QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

May 2010

Highbury College

SR90/2010

Preface

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

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college

- an optional written submission by the student body

- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit

- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days

- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education

- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents

- reviewing the optional written submission from students

- asking questions of relevant staff

- talking to students about their experiences.

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications

- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*

- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects

- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study

- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential, advisable** and **desirable.** To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.

- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence, limited confidence** or **no confidence.** There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published.

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

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

Executive summary

The Summative review of Highbury College carried out in May 2010

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

- there is a high degree of staff understanding of quality assurance mechanisms and of the Academic Infrastructure and full participation at every level in the quality assurance process

- the interaction between the College and its awarding bodies is efficient and effective

- there is a productive relationship between the College and employers that enhances the quality of provision

- information technology is used imaginatively in computing to provide embedded audio and text-based feedback to students on their work

- the College provides a dedicated learner centre for its higher education students and an effective system to allow them self-managed access to specialist learning resources

- the College uses high-quality teaching and learning resources and manages them effectively

- mentor and employer handbooks that support work-based learning are of high quality.

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:

- harmonise the methods used for the reception of student work across departments, in line with College assessment regulations

- achieve greater consistency of terminology in the titling of handbooks, with reference to the use of the prefixes 'student', 'course' and 'programme' in College documentation

- develop a formal system for checking schemes of work, prior to the issue to students.

A Introduction and context

1   This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Highbury College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, the University of Portsmouth, the University of Surrey and the University of Westminster. The review was carried out by Ms Michelle Callanan, Mr Paul Monroe and Mr Clive Turner (reviewers) and Dr Richard Wheeler (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff and students, and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagements in assessment and in enhancing employability. A summary of findings from these 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 for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4   Highbury College is a large general further education college in Portsmouth, with a broad and predominantly vocational and applied academic curriculum. The provision is offered in five College centres, in over 45 community venues and on employers' premises, and through distance learning. The College's 11,700 students are enrolled on programmes that range from entry-level to higher education. The College currently has a total of 233 full-time equivalent HEFCE-funded higher education students, including 253 students on part-time programmes and 87 on full-time programmes. Students are enrolled on FD, HNC/HND and Certificate in Education programmes. There are also 511 students, 272.3 full-time equivalent, on Learning and Skills Council-funded higher education programmes at level 4 and above. Prescribed and non-prescribed higher education constitutes around 4.2 per cent of the College's full-time equivalent student numbers. They are taught by 35 staff, most of whom also teach on further education programmes.

5   The College has a long tradition of offering Edexcel directly funded HNC/D provision in business, construction, computing, engineering, hospitality, media, and travel and tourism. It has developed FDs in Construction and Surveying, and Construction Management, validated since 2002 by the University of Westminster. In 2006, the College became an Associated Institution of the University of Surrey and developed a further range of FDs and a Foundation Certificate, Certificate and Professional Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education, validated by the University of Surrey. The College also collaborates with

the University of Portsmouth in the teaching of hospitality management and hospitality management with tourism programmes, which are taught at the Highbury City of Portsmouth Centre. Construction surveying and construction management students are currently based at the Highbury Northarbour Centre. Other programmes are located at the newly redeveloped Highbury campus.

6   The College offers the following higher education programmes, funded by HEFCE, in conjunction with Edexcel and the Universities of Portsmouth, Surrey and Westminster:

Edexcel	**Students (full-time equivalent)**
Part-time	
HNC Business	25.7
HND (Top-up) Business	17.75
HNC Mechanical Manufacture	11.00
HNC Electrical Engineering	5.50
University of Portsmouth	
Full-time (Teaching only)	
BA (Hons) Hospitality Management	-
BA (Hons) Hospitality Management with Tourism	-
University of Surrey	
Full-time	
FdSc Computer Networking	36.00
FdA Hospitality Management	30.00
FdA Professional Media Production	13.00
FdA Travel & Tourism Management	20.00
Part-time	
Foundation Certificate in Further and Higher Education	25.00
Certificate in Further and Higher Education	15.00
Professional Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education	3.00
University of Westminster	
Part-time	
FdSc Construction and Surveying (Quantity Surveying)	23.35
FdSc Construction Management	8.34

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   The College is an Edexcel Approved Centre. The arrangements with Edexcel involve agreement to run programmes using standardised units. Edexcel monitors the quality of programmes and adherence to standards through external examiners. Support is provided through a BTEC Regional Quality Manager.

8   The partnership with the University of Portsmouth refers exclusively to the arrangements for the College's delivery of teaching, learning and assessment on the University's BA (Hons) in Hospitality Management and Hospitality Management with Tourism programmes. The University is responsible for finance, quality assurance and overall academic standards. The College is responsible for maintaining academic standards for the elements that it teaches, through adherence to the University's policies, procedures and regulations.

9   The agreement with the University of Surrey dates from 2006 when the College became an Associated Institution of the University and developed a range of full-time FDs. The partnership agreement sets out the responsibilities of each party for validated programmes leading to Surrey awards, including finance, academic standards and quality assurance matters. The University's Office of the Registrar is the interface between the College and the University for the assurance of the quality of programmes and the administration of the partnership. The University monitors quality assurance and academic standards through external examiners, an annual review report, boards of examiners and interim reviews. Each programme has a University moderator who ensures that programmes are run in accordance with University regulations and who provides a link to support the sharing of good practice.

10 The partnership agreement with the University of Westminster, which dates from 2002, refers to the directly funded FDs in Construction and Surveying, and Construction Management. The agreement sets out the responsibilities of the University and the College for course management, quality assurance and standards of the awards. A separate document contains details of financial arrangements, which are reviewed annually.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

11 The College has made significant investment in the redevelopment of its estate, including a recently completed £52 million new-build programme. The College now has industry-standard facilities and resources to support applied academic and work-related learning.

12 The College's partnership arrangements with the University of Surrey come to an end in 2011, and the College has established a partnership with the University of Sussex for the FDs in Media and Computing and the Certificate in Education programmes. It is planned to introduce some Sussex-validated programmes from 2010. The College is in the first stage of establishing a partnership with the University of Portsmouth for the validation of the FDs in Hospitality Management & Travel and Tourism Management.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

13 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. They submitted a self-evaluation for the Summative review, as they did for both Developmental engagements. The self-evaluation process was facilitated by the Head of Student Support Services and the Head of

Access and Higher Education, who met with students in programme groups and collated their views. A smaller group of students produced the final written submission. The Students' Union President was involved in the process. The reviewers met with student representatives during the review. The meeting was helpful in providing positive evidence of student support for their programmes and confirming the high quality of teaching and learning.

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 The College has effective and comprehensive arrangements for the management and development of higher education and the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards. Each of the four awarding bodies has their own quality assurance procedures and protocols. The College works within the terms and conditions of the respective partnership agreements and Memoranda of Collaboration. There are some minor differences between the requirements of the awarding body partners but these differences are not significant and the College is able to comply with each of the quality assurance systems in an effective and harmonised manner.

15 The responsibility for higher education programmes lies with the heads of department and the Head of Higher Education Development, who provides a cross-college approach to the provision. The Head of Higher Education Development reports to the Executive Director of the Collegiate College, who has the overall responsibility for higher education development, direction and strategy. The Executive Director of the Collegiate College is a member of the College leadership team and reports directly to the Principal and Chief Executive.

16 The management and delivery of academic standards is supported by the use of clear and effective documentation, including the revised Higher Education Strategy 2009-2012; Higher Education Moderation Procedure; Higher Education Assessment Regulations; Higher Education Teaching and Learning Strategy; Higher Education Work Related Learning Strategy; and the Higher Education Quality Manual. The latter is particularly effective, being both comprehensive and accessible. The team regards the Higher Education Quality Manual as an example of good practice.

17 The reporting arrangements are based on an effective committee structure, incorporating clear lines of responsibility and communication. Each programme has a programme board which exercises responsibility for monitoring quality and standards. The programme boards report to the Higher Education Board of Studies, which reports to the Academic Policy and Standards Committee, thence to the Academic Board, which reports directly to the Principal and Chief Executive. Effective use is made of programme quality reviews across the College, and the outcomes of the reviews are agenda items for the Higher Education Board of Studies. This constitutes an effective means of maintaining consistency in quality assurance processes and provides robust support for the management of the provision and the enhancement of the student experience. There is student

representation on both the programme boards and the Higher Education Board of Studies. This is valued by the students. The team identified good practice in the high degree of staff understanding of quality assurance mechanisms and full participation at every level in the quality assurance process.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

18 The staff are fully aware of the purpose and use of the Academic Infrastructure. This is built into the Edexcel Higher National programmes at the curriculum development stage, and the programme teams make effective use of the units to build a coherent programme of study within the allowed rules of combination. The FD and the bachelor's degree with honours programmes are designed in accordance with the principles of the Academic Infrastructure. Effective programme specifications are in place for all elements of the provision.

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?

19 The College has well-structured and robust systems in place to ensure that academic standards meet the requirements of the validating partners and awarding bodies. Quality enhancement and monitoring processes include those for programme validation, programme review, observation of higher education teaching and learning, monitoring of assessment practice and internal moderation, and annual self-assessment. The outcomes of the enhancement and monitoring processes are formally recorded and fed back to departments for consolidation and action. The agreements with the awarding bodies are aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. The College has mapped its arrangements with its partners against the *Code of practice*.

20 External examiner reports are scrutinised and reported on in annual programme quality reviews and a formal report is forwarded to the external examiner on the actions taken. The awarding body representatives confirmed that the College meets all their requirements relating to processing external examiner reports.

21 A variety of systems are in place for the handing-in of student work. The systems include direct submission to the lecturer, who then issues a receipt, as in engineering; submission directly to a padlocked box which is removed at the end of the submission period, as in business; and an electronic version of the same, as in computing. There is no one system in place that would indicate an overall College approach to the issue of security of student work. Some of the systems in use do not comply with the document 'Assessment Regulations for Higher Education programmes', which states that 'any work submitted by email or placed directly in a teacher's pigeon hole by students will not be accepted as having been handed in within these regulations'. In addition, the College will not accept responsibility for work submitted in these ways. The team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to harmonise the methods used for the reception of student work across departments, in line with College assessment regulations.

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

22   The College has a well-developed learning and development policy and a comprehensive human resources strategy. These underpin effective staff development policy and practice. Staff are encouraged to undertake research and scholarly activity. The proposed nature and subject of the research is discussed at annual performance reviews and must be agreed with the Development, Scholarship and Research Committee. The outcomes can include, for example, professional qualifications in education, projects with Sector Skills Councils and other colleges, and improving internal systems by researching other and better ways of working.

23   The College uses a variety of structures and mechanisms to promote staff development These include annual higher education planning days, a termly practitioners' forum, an annual teachers' conference, three learning and development days and a shared higher education drive on the College Intranet. A wide range of in-house training and development is available, together with external continuous professional development opportunities, secondment of staff, and work shadowing and work-related visits. Staff are encouraged to undertake work for awarding bodies, including external verifying and examining.

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

24   The College delegates the management of the quality of learning opportunities through the same structure and reporting arrangements described in paragraphs 14-16. The minutes of regular meetings of committees and groups provide evidence of effective management of the quality of learning opportunities, as well as of academic standards. While the Head of Higher Education Development was newly appointed at the time of the review, as a replacement for the higher education aspects of the post of Head of Access and Higher Education, the role description of the postholder indicates the potential of the post to enhance the quality of learning opportunities through collaboration with the Head of Quality Improvement and the Executive Director of the Collegiate College.

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

25   The arrangements described in paragraph 19 provide a secure framework for interaction between the College and the awarding bodies. The representatives of the latter confirmed that, in each case, the relationships between the College and its partners are effective and productive. The College reports annually to each of its partners on curriculum matters, including teaching and learning, assessment, student progression and awards data, and resource matters. There are regular meetings between College and university staff at all levels. The role of the link tutors on the University of Westminster programmes, the moderators on the University of Surrey programmes and the attendance of College

teaching staff at programme committees and review events of the University of Portsmouth ensure the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities, in line with awarding body requirements. The team concludes that the interaction between the College and the awarding bodies is efficient and effective, and an example of good practice.

26 There are effective systems in place for collecting student opinion. The committee structures and lines of reporting not only allow issues raised by students to be addressed but also for the College to respond to students. Student representation on certain key committees including Academic Board is an important contribution to this process, although the team noted that student attendance at some meetings is variable because of clashes with other commitments.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

27 As indicated in paragraph 18, staff are fully cognisant of the Academic Infrastructure, which informs their practice. Examples include the mapping of College processes and procedures to precepts of the *Code of practice* undertaken by the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum, reference to embedding of the *Code of practice* in a range of published College documents, and notes of the higher education planning days, which demonstrate the design and delivery of relevant staff development.

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

28 The policies and procedures, as set out in the Higher Education Quality Manual, incorporate the College's approach to the quality assurance of teaching and learning. The team found consistent evidence of the implementation of these throughout the documentation and in the capability of staff to describe and evaluate critically their programmes and practices. The team noted the progress made in response to the Developmental engagement reports with respect to student feedback and work-based assessment, which constitutes evidence of effective managerial action on these issues. The higher education planning days and the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum provide a channel for quality improvement and enhancement, based on strong commitment to reflective practice and continuous improvement.

29 The College implements a universal process of teaching observation to ensure the quality of classroom practice. This is reinforced by a commitment to supporting staff development in both pedagogy and subject-specific updating and training. For example, the College trains staff in the use and application of new and complex equipment and software, including the SMARTboard® and related technologies installed in the new buildings and the substantially renovated tower block.

30 The Developmental engagements recorded many aspects of good practice relating to the productive relationships between the College and employers, including examples of employer involvement in the planning and delivery of programmes, the assessment of students and effective placement learning. The team noted a continuing commitment to employer contacts and involvement and confirms this as an area of good practice which enhances the quality of teaching and learning.

31 Some of the methods used to improve the quality, accessibility and timeliness of feedback to learners on their assessed work are imaginative and stimulating. The link to verbal assessment has met with high student satisfaction in computing where it is being

piloted. It also has considerable potential for use with students with learning problems such as dyslexia. The team identified as an example of good practice the way in which information technology is being used imaginatively in computing to provide embedded audio and text-based feedback to students on their work.

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

32   There is an extensive range of student support services on all campuses, provided either by full-time staff on site or by peripatetic specialists. Tutorial support for students is resourced at typically one hour per week, with additional tutorials available on request, in an open door context. Student feedback confirms overall satisfaction with these arrangements.

33   Student recruitment and enrolment is well managed in line with the published entry criteria. The College has effective systems for diagnosing and providing support in literacy and numeracy for all new entrants, and pastoral support is provided through the tutorial arrangements, and more generally through Student Support Services. The College may wish to improve the provision of pre-programme information to its internal applicants.

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

34   The human resources strategy sets out an ambitious and challenging vision for the development of staff. Staff development days embrace college-wide needs in both further and higher education, including higher education-specific issues. Training in the use of equipment or software is resourced through central and/or departmental budgets. Employers assist in the provision of training and updating.

35   The College provides extensive opportunities to support staff in preparing to teach and in the production of appropriate materials for the new learning environments. The design and delivery of the certificate in education programme is focused on the enhancement of the professional practice of new staff. The awarding body partners require the College to demonstrate, at the point of validation of programmes, that the staff are appropriately qualified and experienced.

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?

36   The accommodation and facilities at the rebuilt Highbury campus are modern and up to date. All teaching rooms are equipped with SMARTboard® technology. The library on the Highbury Campus is adequately stocked, although further resourcing for higher-level media-related material is an identified need. The design and use of the new accommodation has been significantly and constructively influenced by practitioners and resource managers. The College provides a dedicated learner centre for its higher education students and an effective system to allow them self-managed access to specialist learning resources. This constitutes good practice.

37   The Highbury City of Portsmouth Centre was opened in 2007 and accommodates the higher education hospitality and travel and tourism provision. This facility includes modern kitchens and other hi-tech equipment. The Highbury Northarbour Centre is adequate for its current purpose and includes, as do all sites, an on-site library and student support resources.

38 Students on the FD Computer Networking have access to a substantial personal computer and Apple Mac network and the College provides a CISCO laboratory for networking development work. The FD Media Production programme benefits from a digital high-definition television and radio studio, and an extensive Apple Mac network. All students make use of up-to-date materials on MyCourse, the College virtual learning environment. The team identified good practice in the way in which the College uses high-quality teaching and learning resources and manages them effectively.

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?

39 Responsibility for publishing information about the College's HEFCE-funded higher education varies, depending upon the collaborative agreement. The College has full responsibility for publishing information relating to the Edexcel provision. Since the College makes only a limited teaching contribution to the University of Portsmouth programmes information comes direct from the University. For programmes that carry awards of the University of Surrey, the responsibility lies with the College for publishing information, including the use of the University's logo and name. For the University of Westminster programmes, the College produces information within clear University parameters, which is monitored by the University. In each case, the awarding body representatives confirmed the effectiveness of the arrangements.

40 Information for potential students includes a 'University Level programmes' prospectus, an international brochure, individual programme leaflets and general information about the College. These are all available in print and electronic forms. Students commented that pre-course material might provide more information on employability and professional progression routes. Business Development and Innovation is currently working with the programme teams to enhance the higher education information on the website, but this is still at a developmental stage.

41 Registered students receive comprehensive information, as follows: a student handbook; programme/course handbook, including programme specifications; the Students' Charter; employment handbook; mentoring handbook; schemes of work, including module/unit specifications; reading lists; and a week-by-week lecture programme and various policy and procedural documents. These are provided in both printed form and electronically, using MyCourse, the virtual learning environment. Students confirmed their awareness of all such documentation, and its accessibility. In addition, they commented favourably on MyCourse as an effective medium for College and programme information. The Developmental engagement in enhancing employability identified as good practice the high quality of mentor and employer handbooks that support vocational learning. The team confirms this view.

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?

42 Where the College is responsible for promotional material, there is a clear and robust system for ensuring the completeness, consistency, reliability and accuracy of the information deriving from programme teams, heads of department, the Head of Higher Education Development, Student Information, Advice & Guidance and Business Development and Innovation. There are effective checking systems in place throughout the reporting cycle. Business Development and Innovation is responsible for the final printing of promotional material, which is then placed on the College website. The awarding bodies receive a copy of the College's higher education prospectus annually and monitor the information in this, and on the UCAS and College websites.

43 The responsibility for the completeness, accuracy and consistency of programme information lies with the heads of department. The validation events include a check on the accuracy and completeness of the programme specifications and programme handbooks. A recent addition to the annual quality cycle is the auditing of higher education handbooks, undertaken by the Head of Quality Improvement. This audit makes use of the University of Surrey programme handbook template to check the consistency and completeness of University of Surrey and Edexcel programmes. For the University of Westminster programmes, the handbooks are audited by the Head of Quality Improvement against the guidance notes provided by the University. Clear action points arise from all of these audits. A check of programme handbooks confirmed that action had been taken by programme teams and that the information is accurate and comprehensive. However, there is some confusion in the terminology of 'student', 'course' and 'programme' handbooks and a standardised use of terms is needed across documentation. The team concludes that it would be desirable for the College to achieve greater consistency of terminology in the titling of handbooks, with reference to the use of the prefixes 'student', 'course' and 'programme' in College documentation.

44 The module/unit specifications are checked at validation events. The checking of the accuracy, completeness and currency of the annual schemes of work prior to them being issued to students is the responsibility of the heads of department but there is no formal system for checking these documents, and the checking is patchy across departments. The team recommends that it would be desirable for the College to develop a formal system for checking schemes of work, prior to the issue to students. This enhancement to current practice would strengthen still further the clear and robust systems in place for the checking and management of public information.

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.

C1 Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

45 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in June 2008. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College: the timeliness and quality of feedback to students on formative and summative assessment; the balance between the assessment of students'

theoretical understanding and the assessment of their vocational and practical and work-related skills; does marking discriminate sufficiently between strong and weaker candidates? how well are grade criteria used for assessment communicated to all those involve?

46   The Developmental engagement team identified an extensive range of good practice in the College's management of student assessment. This included a clear assessment strategy, strong and consistent tutorial support for formative assessment, and the timeliness and good quality of verbal feedback. An appropriate balance of theoretical, practical and work-related assessment, including examples of the involvement of employers in the assessment of work-based learning, was evident. Comprehensive assessment information was available to students in handbooks and in programme specifications, as was evidence of clear communication of grading criteria to students. Examples of assessment standardisation meetings, including internal verification and moderation, and effective staff development relating to assessment were noted.

47   The Developmental engagement team made a number of desirable recommendations, including the need for greater consistency across programmes in the provision and quality of written feedback, greater consistency in the contextualisation of grade criteria and clearer recording of assessment moderation and internal verification. All students, when submitting work for assessment, should sign a declaration that the work submitted is their own. The College should enhance the clarity and presentation of assessment information relating to higher education programmes on the College website.

C2 Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in enhancing employability

48   A second Developmental engagement, concerned with enhancing employability, took place in June 2009. The three lines of enquiry focused on the following questions: do programmes effectively develop the skills needed for work and career progression? how well are the relevancy and currency of the curriculum maintained for employability? to what extent are students able to apply what they have learnt on the programme to their work-based practice and vice versa?

49   The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice, including the strong liaison between the College, the awarding bodies and employer organisations in maintaining the vocational relevance and currency of the curriculum, and the effective involvement of employers in the planning and delivery of programmes. The high quality of assessment design on Foundation Degrees and Certificate in Education programmes provides students with many opportunities to develop vocational and work-related learning, and results in high levels of student achievement. Effective staff development, effective placement learning, and the high quality of student, mentor and employer handbooks were identified as examples of good practice.

50   The Developmental engagement team concluded that it would be desirable for the College to encourage the business and engineering teams to review the currency of the HNC/D curricula to ensure that they reflect modern workplace practice, to strengthen the focus on higher-level skills within the curricula, with particular reference to the professional and personal development of students, and to raise the profile of employability skills within the pre-course information given to students.

D Foundation Degrees

51 Currently, the College has six Foundation Degrees, validated by two awarding bodies. Four of the degrees are awarded by the University of Surrey: the FdSc in Computer Networking; and the FdAs in Hospitality Management, Professional Media Production, and in Travel & Tourism Management. The two awarded by the University of Westminster are the FdSc in Construction and Surveying (Quantity Surveying) and the FdSc in Construction Management. The College is committed in the longer term to the development of new Foundation Degrees when funding and resources permit. In the shorter term, the priority is to introduce part-time pathways in the Foundation Degrees in Computer Networking, Hospitality Management and Travel & Tourism Management.

52 The Foundation Degree provision is based in curriculum areas where the College has established staffing strengths and modern resources, arising from the recent £52 million new-build works on the Highbury Campus. The provision is fully in line with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. It has strong support from local employers, both for those students who are already in employment and those who wish to study full-time and/or part-time for a work-related vocational programme. External examiners testify to the high quality of student achievement and the way in which the programmes enhance the employability of graduates.

53 All the areas of good practice and all the recommendations in Section E of the report refer equally to the Foundation Degrees as well as to the other provision.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

54 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Highbury 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, Edexcel, the University of Portsmouth, the University of Surrey and the University of Westminster.

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

* the Higher Education Quality Manual is both comprehensive and accessible (paragraph 16)

* there is a high degree of staff understanding of quality assurance mechanisms and of the Academic Infrastructure, and full participation at every level in the quality assurance process (paragraphs 17, 18, 27)

* the interaction between the College and its awarding bodies is efficient and effective (paragraph 25)

* there is a productive relationship between the College and employers that enhances the quality of provision (paragraph 30)

* information technology is used imaginatively in computing to provide embedded audio and text-based feedback to students on their work (paragraph 31)

* the College provides a dedicated learner centre for its higher education students and an effective system to allow them self-managed access to specialist learning resources (paragraph 36)

- the College uses high-quality teaching and learning resources and manages them effectively (paragraph 38)

- mentor and employer handbooks that support work-based learning are of high quality (paragraph 41).

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

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

- harmonise the methods used for the reception of student work across departments, in line with College assessment regulations (paragraph 21)

- achieve greater consistency of terminology in the titling of handbooks, with reference to the use of the terms 'student', 'course' and 'programme' in college documentation (paragraph 43)

- develop a formal system for checking schemes of work, prior to the issue to students (paragraph 44).

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/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the Higher Education Quality Manual is both comprehensive and accessible (paragraph 16)	HE Quality Manual to be reviewed and then updated at the annual HE Planning Meeting

Relevant sections of the Code of Practice updated in light of any amendments or additions to quality assurance processes | 29/06/10 and then annually

29/06/10 and then annually | Head of Quality Improvement and Head of HE Development

Head of Quality Improvement and Head of HE Development | Updated 'tag' on HE Quality Manual, contents page; all HE staff are aware of

Code of Practice is up to date and staff are aware of and understand additions and amendments | Executive Director Collegiate College

HE Board of Studies

Academic Policy and Standards Committee | Evaluation of the adherence to quality assurance processes reported to the HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee

Internal audits confirm that quality assurance processes have been followed |

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	HE staff to be informed of the location of the HE Manual and reminded at the HE Practitioners' Forum	29/06/10 and termly each year	Head of Quality Improvement	All HE staff apply quality assurance processes in accordance with those set out in the Manual		Awarding bodies confirm that standards have been met
• there is a high degree of staff understanding of quality assurance mechanisms and of the Academic Infrastructure, and full participation at every level in the quality assurance process (paragraphs 17, 18, 27)	Disseminate the HE Quality Review Cycle at each HE Planning Day and, where needed, at the termly HE Practitioners' Forum Audit schedule to be issued annually Audit documents at the appropriate points	29/06/10, and then termly, each year September 2010 From October 2010 as per schedule	Head of Quality Improvement and Head of HE Development	Timely submission of documents (which are part of the cycle) for audit at appropriate points in the HE Quality Cycle Positive outcomes from audits; audits show that processes and procedures are being followed and that documents are compliant	Executive Director Collegiate College HE Board of Studies Academic Policy and Standards Committee CLT Business Results	Report on and evaluation of the outcomes of audits reported to the HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee Outcomes of audits reported to College Leadership Team (CLT) Business Results meeting

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the interaction between the College and its awarding bodies is efficient and effective (paragraph 25)	FEI Licence (Edexcel) to be applied for and then maintained Awarding body requirements and procedures met, including new processes for the University of Sussex and the University of Portsmouth	September 2010 then annual Autumn review	Head of Quality Improvement	FEI Licence granted External examiners appointed Positive reports from awarding bodies and external examiners	Executive Director Collegiate College HE Board of Studies Academic Policy and Standards Committee	Report on implementation of awarding body processes and outcome of external examiners and awarding body feedback reported to the HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee
• there is a productive relationship between the College and employers that enhances the quality of provision (paragraph 30)	Employer Forums held Employers continue to be involved in the design and delivery of the curriculum and assessments to ensure relevancy and currency	December 2010	Heads of department and programme leaders	Employer Forum meets regularly Regular meetings with employers for review and updating of the curriculum and assessments	Head of HE Development HE Board of Studies Academic Policy and Standards Committee CLT Business Results	Report on Employer Forums to HE Board of Studies, Academic Policy and Standards Committee, CLT Business Results External examiners reports identify that the

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
						curriculum and assessments are up to date and reflect modern working practices
• information technology is used imaginatively in computing to provide embedded audio and text-based feedback to students on their work (paragraph 31)	PowerPoint presentations by students using Audacity and Camptasia Podcasting Use of Flip menu cameras Good practice shared at HE Practitioners' Forum to include the Learning Technology Unit	December 2010 March 2011	Programme Leader Head of HE Development	External examiner, student surveys, programme quality reviews and self-evaluation report comment positively on the embedding of audio and text-based feedback to students Increased use of audio and text-based feedback to students in areas other than computing	Head of Business, Computing and Access to HE HE Board of Studies HE Practitioners' Forum Information, Knowledge and Management Academic Policy and Standards Committee Executive Director Collegiate College	Report to HE Board of Studies, HE Practitioners' Forum, Information, Knowledge and Management and Academic Policy and Standards Committee Feedback from external examiners

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the College provides a dedicated learner centre for its higher education students and an effective system to allow them self-managed access to specialist learning resources (paragraph 36)	Enhance facilities for HE students at Highbury City of Portsmouth Centre (HCPC), including partnership arrangements with the University of Portsmouth Meeting with Head of Estates to agree system to allow students access to specialist learning resources	September 2010	Head of Department, Co-ordinator Heads of department	Improved facilities at HCPC: Library access in evenings; More computers available for HE students; HE common/ study area Students have access outside of class time to specialist resources	Head of IT and Library Services Executive Director Collegiate College HE Board of Studies CLT Business Results	Student feedback identifies that students are satisfied with the facilities Satisfaction rates reported to HE Board of Studies and CLT Business Results
• the College uses high-quality teaching and learning resources and manages them effectively (paragraph 38)	Continued programme of annual staff development activities to share good practice in the development and use of	October 2010	Heads of department, Head of Quality Improvement, Head of HE Development	Lesson observations, student feedback and external examiner reports confirm the effective use of high-	Executive Director Collegiate College Development, Scholarship and Research	Report on and evaluation of the impact of learning and development activities to Development, Scholarship and Research

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
	high-quality teaching and learning resources See information technology above (paragraph 31)		Head of Quality Improvement and Head of HE Development Quality Officer	quality teaching and learning resources		
• mentor and employer handbooks that support work-based learning are of high quality (paragraph 41).	Annual audit of mentor and employer handbooks Good practice exemplars placed on the S drive	September 2010 December 2010		Audit confirms that handbooks are of high quality Handbooks on S drive and used as models	Executive Director Collegiate College HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee Head of Quality Improvement	Report on and evaluation of the outcomes of audits reported to the HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee Feedback from students and employers

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desirable** to take action:						
• harmonise the methods used for the reception of student work across departments, in line with College assessment regulations (paragraph 21)	Assessment regulations to be reviewed at HE Practitioners' Forum and recommendations made to Academic Board; regulations to cover electronic and paper-based submission	September 2010	Head of HE Development, programme leaders, heads of department	Consistent system applied across all programmes	Executive Director Collegiate College HE Board of Studies Academic Policy and Standards Committee (for approval)	Report to HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards Committee (for approval)
• achieve greater consistency of terminology in the titling of handbooks, with reference to the use of the prefixes 'student', 'course' and 'programme' in College documentation (paragraph 43)	All HE staff to make agreed amendments to all programme documentation; programme leaders to check handbook and leaflets; lecturers to check scheme of work front sheets and	September 2010	Heads of Department	Audit confirms consistency in the use of terminology Standard front sheets used	Executive Director Collegiate College HE Board of Studies Academic Policy and Standards committee	Report to HE Board of Studies and Academic Policy and Standards on outcome of audit External examiner reports

Highbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
	internal verification documents Audit undertaken	October 2010	Head of Quality Improvement, Head of HE Development and heads of department			
• develop a formal system for checking schemes of work, prior to the issue to students (paragraph 44).	Schemes of work to be produced for all programmes and placed on 'MyCourse' Schemes of work to be checked and approved Audit undertaken	1 September 2010 and then annually 15 September 2010 and then annually 25 September 2010	Programme leaders Heads of Department and co-ordinators Head of Quality Improvement, Head of HE Development and heads of department	Schemes of work appropriate, current and congruent with programmes	Heads of department HE Board of Studies Academic Board	Audit report to HE Board of Studies and Academic Board