Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Kendal College

March 2011

SR 018

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 Kendal College carried out in March 2011

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:

- rigorous annual review processes at programme level which are used effectively to enhance academic standards
- proactive engagement by the College and programme teams to participate fully in collaborative activity to ensure that higher education provision meets the requirements of the awarding bodies
- the College's commitment to support staff in engaging in the range of programme and vocational professional development opportunities
- the integration of a wide range of student support arrangements which enhance the learning experience for students
- the College's investment in providing dedicated learning resources to support a higher education ethos
- the development and implementation of a single institutional policy to unify the management of marketing and publicity information for higher education to satisfy the requirements of the awarding bodies.

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:

- fully integrate the higher education aspects of the College's quality cycle into the operations of the Higher Education Quality and Standards Group to enhance academic standards
- ensure that the internal processes for reviewing College policies and procedures are systematically aligned to all the relevant components of the Academic Infrastructure
- continue to promote the use of e-learning through the use of the virtual learning environment to enhance the quality of learning opportunities
- implement a quality control process to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the provision of programme information on the virtual learning environment for all higher education programmes.

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 Kendal 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 the University of Central Lancashire and the University of Cumbria. The review was carried out by Mrs Denise Daniels, Mr Mark Langley, Mrs Jenny Steer (reviewers), and Mr Bob Saynor (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, 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 engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice),* subject and award benchmark statements*, The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4   Kendal College is a small generalist college that serves the needs of the local South Lakeland community and is increasingly working with partners outside of its traditional catchment area. There is a history of higher education at Kendal College, with planned future growth linked to the overall mission statement that: 'Kendal College exists to provide a local, exciting quality curriculum to its community that will enable students to achieve their full learning and skills potential'.

5   The College has approximately 900 full-time and 2,600 part-time students. Of the 227 higher education students (188.8 full-time equivalent students) funded by HEFCE, 95 are full-time and 132 part-time. Of these, 14 full-time and 39 part-time students are enrolled on the Certificate in Education or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, 169 students (136.7 full-time equivalent students) on Foundation Degrees, and 12 full-time students on the BA (Hons) programme. They are taught by 22 members of staff, whose teaching commitment to the higher education provision equates to 8.15 full-time equivalent staff. Curriculum development and delivery is carried out by the heads of curriculum schools. At senior management level, higher education liaison and strategic responsibility lies with the Director of External Relations and Client Services, and curriculum development and quality is managed by the Director of Curriculum and Quality. There is support from the Higher Education Coordinator, who is part of the Student Services team, and the Head of School with responsibility for quality.

6   The higher education awards that are funded, directly or indirectly, by HEFCE are listed as follows with their awarding bodies, with the full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets:

University of Central Lancashire

- BA (Hons) Social Work (12)
- Foundation Degree Business (14.7)
- Foundation Degree Early Years, Education & Care (2)
- Foundation Degree Hospitality Excellence (8)
- Foundation Degree Integrated Education & Care of Children & Young People (60.6)
- Foundation Degree Music (20)
- Certificate in Education (26.5)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (13.7)

University of Cumbria

- Foundation Degree Business & Management (2.7)
- Foundation Degree Computing (8)
- Foundation Degree Drawing (9)
- Foundation Degree Health & Social Care (11.7).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   The College has formal partnership agreements in place with two main higher education providers, the University of Central Lancashire and the University of Cumbria. Partnership arrangements with the University of Central Lancashire have been in place over a 27-year period. Since 2007 the College has developed new provision with the University of Cumbria, in collaboration with the other further education colleges within Cumbria.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   In 2008 the College completed a £12.9 million capital development on its main site on Milnthorpe Road, Kendal, comprising a new reception block, cafe, conference and seminar rooms, and higher education teaching rooms, in addition to a specialist heritage construction centre. As part of this development, the existing College building on this site was also refurbished. Within the Learning Centre, a new bespoke University Centre was created to provide higher education students with their own equipped study area. The College also has the Arts and Media Campus, which comprises the Allen Building and Wildman Street Studios, where expressive and creative courses are delivered; Kendal Museum, managed on a 10-year partnership agreement with the local authority; and The Box, a £1.4 million performance space due to be completed in March 2011, providing a specialist venue for performing arts and technical theatre students.

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 Summative review team, and a students' written submission was submitted in advance of the visit. As part of their engagement with IQER the students were asked to report on their student experience at the College. They were able to do this in several ways. These included posting comments on the notice board in the University

Centre; emailing the Higher Education Coordinator and direct face-to-face meetings; at individual or group tutorials; and via the discussion forum on the College's virtual learning environment. The College also incorporated student feedback obtained at the annual monitoring review. Once all comments had been collated from the various sources they were drafted into a series of statements and circulated to all students for them to add to or amend. The amended document was then finalised, and once again this was emailed to all students and posted on the College's virtual learning environment for final consideration. In addition, students made useful contributions to the review in meetings with the team during the visit.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

10   Arrangements for managing higher education are clearly set out in the formal partnership agreements between the College and the awarding bodies. These are also supported by the Quality Framework for Collaborative Provision of the University of Cumbria, and the Guide and Memorandum of Cooperation with the University of Central Lancashire. These documents and supporting materials clearly outline the overall responsibilities for college partners and the universities for managing higher education provision.

11   The College has strong and supportive links with each of its awarding bodies and has taken a proactive role in fostering these relationships. There is regular representation by the College on key committee meetings of the universities and continued support provided by the appointed officers of the universities. The Quality Framework for Collaborative Provision of the University of Cumbria requires each partner college programme leader to work closely with the University to support the maintenance of academic standards. Staff confirmed that this direct link with the awarding body had improved communication, and the overall support has been strengthened.

12   At a strategic level, higher education roles and responsibilities are embedded within the current management functions of members of the Senior Management Team. These roles are shared by the Director of Curriculum and Quality and the Director of External Relations and Client Services. Strategic university partnership liaison is the responsibility of the Director of External Relations and Client Services. The responsibility for higher education quality and standards rests with the Director of Curriculum and Quality, who coordinates the provision in line with the expectations of the respective universities. At an operational level, one of the heads of school also has a lead quality remit to support the quality cycle in the College. Curriculum development and delivery is carried out by the four heads of curriculum schools. Staff confirmed they are supported in their work by heads of school and other cross-centre managers. The attainment of academic standards is further supported by the consistently high quality of effective documentation.

13   The College's newly constituted Higher Education Quality and Standards Group is responsible for consideration of the policies, validating annual reports, monitoring action plans and promoting the understanding of the College's Higher Education Strategy. Membership of this group includes representation from all higher education programme leaders. The work of the group provides an opportunity for higher education programme leaders and College managers to monitor quality. The group has recognised the need for a series of smaller sub-groups to focus more clearly on key issues such as monitoring external

examiner reports and sharing best practice to further enhance the management of higher education. The College provided the team with details of the Further and Higher Education Quality Cycle during the visit. This was not clearly reflected, however, in the operations of the Higher Education Quality and Standards Group. It is desirable for the College to fully integrate the higher education aspects of the Further and Higher Education Quality Cycle into the operations of the group to enhance academic standards within the College.

14   At programme level, annual self-assessment reports provide a sound basis for monitoring standards and programme improvement. These reports are appropriately informed by reflection on external examiners' and students' views. The College operates effective arrangements for curricular development, with strong involvement of its staff in conjunction with partner institutions, students and employers. The team concludes that at programme level the College has a rigorous annual review process that is used effectively to enhance academic standards. This is good practice.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15   The development and approval of programmes takes appropriate account of the FHEQ, subject benchmark statements, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the *Code of practice*. The precepts are reflected in the arrangements for admissions, student support, assessment, placements and work-related learning. Key policies and procedures are in the process of being reviewed and mapped against the *Code of practice*, for example the Coursework and Marking Policy and Study Services Policy. The precepts of relevant sections of the *Code of practice* are clearly integrated into the documentation available and support students effectively throughout their involvement with the College.

16   College managers ensure that all staff take into consideration the relevant elements of the Academic Infrastructure in the operation of the quality assurance processes. There are comprehensive higher education manuals for teaching and learning with both universities. Where the College references its documentation to specific precepts in the *Code of practice*, this supports students effectively throughout their involvement with the College.

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?

17   There is good involvement by the College in inter-college network activity and peer support with partners in the development of qualifications. The network has opportunities to develop and update modules in programme teams, and engagement in shared practice and delivery. For example, the College has developed two modules to suit a local need for the FD Business which have been shared with other partner colleges. Certificate in Education staff undertake paired observations of students with external peers from partner colleges. Staff from the University of Central Lancashire also undertake observations to support standardisation across the partnership. The BA Social Work course team formally meets with partner colleges and university programme leaders to review and share practice twice each year. The College has actively engaged in a project, funded by the Economic Challenge Investment Fund, offering graduates placements across a wide range of businesses in the South Lakes. This involvement demonstrates that the College participates fully in collaborative activity to ensure that its provision meets the requirements of awarding bodies. This is good practice.

18   The appointment of external examiners is the responsibility of the relevant university. The College has effective systems in place for responding to matters raised by external examiners, although reports covering partnership arrangements mostly do not refer

to individual centres, with the exception of the FD Drawing, which clearly identified the Kendal College programme. Outcomes from reports and discussions held at network events and directly with external examiners contribute to the College's continuing professional development plan for staff, and contribute to individual programme action plans.

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

19   Following the Developmental engagement, higher education staff development opportunities have been enhanced. Higher education staff have targets for continuous professional development for the current year, and this has informed the College's overall continuous professional development programme. The College has a proactive approach to higher education staff development, which includes a cycle of activity to analyse training needs and evaluate teaching annually. Academic standards are enhanced by staff participation in a range of internal and external development events, and staff attend annual partnership conferences at both universities. Attendance at a wide range of teaching, learning and assessment events is clearly evident and reflected in the staff development records seen by the team.

20   The College higher education development activities include opportunities to disseminate good practice. Contact with university partnership networks ensures that staff maintain relevant and current knowledge of assessment practice and programme delivery. Staff have also participated in a range of accredited modules in teaching in higher education. Support is also available for staff undertaking master's degrees, professional body and vocational updating; these inform and enhance learning and teaching practice. The College's commitment to staff development contributes significantly to the effective management of academic standards.

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?

21   The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7, 10 and 11 state the key responsibilities for the academic standards and the impact on the quality of learning opportunities delegated to the College. The College does not differentiate between further and higher education at management level, but delegates responsibilities for learning opportunities at programme level. Regular Senior Management Team and separate Head of School meetings inform the management of each school. Within each school the higher education provision is well supported by programme teams. The Higher Education Quality and Standards Group identifies cross-college themes, including assessment, student voice and support. The annual reports produced for the respective university contribute to departmental self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans. The College monitors the resulting action plans through its quality cycle. The College fulfils its responsibilities to the validating universities for the quality of learning opportunities.

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

22   The College Higher Education Strategy identifies specific priorities, and lists measures to indicate the strategy's success. These measures include the desire to deliver high-quality teaching and learning for students, ensuring that they are appropriately challenged. The Higher Education Strategy also focuses on quality assurance and teaching and learning. The partnership agreements identify the responsibilities of the College for quality assurance and the processes through which the College ensures that it meets those requirements and monitors the effectiveness of its higher education management structures. These systems also promote the sharing of good practice. This is supported by a series of internal staff training events, as well as staff contact with their validating university and wider college networks.

23   The College has produced two coherent Higher Education Teaching and Learning Manuals. Each of these are specific to the requirements of the respective validating universities and encapsulate the spirit of a teaching and learning strategy. Similarly, the College's policies on marking and assessment, work-related learning materials and a review of second marking procedures affirm that the College ensures that higher education programmes provide appropriate learning opportunities.

24   Students provide feedback through a variety of methods. The College recognises the difficulty of gathering all higher education students together, so to capture student opinion they have chosen to meet student groups individually. The College records all student feedback through its complaints and compliments process, and the College Corporation considers the annual record and reports any complaints to the relevant university. Students confirmed that the College listens to them and responds appropriately.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

25   The College aims to embed the Academic Infrastructure within its policies and procedures. Current versions of these make either general or specific reference to the *Code of practice*. For instance, the policy on Coursework Assessment and Marking makes a general reference to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students,* whereas the Higher Education Teaching Manuals refer to specific precepts. The College plans to cross-reference appropriate policy documents as it renews them. The inclusion of other elements of the Academic Infrastructure, as well as references to specific precepts of the *Code of practice*, would support the College's aim more successfully. For example, the Study Services Policy could make specific reference to the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students.* Clearer reference in the Higher Education Teaching Manuals to the FHEQ would also clarify the level of teaching expected of higher education staff. It is desirable that the College incorporate the full range of reference points within the Academic Infrastructure when reviewing policies and procedures.

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

26   Teaching staff deliver on both further and higher education provision. A designated member of the College establishment supports new higher education staff through a planned induction and mentoring scheme. The Head of School with a quality remit confirms that all higher education staff submit their curriculum vitae to the relevant university for approval. Most staff have a postgraduate or higher degree qualification. The range of activities that the College has in place supports the maintenance and enhancement of teaching and learning.

Students commented positively on the quality of the teaching and reported this as one of the chief benefits of the programmes.

27   There is a strong focus on developing vocational expertise to meet the employment needs of the local and regional community. This focus is set out in the College's Higher Education Strategy. Employers are closely involved in course development and assessment. Examples include the development of the FD Hospitality Excellence in conjunction with a network of hoteliers, and the strong connections with national employers with the FD Drawing to supply artwork for commercial exhibitions. The teacher education team links to support staff in the Prison Service, and students on the FD Music have participated in the Kendal Film Festival. For the FD Integrated Education & Care of Children & Young People, local social services confirm the validity of the content of the course to ensure professional standards are met. The team identified the engagement of staff in the range of programme and vocational professional development opportunities as good practice.

28   To support assessment practice across all of its higher education programmes, the Developmental engagement recommended that the College should promote the use of its virtual learning environment. Where appropriate, programme teams are trying to develop online resources. For example, the Professional Graduate Certificate Education programme is exploring an online system for the submission of coursework. Staff recognise that their approaches to the virtual learning environment are inconsistent and require further development. The College effectively maintains the quality of teaching and learning, but could enhance that quality more effectively through more consistent approaches to e-learning. It is desirable for the College to continue to promote the use of e-learning through the use of the virtual learning environment.

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

29   The universities monitor the College's responsibilities for student recruitment and enrolment through annual programme reviews. The College provides direct support for higher education students through the Higher Education Coordinator. The coordinator also supports the College's Widening Participation Strategy by providing guidance to further education students progressing into higher education. Students and university representatives substantiate the College's emphasis on high levels of service during pre-entry guidance and application.

30   Students value the College's induction processes highly and confirm that they receive a good overview of programme content, in addition to course documentation in both paper and electronic formats. During induction all students have an initial assessment for learning support, in line with the College Study Services Policy. Students confirmed that the College is positive in its approach to providing learning support. Students also appreciate the quality of support offered by their personal tutors.

31   Handbooks, generated from university templates, clearly identify the responsibilities of employers, students and staff for any work-related learning. University staff visits to the College, information in programme handbooks and support from College staff ensure students are fully aware of possible progression routes. A range of College initiatives, the vocational background of many staff, and work with employers and other professionals inform students of potential subject-specific career routes. The team for the FD Integrated Education & Care of Children & Young People actively supports students to find employment during their studies. Collectively this demonstrates exceptionally high levels of student support. This comprehensive range of effective student support is good practice.

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

32   The College's staff development process is described in paragraphs 19 and 20.

33   The College's Continuing Professional Development Policy requires all higher education staff to maintain professional currency and some scholarly activity. The College allocates module delivery time for staff to update research and reading in support of programme delivery. The College's own staff development programme provides higher education specific sessions, for example on assessment and feedback and supervising higher education projects and research. Staff teaching on University of Central Lancashire programmes who wish to study for higher qualifications receive reductions on fees and are also supported by the College. Student outcomes achieved demonstrate that the College staff's subject knowledge and skills maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities. Students also commented positively on the quality of learning opportunities, for example business students reported that changes to a finance module were made, in consultation with the awarding body, following module feedback from the students.

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?

34   The College's significant regeneration of its two main campuses and subsidiary sites illustrates that it ensures sufficiency and accessibility of learning resources. Students rate the quality of the College facilities highly and university periodic reviews and audits verify this. Staff record any resource needs in annual programme reports. These needs are incorporated by the relevant Head of School into annual resourcing plans, for consideration by senior management. Staff are positive about the effectiveness of this process. For example, specialist equipment was purchased for the FD Music to be able to match industrial expectations.

35   The University Centre is a dedicated higher education resource within the College Learning Resource Centre. The Learning Centre Manager oversees the maintenance and purchase of books and electronic resources from an annual budget, and maintains effective contact with all partner institutions as an affiliate of several library networks. These library networks increase the range of resources available to students. University audits, periodic review reports and students commend the very high standard of resources. The College's commitment to investing in dedicated learning resources to support higher education provision is good practice.

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?

36   Responsibility for public information is outlined in the awarding body partnership agreements. These agreements require the College to seek approval from the universities prior to publishing information about collaborative provision and to implement universities' policies on branding. The College has consolidated the partnership obligations into the

Higher Education Public Information, Publicity and Marketing Materials Policy. The Policy makes direct reference to the *Code of Practice*, *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, specifically linking with the precepts referring to the awarding institution's monitoring and the controls over the accuracy of public information. The policy has enabled the College to manage the expectations of the partner universities and to make a planning distinction between the marketing of higher education and other marketing functions within the College. The implementation of this policy to unify the College's management of marketing and publicity for higher education to satisfy the requirements of the awarding bodies is good practice.

37   The College website includes a section specific to higher education. The higher education section is easy to find, straightforward to navigate and is comprehensive. The course information on the site states explicitly which university awards the qualification delivered at the College and describes the available progression routes. Information is uploaded by the School Administrator and editing rights are password-protected and limited to named users. Students confirmed that the website information enabled them to make an informed choice and supported them in the process of making an application.

38   The College's published Higher Education Prospectus is available in hard copy. Details of the higher education provision are also available in the overall College prospectus available electronically on the College's website. Individual programme information is located in a dedicated higher education area of the website. Having stated that application for full-time courses is through UCAS, the prospectus and website directs applicants to contact the Higher Education Coordinator for details. While there is limited reference to Kendal College's higher education provision on the UCAS website and on each university's website, the arrangements work well for applicants due to a responsive, efficient and supportive approach to enquiries by the Higher Education Coordinator. Students confirmed that the Higher Education Coordinator helped them navigate the complexities of the application process and continued to provide them with invaluable support after they enrolled.

39   The standard content and presentation of programme handbooks are set by the universities. Programme and module specifications are produced by the universities and form part of, or are annexed to, the relevant handbook. Programme handbooks and related documentation, such as programme specifications, are given to students at induction, and some are made available through the College's virtual learning environment. The students commented positively on the quality and timing of information provided by the College to support their studies.

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?

40   The Higher Education Quality and Standards Group has terms of reference which include the responsibility to advise on and monitor marketing and to review public information. The group considers the draft higher education prospectus and other documents that fall within the provisions of the Higher Education Public Information, Publicity and Marketing Materials Policy and encourages staff to report any discrepancies that require attention in the review of published material. Meetings with staff and examples provided during the visit confirmed to the team that the group endeavours to produce a prospectus that, in language and style, is appropriate to higher education.

41   Course information sheets are produced at the validation stage and derive from the definitive documents. The draft information sheets are systematically checked by the programme and marketing teams. In each case, the final version is signed and dated before becoming a live document on the College website. Authority to approve documents is

restricted to heads of school. Information is checked annually in October by programme leaders and heads of school. In most cases the universities do not expect information to come to them for prior approval but, where this is necessary, the process is completed within a two-week period.

42 The Higher Education Quality and Standards Group has recommended that each programme section of the College virtual learning environment should contain the student handbook, module descriptors, scheme of work, student briefs, reading list, year timetable, assessment board dates and links to learning materials. The review team found variation in the information for students placed on the virtual learning environment, with some courses having yet to meet all these requirements. For example, on the Social Work section of the virtual learning environment the assessment handbook was duplicated under different headings. Also, there was no programme handbook available for Child Studies. In the Business section the information for students was comprehensive and set out chronologically to enable students to plan their learning and assessment. It is desirable that the College implement a quality control process to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the provision of programme information on the virtual learning environment for all higher education programmes.

43 Among the documents given to students at the induction stage are the programme handbooks. The precise arrangements for developing handbooks have differed according to the programme of study and between the universities. The College, however, recognises that students would benefit from a more consistent approach. The College is moving to a position in which handbooks and module guides fit within the templates prescribed by each university. Despite some variation in practice, the review team found that students are very satisfied with the information provided by the College at induction and with information that staff continue to supply during the academic year. Published information is thoroughly explained and supplemented with help and support from the staff, which is greatly valued by students.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

44 The Developmental engagement in assessment at Kendal College was carried out in February 2010. The lines of enquiry for the Developmental engagement were discussed in advance of the Developmental engagement team's visit and three were identified and agreed between the team and College representatives. The lines of enquiry were:

Line of enquiry 1: Members of higher education teaching teams are provided with training and support in marking, assessment, feedback and engagement with the Academic Infrastructure.

Line of enquiry 2: The quality of feedback on assessments enables students to develop and improve their work and progressively address assignments independently.

Line of enquiry 3: Information is made available to staff and students to support their understanding of academic standards relating to assessment to include plagiarism, presentation of work, academic writing style, citing/referencing and assessment criteria.

45   The Developmental engagement review team identified a number of areas of good practice for dissemination in the context of the College's management of student assessment. The College was encouraged to ensure that this good practice was shared within the College. These included positive and productive relationships between the College and awarding bodies at departmental level, supported by effective College personal and professional development opportunities, and the use of Individual Performance Reviews which explicitly highlight targets and actions for individual staff to support personal and professional development associated with higher education activity. The team also identified a good variety of work-related activities, which clearly enhances and supports the student experience and contributes to the assessment process; course teams are responsive to issues and concerns raised by students, which has resulted in changes being made to programmes; and the College provides clear and detailed information on assessment practice, which is valued by students.

46   A number of desirable recommendations were also made, which included developing methods for recording peer personal and professional development activity at College level; to continue to embed the recently introduced higher education quality-related initiatives identified in the College Higher Education Strategy and other higher education documentation and policies; to introduce a College strategy to promote increased staff engagement with the range of formal continuous professional development opportunities offered by partner awarding bodies to support assessment; to review tutorial practice for higher education students to promote more formal methods of capturing formative feedback; to keep under review future arrangements for second-marking procedures across all higher education programmes; to promote the use of the College virtual learning environment to support assessment practice across all its higher education programmes; to review the procedures for routinely refreshing higher education course listings on the College website, including information relating to assessment; and to consider the introduction of standard guidance and a template for the content and production of course handbooks, including information to students.

47   The team was able to verify that progress had been made to address the recommendations and share the good practice identified during the Developmental engagement. Further enhancements have been made through continuing to strengthen the College's mechanisms for sharing good practice across its higher education provision through the Higher Education Quality and Standards Group, and it is currently introducing subgroups to progress this. However, further progress is required to fully utilise the benefits of using the virtual learning environment to enhance and support the student experience.

D   Foundation Degrees

48   The College has nine Foundation Degrees, five programmes validated by the University of Central Lancashire and four validated by the University of Cumbria. There are 136.7 full-time equivalent students studying on these programmes, with 105.3 on University of Lancashire awards and 31.4 on University of Cumbria awards. The review confirms that the programmes currently offered are aligned to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*, and the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*.

49   The College was planning to introduce a number of new Foundation Degree awards from 2011. However, due to the current uncertainty in student numbers and funding these plans are on hold. New awards were being considered in Drama (Theatre & Performance), Management for Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy, Performance, Festivals & Events, Complementary Therapies, Heritage Practice, and Technical Theatre. The College is considering offering modules of the Heritage Practice award as a full-cost option to support the work of Kendal Museum.

50   The good practice and recommendations identified during the Summative review and listed in paragraphs 51 to 54 are common to these programmes.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

51   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Kendal 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, the University of Central Lancashire and University of Cumbria.

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

- rigorous annual review processes at programme level which are used effectively to enhance academic standards (paragraph 14)
- proactive engagement by the College and programme teams to participate fully in collaborative activity to ensure that higher education provision meets the requirements of the awarding bodies (paragraphs 17 and 22)
- the College's commitment to support staff in engaging in the range of programme and vocational professional development opportunities (paragraph 27)
- the integration of a wide range of student support arrangements which enhance the learning experience for students (paragraph 31)
- the College's investment in providing dedicated learning resources to support a higher education ethos (paragraph 35)
- the development and implementation of a single institutional policy to unify the management of marketing and publicity information for higher education to satisfy the requirements of the awarding bodies (paragraph 36).

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

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

- fully integrate the higher education aspects of the College's quality cycle into the operations of the Higher Education Quality and Standards Group to enhance academic standards (paragraph 13)
- ensure that the internal processes for reviewing College policies and procedures are systematically aligned to all the relevant components of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 25)
- continue to promote the use of e-learning through the use of the virtual learning environment to enhance the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 28)
- implement a quality control process to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the provision of programme information on the virtual learning environment for all higher education programmes (paragraph 42).

55   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.

56   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.

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, 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.

Kendal College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2011						
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:						
• rigorous annual review processes at programme level which are used effectively to enhance academic standards (paragraph 14)	Good practice to be continued for reviews for 10/11 academic year including monitoring via HE Quality & Standards Group (HEQSG)	October 2011 and subsequent years of reporting	Programme leaders, heads of school, HE managers	Timely return of approved reports following recorded approval at HEQSG	Quality teams at HEIs	Minutes of HEQSG show approval of reports and College is identified as completing with good practice elements within HEI reports on annual review
• proactive engagement by the College and programme teams to participate fully in collaborative activity to ensure that higher education provision meets the	Each programme team to continue to provide evidence of collaborative activity with university programme teams and to include evidence within annual review	October 2011 and subsequent years of reporting	Programme teams	Evidence included within annual review	HEQSG	Minutes of HEQSC meeting Autumn 2011 provide evidence of monitoring of reviews to include evidence of collaborative provision

requirements of the awarding bodies (paragraphs 17 and 22)						
• the College's commitment to support staff in engaging in the range of programme and vocational professional development opportunities (paragraph 27)	College continuous professional development (CPD) plan for 2011/12 to include specific reference to opportunities for training from HEIs. Appraisal of staff delivering HE includes specific reference to CPD	By September 2011 and ongoing for following years	Quality team and line managers	Appraisal records demonstrate capture of CPD requirements that inform the CPD programme	Director of Curriculum & Quality	CPD report shows evidence of HE tutors attending training
• the integration of a wide range of student support arrangements which enhance the learning experience for students (paragraph 31)	Continue to monitor student support services and improve on an annual basis based on student expectation	Ongoing	HE Coordinator, Director of External Relations & Client Services	Student feedback following induction and student satisfaction surveys indicate a high level of perception of student support arrangements	Senior Management Team	Self-assessment of Student and Study Services
• the College's investment in providing dedicated learning resources to support a higher education ethos	Continue annual investment in resources to support HE provision	Ongoing year on year	Heads of school and Director of Curriculum & Quality, Director of Finance & Resources	Budget for 11/12 reflects increased resources for HE	Senior Management Team	Student feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction on resources. Annual budget shows continued investment

(paragraph 35)						
• the development and implementation of a single institutional policy to unify the management of marketing and publicity information for higher education to satisfy the requirements of the awarding bodies (paragraph 36).	Monitor compliance with the requirements of the policy and review on an annual basis following university guidelines	December 2011 and ongoing	Marketing Manager	Full compliance with branding guidelines within all advertising campaigns and production of public information	Director of External Relations & Client Services	Sampling of materials demonstrates compliance with the policy and university guidelines
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desired** to take action:						
• fully integrate the higher education aspects of the College's quality cycle into the operations of the Higher Education Quality and	Develop further the quality cycle to ensure HE activities are fully embedded and to include as a standard item on the HEQSG agenda	September 2011	Quality Manager	Quality cycle included on HEQSG agenda	Director of Curriculum & Quality	Minutes of meeting provide assurance that quality cycle is included and monitored

Standards Group to enhance academic standards (paragraph 13)						
• ensure that the internal processes for reviewing College policies and procedures are systematically aligned to all the relevant components of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 25)	As each policy is identified for review, references to the Academic Infrastructure will be considered	Ongoing	Senior managers with responsibility for specific policies and procedures	Review of policies approved at HEQSG	Senior Management Team	Policy update list and references to elements of Academic Infrastucture
• continue to promote the use of e-learning through the use of the virtual learning environment to enhance the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 28)	CPD for staff to be put in place on e-learning aimed at course leaders, tutors and administrators	December 2011	Programme leaders, heads of school	Staff develop more skills to use the VLE to support teaching and learning	Director of Curriculum & Quality	Review VLE to identify increased use and quality improvements

• implement a quality control process to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the provision of programme information on the virtual learning environment for all higher education programmes (paragraph 42).	Minimum requirements for content to be monitored and non-compliance supported	February 2012 and ongoing	Quality Manager	Monitoring of VLE demonstrates increased access to students of e-learning materials	Director of Curriculum & Quality	Monitoring report identifies where programmes have not met requirements leading to further action