Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Hartlepool College

March 2012

SR 053/12

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* (FHEQ) which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*)
- 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 Hartlepool College carried out in March 2012

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 agreement, 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 agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice** for dissemination:

- the Higher Education Quality Enhancement process which focuses on specific aspects of delivery and drives forward enhancements in learning opportunities
- the academic support for learning, which is especially well organised and highly accessible, and is particularly appropriate to meet the needs of part-time students
- the extensive links with industry, employers and public services to maintain and enhance the vocational currency of learning opportunities across all programmes
- the College's high level of commitment to staff development exemplified in its dedicated Higher Education Scholarly Activity programme
- the virtual learning environment/internet portal is generally well developed, in particular the use of high quality interactive materials on the FdA Working with Children and Young People.

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 that the College's Curriculum Planning and Validation policy makes reference to the Academic Infrastructure and other higher education reference points
- explore the possibility of students having access to some aspects of external examiners' reports
- refine the Professional Practice Observation Scheme to make it more robust for the context of higher education
- provide students, during the induction process, with more information about how they can access the University's website.

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 Hartlepool 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 Teesside University (the University) and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Ms AnnMarie Colbert, Mr Bob Millington, Mr Brian Whitehead (reviewers), and Mr Philip Markey (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 its awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, and reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment and the second Developmental engagement in learning and teaching. A summary of findings from both Developmental engagements 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,* subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4   Hartlepool College has been in existence in different guises since 1897 when the Municipal Technological College was formed. It opened new premises in 1969 and recently moved to a new building adjacent to these premises. It provides mainly vocational programmes, has established strong links with employers, and offers skills and apprenticeship programmes to some 3,347 further education students. In higher education, programmes are work-related and employer-focused through Foundation Degrees and Initial Teacher Training programmes. Similarly, Higher Nationals in building, engineering and public services have explicit links with industry and services. There are 600 part-time higher education students; a total of 295.82 full-time equivalent students.

5   The College's recent reorganisation involved the move from five large divisions to the creation of 10 smaller schools. Higher education programmes are offered in eight of these schools. There is an Assistant Principal for Higher Education, supported by the Director of Adult and Higher Education and three administrators.

6   The following programmes are offered by the College with full-time equivalent students in brackets.

Teesside University

- BA Education Studies (level 5) (9)
- BA (Hons) Education Studies (level 6) (14)
- Certificate in Education: Teaching in Lifelong Learning (4)
- Certificate in Education: Teaching in Lifelong Learning (8.5)
- FdA Design for the Creative Industries (9)
- FdA Early Years (Sector Endorsed) (9)

- FdA Early Years (Sector Endorsed) (14)
- FdA Working with Young People (12)
- FdA Working with Young People (16)
- FdEng Building Services Engineering (6)
- FdEng Building Services Engineering (4)
- FdEng Process Engineering (2)
- FdSc Outdoor Education (6)
- FdSc Sports Coaching and Exercise (16)
- HNC Aeronautical Engineering (3)
- HNC Building Services (6)
- HNC Building Studies (3)
- HNC Building Studies (5.5)
- HNC Electrical and Electronic Engineering (10.5)
- HNC Electrical and Electronic Engineering (9)
- HNC Fabrication and Welding (8)
- HNC Fabrication and Welding (3)
- HNC Instrumentation Engineering (3)
- HNC Instrumentation Engineering (1)
- HNC Mechanical (10.5)
- HNC Mechanical (9)
- HND Fabrication and Welding (1)
- HND Public Services (9)
- HND Public Services (8)
- PGCE: Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (7.5)
- PGCE: Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (5.5)
- UCPD Information Technology (4.59)
- Certificate of Credit School of Science and Eng (6.46)

Certificate of Credits

- UCCE Preparation for Higher Education (21.59)
- UCCE Arts and Media Subjects (4.93)

Association of Accounting Technicians

- NVQ Accounting AAT (3)

Edexcel

- Edexcel Advanced Professional Certificate in Management (level 7) (4.5)
- Edexcel Award Leadership and Management (level 5) (2.75)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   The majority of programmes offered by the College are with Teesside University. The College, along with four other regional colleges, is part of the Higher Education Business Partnership with the University. The University provides support on key operational matters and planning related to quality assurance. This is formalised through the Operations Manual. The College offers Edexcel Higher National qualifications under licence from the University. It also offers programmes which are quality assured by the College's own processes. These are the Edexcel management studies programmes and a programme from the Association of Accounting Technicians.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   The College moved into new premises in August 2011. This enabled the College to enhance the facilities for higher education students, through, for example, a dedicated higher education centre, specialist resources for sport, and design and engineering programmes. Teesside University contributed to the cost of this development. All the College's programmes are now with Teesside University. In January 2010, following the appointment of a new Principal, the College was reorganised into 10 schools.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. A submission was provided. It was based on a 21-item questionnaire completed by 85 students from a range of programmes. These were based on the National Student Survey. They were asked about learning and teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, programme organisations, and personal development. The responses were largely positive on all aspects of the provision. The team was able discuss the submission with the students during the visit. It was a useful document which helped to set the agenda for the meeting with students.

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?

10   For the higher education programmes at the College the main awarding body is Teesside University. There are programmes with Edexcel and the Association of Accounting Technicians. These are also part of the University's collaborative arrangements. The partnership with Teesside University is an effective and mature arrangement with clear documentation for the operation of the quality processes. The management of academic standards is guided by the University's Operations Manual which includes the Threshold Quality Standards and a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The College's policies and processes are closely aligned with these guides.

11   The Executive Committee and the College Leadership Team have ultimate responsibility for all strategic and operational matters. Reporting to these are three committees with more specific responsibilities; the Performance Review Committee focuses on data relating to enrolment, retention and student achievement, and the Curriculum Planning Committee identifies and considers new College programmes. The Curriculum Management Committee provides assurance that policies and procedures are consistently applied. All these have higher education agenda items for their meetings and reports. Specific to higher education is the Higher Education Working Group which includes representatives from all schools offering higher education. The internal management system of higher education is well organised, with clear lines of communication between the committees.

12   The management of higher education is the responsibility of an Assistant Principal, supported by the Director of Adult and Higher Education. Together they work closely with Heads of Schools and programme leaders, using channels such as the Higher Education Working Group and Performance Review Committee, to ensure that academic standards and the student learning experience are maintained. In August the College was restructured and the higher education programmes are now located in eight of the 10 schools. Responsibility for specific programmes is delegated to programme leaders. The responsibilities for the management of academic standards are carried out effectively by College staff.

13   There reporting system is clearly organised and timely. There are module and programme reports. Information from these and from external examiner reports, observations of teaching, student evaluations, and University monitoring visits contribute to the Annual Monitoring Report. This report is considered first by the Higher Education Working Group and then by the various quality committees, with a summary provided for the governing body. In all cases, action plans are identified and signed off when completed.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14   There are clear references to all the elements of the Academic Infrastructure in validation reports. The College's internal programme approval process ensures that references to the Academic Infrastructure are known to staff. The programme design, approval and monitoring processes are guided by appropriate areas of the *Code of practice*, such as *Section 10: Admissions to higher education*, *Section 6: Assessment of students*, and *Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. Foundation Degree programmes make use of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark.* In the meetings with staff the team received confident responses confirming how the Academic Infrastructure is embedded throughout the provision.

15   One aspect of the internal approval process which does not make explicit reference to the Academic Infrastructure is the College's Curriculum Planning and Validation Policy. This is mainly a policy for further education. The team considers it desirable that the Curriculum Planning and Validation Policy has new proposals to make reference to the Academic Infrastructure and other higher education reference points.

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?

16   The College has a mature and effective working relationship with Teesside University. There are a series of well established and effective monitoring and reporting systems in place. The College is meeting the requirements of the University in all aspects of the management of academic standards.

17   Assessment is managed in line with the requirements of the relevant schools at the University and is guided by the Operations Manual and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, which includes guidelines for first and second marking and the verification/moderation processes. Following the first Developmental engagement, the College has developed a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy aligned with the University's strategy.

18   The College works effectively with the University's programme leaders to ensure that external examiner reports are carefully considered. The reports are sent from the awarding body to programme leaders and to the Assistant Principal. Programme leaders are

responsible for producing the responses on behalf of the University. The College is involved in making these responses. The College is working with the University to make the reports available to students. The team considers that it is desirable that the College should explore the possibilities of making some aspects of the reports available to students.

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

19   The College has in place a series of clear policies and arrangements to support and develop the staff. Staff inductions are provided by Teesside University for staff new to higher education. The College's staff mentoring policy ensures support during their first year of teaching. Staff are required to take 30 hours of continuing professional development per year. The College is highly supportive of staff gaining higher awards or updating work experience. Support is given for attendance at the Teesside University's annual Higher Education in Further Education conference. Of particular note is the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Programme. This is a series of mandatory sessions for all staff who deliver higher education and focuses on higher education-specific topics such as assessment and teaching and learning. The team considers that the College's Higher Education Scholarly Activity Programme is good practice.

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?

20   The arrangements described for academic standards in paragraphs 10 to 12 are also effective for the management of and reporting on the quality of learning opportunities. Operational management of learning opportunities resides with programme leaders whose responsibilities include regular liaison with the University school programme coordinators regarding all aspects of programme delivery.

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

21   The Partnership's Operations Manual sets out the significant responsibilities that are delegated to the College by the University to support the quality of learning opportunities. These include student admissions, delivery of the validated programme, the support of staff development, and the provision of suitable physical resources. College policies for the provision are carefully aligned with the expectations and threshold quality standards set out in the University's Quality Handbook. Procedures on the College's Edexcel Management Studies programmes are in keeping with Edexcel's standard note, and the external examiner confirms that the College is fulfilling its obligations regarding the delivery of the learning opportunities.

22   Programme reports provide an opportunity for teams to evaluate the quality of learning provision, and are used to inform the production of its overarching higher education

monitoring report and quality improvement plan that is submitted both to the University and the College Executive Committee. Further opportunities to reflect on the provision and make enhancements stem from the annual quality monitoring visits conducted by the University schools for each programme area, which include discussion with students on their learning experience and the College's recently introduced Higher Education Quality Enhancement review. This is a highly effective feature of the provision that has helped to drive forward enhancements and greater consistency in the provision of assessment feedback to students. It has also enhanced the quality of programme handbooks. The team considers as good practice the work of the Higher Education Quality Enhancement review which focuses on specific aspects of delivery and drives forward enhancements in learning opportunities.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

23   As described in paragraphs 14 and 15 under Academic Standards, all new developments and reviews of existing provision are prepared and scrutinised with reference to the Academic Infrastructure and embedded in programme specifications at the time of approval. The University assumes full responsibility for ensuring that the provision aligns with the Academic Infrastructure and has recently provided a development session at the College. With reference to learning opportunities, staff demonstrated their familiarity with the sections of the *Code of practice* relating to their work. The Assistant Principal assumes responsibility for mapping the sections of the *Code of practice* with the learning opportunities provision for which the College is responsible, and has directed the focus of its current quality enhancement exercise on the virtual learning environment and work-based learning to ensure appropriate alignment with the relevant sections*.*

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

24   The College has a well developed Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy that is focused on the needs of individual learners in the context of an equal opportunities agenda. Following the Developmental engagement, a section of the policy has now been made specific to higher education to ensure that the strategic priorities of both the College and the University are fully met and to ensure that focus is placed on motivating independence in learning. The new strategy was introduced and discussed in a recent staff development event and arrangements are in place to ensure it is implemented effectively.

25   All staff teaching on the higher education programmes are well qualified, with over 80 per cent possessing a higher degree or other postgraduate qualification. All are expected to possess or to undertake a formal teaching qualification soon after they take up an appointment. Teaching quality is systematically monitored through the College's Professional Practice Observation Scheme with all teaching staff observed on an annual basis. Sessions are graded and moderated and the outcomes reported to the Organisation Development Committee to inform the self-assessment reporting cycle. The sessions also play an important developmental function as areas are identified for improvement in action plans that are carried forward to staff appraisals. The quality of observed sessions was generally high with over 64 per cent being judged good or better. In response to the Developmental engagement action plan, a pilot peer review for higher education has been introduced to increase opportunities for sharing good practice among participants. Staff participating in the pilot reported a very positive outcome. In the current universal observation arrangements only about 25 per cent of the higher education is sampled in a single year and there is no formal procedure in place to ensure that all programme areas are observed in the course of time. The College acknowledges that some changes need to be made to the current arrangements to ensure consistency in the implementation of the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy. The team considers that it is

desirable that changes are made to the Professional Practice Observation Scheme to make it more fully robust in the higher education context.

26   Student surveys confirm a high level of satisfaction with the teaching and learning on the programmes. In line with its Learner Engagement policy, the College gathers student opinion and feedback systematically and makes full use of it in annual monitoring to improve programme quality. The student voice is collected in a range of ways including end of module questionnaires, consultation with student representatives invited to meetings of programme boards, and through the National Student Survey. Actions being taken in response to student concerns are fed back to students.

27   The College makes effective use of its extensive links with local industry, employers and sector skills councils to assure and enhance the vocational currency of learning opportunities. The links have been significant in the development of Foundation Degrees. The review team confirms the good practice identified at the Developmental engagement: that the extensive links with industry, employers and public services to maintain and enhance the vocational currency of learning opportunities across all programmes is good practice.

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

28   The Unified Tutorial System provides a coherent framework for the support of students. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to ensure that students receive the academic, pastoral and welfare advice they need and also, if required, tutor support on their work-based learning. Effective features of the provision include the detailed induction procedures, which occur at both the College and the University, and the use of Independent Development Plans, which are drawn up and progressed through reviews with reference to the designated tutor.

29   Where the need for additional support is identified to address special needs and other personal, financial, or careers guidance concerns, students make use of specialist members of the Student Services team which retains the Matrix quality standard for delivering information, advice and guidance. An increasing amount of useful information is now being made available for students online through the College's and the University's intranets. Students commented that they needed to have more information on how to access the University's website. The team considers it desirable that students are provided with more information about how they can access the University's website during the induction period.

30   Students have a range of ways to access the support they need through direct contact with staff, phone calls, email, or the College's intranet messaging system. There is effective evaluation of support systems, making full reference to student feedback and performance data, integrated into the annual monitoring process at module, programme and institutional level. The team also noted the way the use of a standard proforma at key points in the support process, such as independent development planning, helps to ensure consistency in approach across the provision. The team considers that the academic support for learning to be well organised, highly accessible, and particularly appropriate to the needs of employed part-time students, and confirms the good practice identified in the Developmental engagement.

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

31   Staff development is outlined in paragraph 20. With reference to the management and enhancement of learning opportunities, the College has an effective staff development strategy. Arrangements include an induction programme for new staff, significant time remission to undertake scholarly activities and attend University partner conferences and training events, and annual appraisals to discuss future needs. It provides a full range of in-house training sessions to support teaching and learning, including the mandatory activities provided by the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Programme, which have recently included referencing skills and the virtual learning environment. Most staff attend the annual Higher Education in Further Education conference at the University and other designated partnership events. Together these provide very significant opportunities for developing skills specific to higher education, and disseminating good practice both internally and between colleges.

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?

32   The sufficiency of both human and physical resources is formally considered at the programme approval and review stages. The University routinely checks the qualifications and experience of staff at validations and during quality monitoring visits. Physical resources and equipment required for new and existing higher education programmes are incorporated within the College's integrated budgeting strategy in annual allocations to schools.

33   The College, with support from the University, has made a significant capital investment in the development of an impressive new campus to support its strategic aims. Both students and staff have benefited greatly from the high quality specialist facilities, workshops and teaching rooms, and these are well suited to the vocational character of the programmes. A key feature of the new campus is the dedicated Higher Education Centre, funded principally by the University. This brings together a wide range of print and electronic resources for students to support their achievement of programme outcomes and to facilitate independence in learning. Students have also full access to the print and electronic resources at the University library and can download a wide range of learning materials through its intranet. Resources staff liaise regularly with their University counterparts to ensure the currency of learning materials and their ready accessibility to students.

34   The College has prioritised the development of its virtual learning environment with a view to ensuring that an extensive range of course materials and electronic resources are available at times and places of the learner's choosing. An effective blended and electronic learning policy is in place which establishes threshold standards for electronic materials to be in place at programme level. An audit of online materials has recently been undertaken to review progress with the materials available through the College's intranet portal. The review team considers the College's virtual learning environment as good practice, which is generally well developed, especially the high quality interactive learning materials on the FdA Working with Children and Young People.

> **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?

35 Responsibility for the promotion of collaborative provision is shared between the College and University. The College is responsible for programme-specific marketing in liaison with the University Marketing and Student Recruitment Department. Responsibilities are clearly described in the Partnership's Operations Manual, as are the guidelines for the production of marketing material. The College executes its responsibility for programme-specific marketing and advertising predominantly through the welcoming website.

36 Information for potential applicants includes concise programme listings in the College publication 'A Guide to Part Time Programmes'. Detailed information sheets prepared by the College in liaison with the University are readily accessible from the College website and through links to the University website. Clear information about the range of advice, guidance, support and recreational facilities available to students is also available. Helpful information about finance is available in the Higher Education Bursary leaflet. The College also publishes two helpful Higher Education Made Easy guides, one designed for students and the other for employers. All documents provide concise information to support informed decision making by their readers.

37 Programme handbooks, handbooks to support workplace learning and module guides are produced by the College in partnership with the University. These are contextualised for the College. Handbooks and module guides are informative and students confirm their value. While handbook templates differ, content remains consistent; for example, the inclusion of clear information about assessment, the support available, award regulations, and referencing. Module guides are made available to students through the College's virtual learning environment. Programme specifications are made available through links with the University website. Students are also provided with the College-published learning resources guide during induction.

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?

38 Clear, well established formal processes are in place for the production of public information. The College has a clear marketing policy. Frequent, regular meetings of the College Marketing Working Group, including the Principal and Assistant Principal for Higher Education, drive marketing operation effectively. There is a clear iterative approval process to ensure accuracy of information.

39 Arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information on the website is the responsibility of the Marketing Manager. The responsibilities are carried out effectively. The College and University work well together to ensure information is accurate and complete. For example, following evidence of significant variation in published information identified in Teesside University Marketing group minutes, the College responded immediately to amend the information. The College works actively to enhance information and improvements have been made to the quality and consistency of programme handbooks. Adherence to the guidance about the content and design of handbooks is provided in the Teesside University Quality Handbook. The cooperation between the College and University provides an assurance that the processes for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information are effective.

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

C   Summary of findings from the Developmental engagements

Developmental engagement in assessment

40   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in March 2010. It covered all the five colleges in the Teesside Higher Education Business Partnership. It addressed the following lines of enquiry agreed with the colleges.

Line of enquiry 1: How do the colleges in the Partnership assure themselves that they are fulfilling the requirements of the awarding body in relation to assessment?

Line of enquiry 2: Are the requirements for feedback on assessed work being understood by all to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes?

Line of enquiry 3: How does each college in the Partnership ensure the accuracy and consistency of information it publishes on assessment?

41   The Developmental engagement identified a number of areas of good practice. These include the collaborative arrangements between the College and its awarding body for the assessment process and for the internal approval processes for new programmes prior to consideration by the University. The assessment exercises used in the induction period help students to understand plagiarism. Where similar programmes are delivered across the colleges, the robust and secure assessment processes ensure consistency and comparability. Staff development in assessment is strengthened by the use of 'Teaching Squares'. There is high quality written feedback on assignments in Foundation Degrees in Complementary Therapies and in Early Years and the HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families. The efficient system for returning assignments supports student learning. The assessment details in the programme specifications and information sheets are especially clear and demonstrate the close collaboration between the College and University. The work-based learning handbooks for students and employers are particularly detailed and comprehensive, especially the information on assessment.

42   The team made eight desirable recommendations, all of which have been implemented by the College. Employers and work-based mentors have access to external examiner reports, although the College is continuing to work with the University to make these available to students. There are details in handbooks on the agreed policy for the reading of drafts of summative assessments. Written feedback now refers more to learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are now checked to ensure that they are consistent across all documents. Word-processed feedback is provided on the feedback sheets and it was recommended that there should be more annotations on student assignments. Information on assessment and progression routes for Foundation Degrees is provided. Programme handbooks and module guides provide the information identified in the University's Threshold Quality Standards document.

Developmental engagement in learning and teaching

43   The second Developmental engagement took place in March 2011. It covered all the five colleges in the Teesside Higher Education Business Partnership. It addressed the following lines of enquiry agreed by the colleges.

Line of enquiry 1: How do the colleges ensure that the standards of teaching and learning on the higher education programmes meet the requirements of the awarding body?

Line of enquiry 2: How do the colleges ensure that higher education learners have access to a wide range of learning opportunities?

Line of enquiry 3: Do the colleges publish informative and accurate information about teaching and learning on their programmes?

44   This Development engagement identified four areas of good practice relating to the College. The Partnership's continuing professional development strategy and its provision of opportunities for higher education staff to gain postgraduate qualifications and/or industrial experience strengthens learning and teaching. The Partnership demonstrates the sharing of good practice in learning and teaching across many programmes, especially in the FdA Early Years programme. Academic support for learning is well organised and is particularly appropriate for the Partnership's part-time students. The College has extensive links with local industry and services which serve to enhance students' learning through the opportunity for work placements and enables the College to identify and develop skills for its students.

45   The five desirable recommendations included producing an explicit and documented learning and teaching strategy aligned with the awarding body's 'Priorities of the Strategy' in its Threshold Quality and Standards. The College should ensure that all staff are more familiar with the application of the Academic Infrastructure, especially regarding any updates. It should also ensure that all programmes build on existing practices and make fuller use of the virtual learning environment. Learning and teaching strategies should include reference to making the best use of the higher education centre to enhance the learning opportunities for students. More general information should be provided on learning and teaching in pre-enrolment documentation and, in on-programme documentation, make more reference to the range and types of learning and teaching in the College.

D   Foundation Degrees

46   The College offers 11 Foundation Degrees in areas such as building services, design for the creative industries, early years, working with young people, and sport and outdoor education. All programmes have been developed with contributions from employers, some of whom have released their staff to study for the awards.

47   The programmes recruit well, especially in sports coaching and exercise and working with young people. The College has effective processes for monitoring progression data for Foundation Degrees, with the majority of students achieving the award.

48   All the good practices and recommendations listed in paragraphs 49 to 52 apply to the Foundation Degrees.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- the Higher Education Quality Enhancement process which focuses on specific aspects of delivery and drives forward enhancements in learning opportunities (paragraph 22)
- the academic support for learning, which is especially well organised and highly accessible, and is particularly appropriate to meet the needs of part-time students (paragraph 30)
- the extensive links with industry, employers and public services to maintain and enhance the vocational currency of learning opportunities across all programmes (paragraph 27)
- the College's high level of commitment to staff development exemplified in its dedicated Higher Education Scholarly Activity programme (paragraph 19)
- the virtual learning environment/internet portal is generally well developed, in particular the use of high quality interactive materials on the FdA Working with Children and Young People (paragraph 34).

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

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

- ensure that the College's Curriculum Planning and Validation policy makes reference to the Academic Infrastructure and other higher education reference points (paragraph 15)
- explore the possibility of students having access to some aspects of external examiners' reports (paragraph 18)
- refine the Professional Practice Observation Scheme to make it more robust for the context of higher education (paragraph 25)
- provide students, during the induction process, with more information about how they can access the University's website (paragraph 29).

53   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

54   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

55   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

Hartlepool College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the Higher Education Quality Enhancement process which focuses on specific aspects of delivery and drives forward enhancements in learning opportunities (paragraph 22)	To further strengthen this quality process, widening its scope to encompass a broader spread of the College's higher education programmes	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education	Compliance with the Awarding Body's Threshold Quality Standards	Executive Committee College Leadership Committee Higher Education Working Group	The actions will be evaluated in the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report
• the academic support for learning, which is especially well organised and highly accessible, and is particularly appropriate to meet the needs of part-time students (paragraph 30)	Continue to ensure the robust and effective implementation of the College's approach to supporting part-time higher education students	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education Higher Education Programme Leaders	Student retention Student success Student feedback (National Student Survey)	Executive Committee College Leadership Committee Higher Education Working Group	The actions will be evaluated in the National Student Survey results and the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report

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• the extensive links with industry, employers and public services to maintain and enhance the vocational currency of learning opportunities across all programmes (paragraph 27)	Ensure new higher education programmes are designed to reflect links with industry Further expand and promote events (ie the Projects Presentation day) to strengthen the links between the College's higher education programmes and industry	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education Higher Education Programme Leaders Skills Coordinators	Student retention Student success Student recruitment	Executive Committee Higher Education Working Group	The actions will be evaluated in the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report
• the College's high level of commitment to staff development exemplified in its dedicated Higher Education Scholarly Activity programme (paragraph 19)	Continue to strengthen the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Programme, focusing on topics which enhance the delivery of the College's higher education programmes (ie research-informed teaching and use of the virtual learning environment)	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education	Staff participation rates Student feedback (National Student Survey)	Executive Committee College Leadership Committee Higher Education Working Group	The actions will be evaluated in the performance of the College's higher education observations as well as the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report
• the virtual learning environment/inter net portal is generally well developed, in particular the use of high quality interactive	Ensure all higher education programmes engage with the College's virtual learning environment	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education	Virtual learning environment activity rates increase on all higher education programmes Student feedback (National Student	Executive Committee College Leadership Committee Higher Education Working Group	The actions will be evaluated in the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
materials on the FdA Working with Children and Young People (paragraph 34)				Survey)		
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• ensure that the College's Curriculum Planning and Validation policy makes reference to the Academic Infrastructure and other higher education reference points (paragraph 15)	Update the Curriculum Planning and Validation policy to ensure references to the Academic Infrastructure are made for higher education programmes	September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education	Explicit references are made to the Academic Infrastructure in all future higher education submissions	Curriculum Planning Committee College Leadership Committee Executive Committee	These actions will be evaluated by the Curriculum Planning Committee
• explore the possibility of students having access to some aspects of external examiners' reports (paragraph 18)	Students access to external examiners' reports will be made explicit in programme handbooks and supported by either a hard copy or via a programme's virtual learning environment	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education Higher education Programme Leaders	Students fully aware of their rights to access previous external examiners' reports	This will form a part of the new Higher Education Quality Enhancement Review Executive Committee College Leadership	The actions will be evaluated in the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report

					Committee Higher Education Working Committee	
• refine the Professional Practice Observation Scheme to make it more robust for the context of higher education (paragraph 25)	Develop a strand of the College's Professional Practice Observation scheme, including the use of a peer-review component, related specifically to higher education delivery ensuring it is robust and has clear links to the College's and awarding body's strategic aims	September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education	An effective and robust higher education observation process	Executive Committee College Leadership Committee Higher Education Working Committee College Leadership Committee	The actions will be evaluated in the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report
• provide students, during the induction process, with more information about how they can access the University's website (paragraph 29)	All higher education programme handbooks to make explicit references to Teesside University's email accounts and the relevant activation protocols	From September 2012	Assistant Principal (Higher Education) Director for Adult & Higher Education Higher Education Programme Leaders	Students fully aware of their rights to access their email account at Teesside University	This will form a part of the new Higher Education Quality Enhancement Review Executive Committee College Leadership Committee	The actions will be evaluated in the College's Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report

					Higher Education Working Committee	