



**QAA**

## **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

May 2007

City College Manchester

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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 City College Manchester 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:

- there are effective relationships with local universities that have led to substantial and productive partnership activities at all levels and for a wide variety of purposes
- the design of the annual programme review process and the commitment of staff have ensured that it is an effective mechanism for assuring academic standards and quality
- there are appropriate and robust mechanisms in place for course approval and review
- students are provided with vocationally relevant learning opportunities, helped by the regular engagement of employers and those academic staff who have professional links
- there are clear and extensive procedures and practices for providing academic and personal support to students
- in some areas, academic staff are making effective use of the virtual learning environment and other digital media to inform student learning.

### 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:

- ensure, for the Edexcel awards, that systematic and documented procedures are implemented to ensure that all final assessment boards involve at least one College member who is independent of the academic unit responsible for the award
- rationalise and clarify its executive and deliberative structures to ensure that there is an appropriate mechanism for fully considering higher education issues
- review the appropriateness of the higher education self-assessment report format and process to ensure that it is fit for purpose

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

- establish and maintain a common reference source to provide a definitive record of the College's current higher education policies and practices
- formally record each stage in the checking of published information to allow the College to monitor that it has been completed
- ensure that the information published about programmes is better focused to meet the needs of part-time students.

## A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) at City College Manchester (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. The review applies to programmes the College delivers on behalf of the University of Manchester, the University of Bolton, Manchester Metropolitan University, the University at Salford and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Dr Michael Edmunds, Dr Mark Atlay and Mr Wayne Isaac (reviewers) and Mr Robert Hodgkinson (Coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in negotiation with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for a pilot study of an integrated quality and enhancement review*, published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted and other external bodies. 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 the higher education sector, 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 the new Foundation Degree (FD) awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the FD programmes delivered at the College.

4 City College Manchester, was formed in 1990 as a result of a restructuring of further education in the city of Manchester and the subsequent merger in 2001 with Shena Simon Sixth Form College. It is the third largest of the United Kingdom's general mixed economy further education colleges. It has four campuses in Manchester; two are in the south, one in the north and one in the city centre, and a site for international students. The College is a member of the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance of HE in FE Consortium of Colleges and the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance Lifelong Learning Network. The latter is a collection of further and higher education institutions within the Greater Manchester sub-region that has been established with the aim of widening participation among currently underrepresented groups.

5 In the academic year 2006-07, there are 3,410 full-time and 8,334 part-time student enrolments. Of these, 482 are directly funded higher education students, of which 464 are full-time and 18 are part-time. There are also 45 full-time students who are indirectly funded. The higher education provision is taught by 34 full-time equivalent staff, of which 11 are full-time fractional appointments and 45 are employed part-time. Recruitment patterns show that approximately 72 per cent of the higher education students are local.

6 The higher education provision comprises 19 programmes that fall within the scope of this review:

- FD Event Management\*
- FD New Media Design
- FD TV and Broadcast Media
- FD Music and New Media Management
- FD Community Governance
- FD Logistics Management\*
- HNC/D Business
- HNC/D Travel and Tourism Management
- HND Media Make Up (Design)
- HNC/D Graphic Design
- HND Jewellery and Applied Arts
- HND Multimedia Design
- HND Music Performance
- HNC/D Music Technology
- HNC Theatre Studies (fast track)
- BA (Hons) Acting Studies
- BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Studies
- BA (Hons) Stage Design and Management Studies
- PG Diploma Writing for the Stage

Note \* although validated and approved these programmes have not commenced.

### **Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies**

7 The team examined the formal partnership agreements and memoranda of association agreed with each of the validating universities. A variety of partnership agreements set out the College's responsibilities as defined by its five awarding bodies. The College has an active policy of pursuing local partners who have subject expertise in relevant academic areas. The University of Manchester validates the range of honours degrees and postgraduate certificates within the School of Theatre. Manchester Metropolitan University validates the FDs in New Media Design and TV and Broadcast Media, as part of a collaborative partnership arrangement within the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance Lifelong Learning Network. The University of Salford validates the FDs in Music and New Media Management and Event Management. The University of Bolton validates the FD in Logistics, while Edexcel validates the remaining range of Higher National Diplomas and Certificates (HND/C) across the whole of the provision.

## **Recent developments in higher education at the College**

8 The College has recently seen a number of changes in its structures. These have included the appointment of two new heads of programme areas and a new Head of the School of Theatre. The Academic Board's role and functions have been subsumed into the College's Quality Council, to reduce duplication. Overall, the higher education provision is significantly smaller than other elements of the College's portfolio, but is set to expand in accordance with new institutional priorities. All programmes aim to widen participation and provide progression opportunities locally, while niche provision offered in some areas attracts national, European and international applications.

9 The College witnessed a decline in enquiries and applications on some programmes in the five year period from 2000-01. This culminated in a significant shortfall of full-time equivalent student numbers against its HEFCE target in the academic year 2005-06. As a result of an internal higher education review in January 2005, a series of initiatives were introduced to support higher education recruitment. These were designed to strengthen and promote wider regional, national and European awareness of higher education programmes. In 2006-07, the decline in higher education recruitment has been reversed, with the College now successful in meeting its directly-funded HEFCE target.

10 As a result of the ongoing internal review of the School of Theatre, the stage design and management programme is to be transferred to the design and visual arts programme area. This is intended to refocus its core design content and to strengthen its recruitment appeal to young spatial designers wishing to specialise in aspects of stage design.

11 A new honours degree in musical theatre has over recruited in its inaugural year, 2006-07. The programme is housed in state-of-the-art accommodation in the newly acquired Universal Square Campus in the Northern Quarter of the city. In addition, the Postgraduate Certificate in Writing for the Stage has been reintroduced, following its suspension for one year in 2004-05 due to a lack of recruitment.

12 The College is also developing its existing undergraduate provision, with the addition of honours degree programmes. It is currently exploring the development of a one-year honours degree top up and master's degree in creative industries management, in partnership with the School of Business at the University of Bolton. In addition, there has been considerable engagement in regional developments by programme teams to facilitate growth, aligned to College strategies, national agendas and sector skills priorities. The College is merging with Manchester College of Arts and Technology with the intention of forming a single institution by September 2008. As part of its expansion, the College is rationalising its estate and will be relocating its city centre provision.

## **Students' written submission**

13 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. Following a briefing by college staff, the HE Development Manager agreed to fund a one-day residential meeting attended by eight students. The students prepared an independent written submission covering the Developmental engagement and Summative review. The submission was clearly written and brought together the views of students drawn from most of the higher education programmes. Students also attended the IQER preparatory meetings for the Developmental engagement and Summative review visits, and expressed their views in meetings with the review team.

## **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?**

14 Published QAA reports have found the College's higher education provision to be of high quality. The judgements of its most recent QAA Academic review in 2005 demonstrate that the College is able to maintain consistency of quality and standards. This is underpinned by the good working relationships that the College has established with its five awarding bodies, all of whom participated actively in the Summative review. The partnership with each awarding body is subject-based and generally aligns a College curriculum team with a particular awarding body. Thus staff and quality assurance processes, up to the level of the curriculum team, generally link with a single awarding body.

15 The College is organised into four programme areas, each managed by a head. These heads are not required to have prior experience of higher education on appointment to the role. Each programme area is divided into a number of teams, of up to 30 staff, managed by a team leader responsible for a curriculum area. Some staff work solely on higher education programmes while others work on a mixture of further education and higher education. Each programme has a programme leader. Some of the programmes and courses/units are the same as those offered at the partner universities, while others have been developed or adapted to meet local needs. There is evidence of substantial and productive partnership activity at all levels between the College and its awarding universities, including joint marking, which is used to ensure equivalency of standards between the College and the universities. In some cases, College staff join their university colleagues at 'away days' to draft programmes and assessments.

16 The College has comprehensively documented quality assurance procedures with a differentiated subset of these operating to cover higher education, including a specific 'HE Quality Cycle'. These procedures are supported and managed by the HE Development Manager and the College's Quality Unit. The key quality assurance process is the annual programme review and course review. The annual programme review is used by the College to demonstrate to the awarding bodies that it is ensuring the quality and standards of the provision offered under their authority. Programme teams complete the annual programme reviews and course reviews by analysing an appropriate range of data and producing an action plan for the forthcoming year. The annual programme reviews are well prepared, using good-quality data. The team was impressed with the staff understanding of, and commitment to, the annual programme review process and the extent to which the action plans are followed through. The awarding bodies expressed their satisfaction with the reports received from the College, as well as the response of the College to their comments.

17 The College operates a thorough and well understood internal verification process that considers both assessment briefs and marked assessments. The team found instances in external examiner reports where this had not been followed to the full, but is satisfied that the College has appropriate procedures in place for monitoring and rectifying such occurrences.

18 External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies and their reports are considered independently by the College. The College has a clearly documented procedure for this process and programme teams respond appropriately to all reports, either directly, or through the awarding universities.

19 Examination boards operate under the regulations of the awarding bodies and those of university partners are conducted appropriately. It is the Higher Education Development Manager who has mainly chaired the examination boards for Edexcel qualifications since being appointed in 2004. However, the team did find evidence of instances where these examination boards were chaired by award team leaders directly associated with the programmes. In at least one case, no one independent of the programme team sat on the board. The College's HE Handbook provides limited guidance on these issues, although it claims that the procedures used meet the precepts of the relevant section of the *Code of practice*. The team regards it as desirable that, for the Edexcel awards, systematic and documented procedures need to be implemented to ensure that all final assessment boards involve at least one College member who is independent of the academic unit responsible for the award. The team notes that, from September 2007, the College is expecting to replace all the HNC/D awards with FDs, which will be subject to the regulations of the respective university awarding bodies.

#### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

20 The impact of the Academic Infrastructure is clearly evident in procedures relating to the design, approval and delivery of higher education programmes. In particular, the documentation and the minutes of meetings relating to the design and development of FDs reflect significant engagement with the precepts of the *Code of practice*, and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* (October 2004), both published by QAA. Overall, the staff demonstrate a high level of awareness of the Academic Infrastructure. The report for the Developmental engagement identified that although the College works with the awarding bodies in incorporating the *Code of practice* into its programmes, it is not clear where changes to the Academic Infrastructure are systematically addressed in the College's quality structure. The report recommends that the College clarify the mechanisms by which it takes overall responsibility for reviewing and addressing the impact of changes in the Academic Infrastructure. In the Developmental engagement action plan, the College states that a review of the impact of changes to the Academic Infrastructure is to be embedded in the College's HE Quality Planning and Review Calendar for HE, 2006-07. Owing to the limited timescale between the Developmental engagement and Summative review visits, the team is unable to assess the impact of this response.

21 Engagement with the FHEQ is evident in the development of FDs and other new programmes. It is clearly embedded in the process of curriculum development and reflected in the related documentation.

#### **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?**

22 The College has two key and parallel committees, the Quality Council and the Curriculum Standards Committee, reporting through the Senior Management Team to the Governors. In practice, the Quality Council is the senior committee. This structure is a result of the recent consolidation and transfer of the functions of Academic Board to the Quality Council. The College's senior committees also include an HE Forum, the HE Managers

Group and the FD Development Group. The College Quality Unit plays an important role in supporting both deliberative and executive quality assurance functions. Each head of programme area chairs a board of study representing a cluster of programmes. These boards receive reports from the relevant examination boards and curriculum team meetings. Boards of study also receive and monitor actions from annual programme reviews and course reviews.

23 There is some disparity between the terms of reference of College higher education committees and the way they discharge their duties. This is demonstrated in committee agendas and papers. For example, the revived HE Forum is delegated quality assurance functions that it does not appear to fulfil, but which are discharged by other committees. There are also overlaps in the allocation of responsibilities between the College's executive and deliberative structures. The responsibility for the development, monitoring and review processes is contained within the terms of reference of several different committees. Given the expansion in programme provision anticipated, it is desirable that the effectiveness of the committee structure be improved by rationalising and clarifying the higher education executive and deliberative functions, and by a clearer differentiation of the College's higher education activities.

24 The College operates review processes through which it seeks to assure itself of the quality and standards of its provision. The Quality Council and Senior Management Team receive self-evaluation reviews from each area of provision, including one specifically from higher education. The higher education subject annual review is compiled by the HE Development Manager, drawing on all higher education annual programme reviews and course reviews, as well as an internal audit conducted by the Quality Unit. All subject annual reviews follow a standard format in which the analysis of standards, referred to as 'achievements', is considered in only two of a large number of questions. This limits the consideration of the provision as a whole, such as might be derived from an overall statistical analysis, an overview of external examiners reports, awarding body feedback, annual review of validation and periodic review activity, and an annual higher education internal verification report. Furthermore, the subject annual reviews do not systematically report on the implementation of the previous year's action plan, nor do they sufficiently integrate the outcomes of monitoring by the awarding bodies. Although the College review processes are working very well at the programme level, it is desirable that the higher education self-assessment report and associated process is reviewed to ensure it is more fit for purpose. This could include a strengthening of the analysis and consideration of standards overall.

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

25 The College and its validating partners have been active in providing staff development opportunities to support the maintenance of standards. The partner universities have collaborated in providing opportunities where staff from the College and University critically compare approaches to assessment and marking. The College HE Forum staff development events have also provided opportunities for staff engagement with the Academic Infrastructure, including the FHEQ.

**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?

26 The College delegates its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities in a similar manner to its responsibility for standards. From its meetings with senior managers, committee members and other staff, the team determined that staff are generally aware of the application of the College's robust quality processes. However, the multiple scrutiny and reporting mechanisms create a lack of clarity about which committees have overarching responsibility for key higher education quality processes.

27 The HE handbook is the definitive point of reference for the College's quality processes. The intention of the handbook is to provide 'an organic document, changing as the College amends its practices and improves its systems'. However, it was last revised in 2004 and the College's procedures have changed significantly since that time. At the time of the visit, the handbook was in the process of being updated for the period through to 2011, to coincide with the College's five-year plan. Given that College policies and processes, awarding body requirements and the Academic Infrastructure are continuously evolving, it is desirable that a common and current reference source is maintained to provide a definitive record of College policies, procedures and committee structures. Such a reference should be readily accessible to all higher education staff.

28 Suggestions for possible new courses can arise from a number of sources. They are considered by the Curriculum and Planning Committee chaired by the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) and by the HE Managers Group. It is the latter group that formally gives approval for the development of detailed course proposals. An appropriate awarding body is identified, usually building on the existing links developed by the programme area. Library and other resource issues are then considered and an internal validation panel is established. The panel includes cross-college representation and has a responsibility to ensure that the proposal is ready for submission and consideration by the awarding body. The College undertakes its own system of periodic review, which involves an external subject specialist. The reviews are timed to avoid overlap with reviews undertaken by the awarding body or any other external agency. The College mechanisms for course approval and review are well designed, robust and effectively implemented. The team judges these mechanisms to represent good practice.

29 In its self-evaluation for the Summative review, the College indicates that it assures itself and its awarding bodies that students receive appropriate learning opportunities through its systems and reporting mechanisms. These include key roles for academic advisers, the higher education institution quality departments, external examiners and link tutors. Through its discussions with College staff and the representatives of awarding bodies, and its scrutiny of documentation, the team is able to confirm that there are appropriate and effective mechanisms for liaising with, and reporting to, awarding bodies.

**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?**

30 Heads of programme areas chair the boards of study, which meet twice a year, to enable detailed discussion of the curricula. The boards involve tutors, students and representatives from support areas. Reports from the boards of study are provided to both the Curriculum Standards Committee and the Quality Council.

31 Each higher education programme is monitored three times a year by the programme team, to set targets and to identify actions for improvement. At the end of the year, each programme leader completes an annual programme review or course review. The reports cover quality enhancement issues and are produced to ensure they meet the specific requirements of the relevant awarding body. These processes incorporate information collated from an appropriate range of sources and each includes an action plan for the forthcoming year. The completed review is initially audited by the Quality Unit and HE Development Manager. The HE Development Manager compiles a higher education subject annual review, which then undergoes external peer review before being forwarded to the School Management Team for discussion. The action plan is disseminated to teams.

**What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

32 The College has engaged appropriately with the Academic Infrastructure in many areas of its work, as can be seen from paragraph 21 of this report. Academic staff confirm that their practice is enhanced through continuous engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. In this, the HE Forum provides opportunities to attend events targeted at improving their understanding of its elements and intended effects. The HE learning, teaching and assessment strategy provides a common framework for all learning and teaching and is developed with direct reference to the Academic Infrastructure. The impact of the Academic Infrastructure is clearly evident in programme specifications and assignment briefs, which have a direct bearing on teaching and learning. Student admission and support arrangements reflect the precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*.

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

33 The College's HE learning, teaching and assessment strategy underpins the quality of teaching and learning across all higher education programmes. The guidance in the strategy is welcomed by staff, who confirm its value in managing, supporting and assuring the quality of the intended learning outcomes offered to students. At the time of the visit the College was in the process of revising the strategy to reflect the new five-year plan.

34 The learning, teaching and assessment strategy aims to ensure that students are prepared for their future development and able to contribute effectively in the workplace. Opportunities for students to achieve their programme learning outcomes are provided through a sound technical underpinning, facilitating the development of valuable, industry-relevant competencies and knowledge. The College's success in providing vocationally relevant learning experiences for students is evident in the outcomes of QAA subject and academic reviews, and confirmed in the team's dialogue with College staff, students and employers. Many of the staff teaching on higher education programmes have current or recent professional, commercial or industrial experience, which offers the clear potential to enrich the students' learning experience.

35 A particular strength of the College's provision is its relationship with employers, which ensures that curricula are relevant, enhances the learning experience of students and prepares them for future careers. Each programme area has close links with employers either through formal employer liaison meetings, or in other ways suited to the subject context and employer needs. This close relationship is enhanced further by the professional experience and the links of the teaching staff. Employers are consulted about programme proposals. They also provide live briefs and work placements and are involved in presentations to students as well as providing feedback to the College on changes in industry practice. The team judges that the College's use of employers, and the professional links of teaching staff to enrich the students' learning experience, is evidence of good practice.

36 The College ensures that its curricula are undergoing continuous review and enhancement through its annual monitoring processes, its engagement with employers and awarding bodies. An important element is the use made of student feedback. Campus-based higher education student representative meetings provide students with a forum to raise and discuss issues about the college environment. The individual and group tutorial processes provide opportunities for a regular exchange of views between staff and students on a wide range of issues. Student surveys, sometimes carried out by independent external bodies, provide feedback on the quality of the learning experience. Module/unit feedback systems allow students to comment about the delivery of each aspect of their study. Students are invited to attend course meetings with staff across the programmes and are involved in the process of periodic review. Students confirmed that they have a number of avenues through which their views can be communicated, and that there was an appropriate and timely response to issues that they raised. The team considers that the College has effective systems for listening and responding to the views of students.

37 The College operates a process of peer review of higher education teaching in which colleagues are paired for the observation of classes. This is an enhancement process and staff commented positively on its value. The Developmental engagement report noted that it was less clear how good practice and areas requiring improvement were addressed and disseminated across the higher education provision. In response, the College is initiating monthly meetings of the HE Forum at which the identification and sharing of good practice is to be discussed. The College is encouraged to monitor closely the impact of its actions to improve the dissemination of good practice to all course and programme teams, including its part-time staff.

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

38 Students receive a well-structured induction, which prepares them for their studies. Formally planned individual and group tutorials, in addition to informal access to teaching staff, provide effective mechanisms for personal and academic student mentoring. In meetings with the team, students reported that support is 'exceptional' on all courses. Students with learning difficulties are made aware of the support that is available. The team found ample evidence to confirm that the provision of tutorial support is an area of good practice within the College.

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

39 New staff receive induction into the College and are supported by their team leaders. This process is augmented by the mentoring of new staff by more experienced colleagues and team teaching in many areas. Annual appraisal by the team leader enables the

identification of staff development needs. The College encourages staff to engage in continuous professional development, research and scholarly activity. Annually produced and evaluated team training plans are drawn up to support individual staff development, and link to curricular action plans and the College's strategic plan. The Developmental engagement report notes that despite the variety of continuous professional development activity, scholarship and subject-based research, the processes and procedures for gaining approval and finance are not systematic. Nor are they clearly understood by managers and staff. In addition, resources to support the attainment by higher education staff of higher-level qualifications are limited. In its action plan, the College proposes the development of a structured, transparent and effective policy and process for higher education continuous professional development. The team considers that the proposals for identifying and meeting the staff development needs of higher education staff have the potential to be effective in ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the student learning experience.

### **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?**

40 There are clear procedures for considering learning resources during the development and validation of programmes. All new programmes undergo a dual process of internal and external approval, with staffing, library and other resource issues being considered. The arrangements ensure that the requirements of the awarding body are addressed. College management structures and quality monitoring systems are in place and can be shown to address and resolve action points. These procedures, which include annual programme and course review, provide the means by which learning resources can be routinely monitored. With the expansion of higher education provision, the College recognises the need for the continued monitoring of its infrastructure and resources, both human and physical.

41 There is significant evidence to suggest that the procedures for ensuring the sufficiency and accessibility of learning resources are effective. The teaching staff for higher education, 34 full-time equivalent, are sufficient in number with appropriate qualifications and experience for the provision. The engagement of many fractional and part-time staff allows the College to ensure that staff teams have current professional contacts and experience.

42 The College has made considerable investment in physical learning resources to support the students' attainment of the learning outcomes for their programmes. There are learning centres at all campuses and access to the virtual learning environment. A notable feature of the provision is the range of industry standard specialist facilities, notably in dance, drama, design and music. These include specialist Apple Macintosh studios, a suite of recording studios, a theatre and professional dance and rehearsal facilities. The most recent QAA Academic review reports, from 2005, confirm the high quality of the specialist facilities for art and design, dance, drama and performance.

**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**

43 The College recognises the need to monitor the accuracy of public information that it is responsible for publishing. This includes the higher education prospectus, internet-based programme-related information, student application and induction material, programme handbooks and related documentation, programme specifications and the HE handbook.

**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?**

44 College procedures and practices ensure that paper-based and internet-based documentation are reviewed and checked for accuracy before their publication. The College cooperates with its awarding body higher education partners to ensure they are able to monitor and control the programme information the College wishes to publish. Some of the partnership agreements refer explicitly to the approval of publicity material relating to the university validated provision and engage with the precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distance learning (including e-learning)*. The team confirms the findings of the Developmental engagement that where relevant, published material is referred by the College to its partner universities through different but well-understood processes. In turn, the College advises its awarding body partners as to the information they publish concerning the College. In the main, awarding bodies provide a range of templates, policies and guidance notes. Programme-specific information originates from the programme teams. Much of the course material is now in electronic form and readily available through the internet.

45 As indicated in the Developmental engagement report, the College marketing department is responsible for approving all publicity material and internet content before publication through a procedure that is well understood by staff. The process benefits from the College having its own design unit, which works closely with the College marketing department. College information, contained in its strategies, policies and guidance notes, is published following a process of consultation. Templates help to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the publishing of information and that it conforms to a house style. The Developmental engagement report refers to the fact that procedures for checking the accuracy and currency of information, although understood by staff, were not formally documented by College staff. The team considers that it would be desirable to formally record each stage in the checking of published information to allow the College to better monitor that it has been completed.

46 The team is able to confirm that pre-course information is useful, accurate and readily accessible. A majority of the students use the internet to find out about the course before applying through UCAS. They comment positively on this experience, feeling that the pre-course information helped them to make the right course choice. While many of the higher education programmes are being structured to incorporate opportunities for part-time study, most information is presently geared to the needs of full-time students. It is desirable that the information published about programmes is better focused to meet the needs of part-time students. All students undertake an induction process at which information concerning the College, the validating university and their programme and courses is provided. Most students found this information helpful and accurate.

47 All students receive copies of a student handbook at induction. Programme teams update student handbooks and other student documentation annually to ensure they remain accurate. A recent QAA Academic review report for the College, covering art and design and dance, drama and performance arts, identifies the programme handbooks as containing clear assessment information, engendering in students confidence in the assessment process. Generally, the students are very clear about the information contained in assessment schedules, assignments and the grading criteria. The team endorses the conclusion of the Developmental engagement report that documentation relating to assessment is generally clear, accurate and up to date. Much of this information is replicated in the virtual learning environment, which is widely valued by students.

48 The College acknowledges that there have been some inaccuracies in the past in the content of its website. These have now been eliminated by the introduction of its new bespoke website. The Arden School of Theatre currently has its own website, which is also managed by the College marketing department and addresses the particular needs of prospective and existing students for programme information. In general, students confirm the usefulness of the information on assessments to be found in the College virtual learning environment. During 2007, the College changed its virtual learning environment software, and has significantly upgraded its content. While the College recognises the need for further staff development, some tutors are making very good use of the virtual learning environment and other digital media to encourage learner interaction and to display examples of formative assessment. The team judges this to be good practice and it is evident in the music programmes. On many of the media courses significant parts of the programme have been converted to a digitally based format. The students confirm that the college website and prospectuses provides useful and accurate information. The college website and that of the Arden School of Theatre are easy to navigate, helpful, informative and accurate. There are also clear hyperlinks to other relevant sites including those for the awarding bodies.

**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**

49 The Developmental engagement in assessment was completed in April 2007 following a review visit on 22 and 23 February 2007. Four lines of enquiry were agreed with the College and were as follows:

- Does the way in which assessment decisions are reached, recorded and fed back to students, promote learning and facilitate improvement? Is this information communicated in a timely manner?
- How is the College assured that its assessment strategies and programme design reflects the appropriate professional practice and academic standards indicated by the intended learning outcomes?
- Does the assessment framework, including the tutorial process and personal development planning, facilitate effective support of the student learning opportunities?
- Can reliance be placed upon the accuracy, consistency and currency of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about its assessment practices and procedures?

50 In the course of the Developmental engagement, the team identified much good practice that it judged was worthy of wider dissemination. This included the effective and productive relationships with awarding partner universities and the design and discharge of the annual programme review process. The engagement found that there were appropriate and robust mechanisms for course approval and review. In addition, student learning was

enhanced by the vocationally relevant opportunities provided by employers and academic staff and the procedures and practices for providing academic and personal support. The team also identified the effective use made of the virtual learning environment and other digital media to inform student learning, which was judged to be an example of good practice.

51 The Developmental engagement also identified a number of recommendations judged as desirable. These related to the need to establish clear and systematic procedures for the identification and sharing of good practice and to clarify the mechanisms for reviewing and addressing the impact of changes in the Academic Infrastructure. The Developmental engagement also encouraged the development of a clearer policy for staff seeking continuous professional development, scholarship and subject-based research opportunities and funding. In addition, the process for the approval of the HE Handbook was seen as needing clarification.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

52 As of May 2007 the higher education in further education provision comprises 20 programmes, six of which are validated as FDs and fall within the scope of this review:

- FD Community Governance\*
- FD Event Management
- FD Logistics Management\*
- FD New Media Design
- FD TV and Broadcast Media
- FD Music and New Media Management.

Note \* although validated and approved, these programmes have not commenced.

53 The College is committed to expanding its FD provision by another 10 programmes for September 2007. This involves replacing a number of HNDs and reflects plans to expand the higher education numbers significantly over the next year. In particular, the Edexcel HNDs in Music and Media Make Up are currently undergoing new programme approval as FDs. The Music Performance and Music Technology HND/Cs are also being replaced by a new FD in Popular Music and Production. The introduction of an FD in Media Make Up, as one of only six in the UK, will continue to provide opportunities in this highly specialist area. New FDs in Technical Event Management and Operations, Theatre Practice, Fashion/Retail Wardrobe Management, Retail Management and Green Space Management (Ecology) are also expected to start in September 2007. In line with its five-year HE Strategic Development Plan, the College has made a further bid for the development of FDs in Business and Marketing, Photography and Animation. Building on their experience of developing and running one of the first prototype FDs, the design and visual arts team have been actively engaged in regional and national FD developments. This has included involvement with the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance Digital Media FD and the development of the FD in TV and Broadcast Media in 2006.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

54 The Summative review team identified a number of features of good practice and agreed some recommendations 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. It based these on discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by City College Manchester and its awarding bodies, the University of Manchester, the University of Bolton, Manchester Metropolitan University, Salford University and Edexcel.

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

- the effective relationships with local universities, which have led to substantial and productive partnership activities at all levels and for a wide variety of purposes (paragraph 15, 29)
- the design of the Annual Programme Review process and the commitment of staff to making it an effective mechanism for assuring academic standards and quality (paragraphs 16, 31)
- the appropriate and robust mechanisms in place for course approval and review (paragraph 28)
- the engagement of employers and academic staff with professional links in providing students with vocationally relevant learning opportunities (paragraphs 34, 35)
- the procedures and practices for providing academic and personal support to students (paragraph 38)
- the effective use made by some academic staff of the virtual learning environment and other digital media to inform student learning (paragraph 48).

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

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

- to ensure that, for the Edexcel awards, systematic and documented procedures are implemented to ensure that all final assessment boards involve at least one College member who is independent of the academic unit responsible for the award (paragraph 19)
- to rationalise and clarify its executive and deliberative structures in regard to the College's higher education provision, including ensuring that there is an appropriate mechanism to fully consider higher education issues (paragraphs 23, 26)
- to review the appropriateness of the higher education self-assessment report format and process to ensure that it is fit for purpose (paragraph 24)
- to maintain a common reference source to provide a definitive record of the College's current higher education policies and practices (paragraph 27)

- to formally record each stage in the checking of published information to allow the College to monitor that it has been completed (paragraph 45)
- to ensure that the information published about programmes is better focused to meet the needs of part-time students (paragraph 46).

57 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes 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.

58 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that 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.

59 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.

City College Manchester 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>In the course of the Summative review the review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the college:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective relationships with local universities that have led to substantial and productive partnership activities at all levels and for a wide variety of purposes (paragraph 15; 29)</li> </ul>	<p>Awarding Body Forum agreed. College to meet with University partners during 2007 - 08 academic year.</p>	<p>November 07 May 08</p>	<p>Higher Education Development Manager</p>	<p>Continued appraisal of Memorandum of Agreement and strengthening of processes re- Published Information</p>	<p>HE Managers Group CSC QC Vice Principal - Quality SMT</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings considered at CCM Higher Education Managers Group. Practice shared at HE Forum. Wider discussion at Curriculum Standards Committee &amp; Quality Council. Appropriate actions taken to SMT</p>

City College Manchester 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"> <li>the design of the annual programme review process and the commitment of staff to making it an effective mechanism for assuring academic standards and quality (paragraphs 16; 31)</li> </ul>	<p>Review of APR process undertaken by HE Development Manager as part of the HE Self Assessment Review.</p> <p>Review at Boards of Studies</p>	<p>September 07</p> <p>Nov. 07</p> <p>March 08</p> <p>June 08</p>	<p>HoPA</p> <p>HE Quality Assurance Working Group</p> <p>Quality Unit</p>	<p>Continued improvement in self evaluation process</p>	<p>HE Development Manager</p> <p>Quality Manager</p> <p>VP Quality</p>	<p>Review of APR process undertaken by HE Development Manager as part of the HE Self Assessment Review.</p> <p>Review at Boards of Studies</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the appropriate and robust mechanisms in place for course approval and review (paragraph 28)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to monitor good practice of long course validation process.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>HE Dev Manager</p> <p>Quality Manager</p> <p>VP Teaching &amp; Learning</p>	<p>Continued good practice</p>	<p>VP - Quality</p>	<p>Quality Manager</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the engagement of employers and academic staff with professional links in providing students with vocationally relevant learning opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Appraisal to determine CPD needs.</p>	<p>July 2007</p>	<p>HoPAs</p> <p>Team Leaders &amp; HE Staff</p> <p>HE Development</p>	<p>Development &amp; implementation of good practice into all curriculum areas</p>	<p>HoPAS</p> <p>TLs</p> <p>HE Development Manager</p>	<p>Evaluation of staff development needs</p>	

City College Manchester action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
(paragraphs 34; 35)	CPD reviewed by HE Development Manager & HRD Manager	Nov 07	Manager HR Manager	Continued professional currency of programmes Update of staff skills & knowledge Achievement of higher qualifications Continued access for students to high quality work related learning opportunities	HRD Manager Vice Principal Quality Quality Manager	Appraisal of Industry & Business Development by HoPAS TLs HE Development Manager Business Development Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the procedures and practices for providing academic and personal support to students (paragraph 38)</li> </ul>	Pre Programme Initial Assessment prior to Induction Learning needs identified through	Aug/Sept 2007	TLs HE Student Support & Guidance Team Learning Support Team	Student Achievement / Retention	HE Development Manager Student Services Manager HE Student Guidance Team	Reviewed at Team meetings Boards of Study Nov.07 March 08 June 08

City College Manchester action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	consultation with LST Allocation of Learning Support funding by HE Development Manager through HEFCE WP Funding stream	Sept/Oct 07			HoPAs Quality Manager TLs	Reviewed at Team meetings Boards of Study Nov.07 March 08 June 08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective use made by some academic staff of the virtual learning environment and other digital media to inform student learning (paragraph 48).</li> </ul>	Build into HE Forum Good Practice sharing events schedule	Jan - June 08	All HE Teams Learning Services Manager  HE Development Manager	Development & implementation of good practice into all curriculum areas	HE Development Manager Learning Services Manager HoPAs Quality Manager TLs	

City College Manchester action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that for Edexcel awards, systematic and documented procedures are implemented to ensure that all final assessment boards involve at least one College member who is independent of the academic unit responsible for the award (paragraph 19).</li> </ul>	<p>HE Managers Group meeting</p> <p>HE Manager to review structure and report to SMT</p>	<p>18 July 07</p> <p>Sept 07</p>	<p>HE Managers Group</p> <p>HE Manager Quality Manager</p> <p>Vice Principal Teaching &amp; Learning</p>	<p>Closer focus on HE issues within college committee structure</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>HE Managers Group</p> <p>Curriculum Standards Committee</p> <p>Quality Council</p> <p>SMT</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rationalise and clarify its executive and deliberative structures in regard to the College's HE provision, including ensuring that there is an appropriate mechanism for fully considering HE issues. (paragraphs 24; 27)</li> </ul>	<p>Address the inconsistencies and lack of clarity to ensure a clear focus on HE</p>	<p>18 July</p> <p>Sept 07</p>	<p>HE Managers Group</p> <p>HE Manager to review structure and report to SMT</p>	<p>Closer focus on HE issues within college committee structure</p>	<p>HE Managers Group</p> <p>Curriculum Standards Committee</p> <p>Quality Council</p> <p>SMT</p>	<p>SMT</p>

City College Manchester action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007							
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the appropriateness of the HE Self Assessment Report format and process to ensure it is more fit for purpose (paragraph 24)</li> </ul>	<p>Review of process and reporting structure in line with QAA guidance</p>	<p>Oct 07</p>	<p>HE Manager Quality Manager VP - Quality</p>	<p>Refined process</p>	<p>VP - Quality</p>	<p>Quality Unit &amp; Manager HE Development Manager</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain a common reference source for the College's current HE policies and practices (paragraph 27)</li> </ul>	<p>Review all HE Quality &amp; Standards documentation and map against QAA Code of Practice</p>	<p>Oct 07- July 08</p>	<p>HE Development Manager Quality Unit</p>	<p>Annual review of documentation against QAA Code of Practice format</p>	<p>HE Development manager Quality Manager VP - Quality HEI</p>	<p>Team Leaders HE Development Manager HE Advanced Teaching Practitioner</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formally record each stage in the checking of published information to allow the College to monitor that it has been completed (paragraph 45)</li> </ul>	<p>College to meet with Awarding Bodies to agree timetable of events and actions for the monitoring of CCM published information</p>	<p>Oct 07</p>	<p>Head of Marketing Admissions Manager HE Development manager Awarding Body Representative Collaborative Partnerships</p>	<p>Published material approved by HEI &amp; College</p>	<p>Head of Marketing CCM HE Development Manager</p>	<p>Collaborative Partnerships Director To liaise with HE Development Manager to monitor process</p>	

City College Manchester action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the information published about programmes is better focused to meet the needs of part-time students (paragraph 46).</li> </ul>	HE Development Manager to ensure information is focussed on PT provision requirements alongside fulltime	Oct 07	HE Development Manager Head of Student Support and Guidance	Improved documentation for PT students	VP - Quality	HE Managers Group Quality Manager

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