documents	HE Steering Group	Programme Annual Reviews and student evaluations

Carshalton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development of higher education specific teaching observation, and its alignment to the FHEQ through its focus on the development of learning skills appropriate to level (paragraph 32) 	<p>Wider dissemination throughout the College and at external events, as appropriate. Further align to appropriate codes of practice from the AI</p>	March 2010	Deputy Director, Higher Education	Module reviews and staff feedback	HE Steering Group/ College Management Team	Annual College Observation of Teaching and Learning Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the level of support provided to staff new to higher education teaching (paragraph 37) 	<p>Disseminate the staff support structure to all areas within the College</p>	October 2009	Deputy Director Higher Education	Staff appraisals	College Management Team	Feedback from Curriculum Managers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the management of the virtual learning environment relating to Roehampton University programmes which enhances learning and teaching, and supports staff development (paragraph 42). 	<p>Continue the good practice and to further develop VLE usage across all Higher Education Programmes</p>	July 2010	Deputy Director of Higher Education and curriculum teams	Increased usage of VLE and staff and student feedback	College Management Team	Module Reviews and Programme Boards

Carshalton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
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"> to review the current arrangements for meetings of programme boards to help facilitate attendance by employer and student representatives and hence improve transparency and their effectiveness (paragraph 17) 	Liaise with the HEI to reschedule meetings at a more suitable time for employers	October 2009	Vice Principal/Deputy Director of Higher Education	Employer and Student attendance at Programme Boards	Programme Annual Review	Reported in the Programme Annual Review and Student Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to embed the recently developed mechanisms for obtaining the views of employers (paragraph 17) 	More focused targeting approach, using a stratified sample of employers	July 2010	Curriculum Managers	70% response from employers	Programme Board	Reported in Programme Annual Review and Annual Self Evaluation Document

Carshalton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> as the new Higher Education Learning and Teaching Strategy develops, the College should seek to align it with its Higher Education Quality Strategy Policy (paragraph 27) 	Ensure that all strategies are fully aligned	March 2010	Deputy Director of Higher Education	Strategies are approved by the Higher Education Steering Group	Higher Education Steering Group	Reviewed annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> while most published information is well produced and accurate, there is a need for improved systems to ensure consistency and accuracy of all published information and to ensure effective version control (paragraph 51). 	Carry out a periodic review of all published documents	Ongoing	Deputy Director of Higher Education	Secure version control	Higher Education Steering Group	Ongoing review

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

RG 528 08/09