



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Knowsley Community College

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Preface

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by 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 Knowsley Community College carried out in February 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 agreement, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the successful collaboration between the College and employers supports the needs of students by providing them with skills that are invaluable for further study and subsequent employment
- the range and accessibility of learning support services provided through the learning centres make a significant contribution to the effective take-up of learning opportunities by students and to their successful achievement of appropriate standards.

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 **advisable** for the College to:

- ensure that action plans provided through course-level self-assessment fully utilise all available evidence and contain clearly identifiable actions, responsibilities and timescales
- work with the awarding body to take action to align published information in the various media used, and in particular across the respective websites.

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the College to:

- publicise responsibilities for finding work placements and clarify the role of students in that process
- continue to seek ways of ensuring that students have access to quiet study areas which are conducive to their learning needs.

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 Knowsley Community 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 Edge Hill University. The review was carried out by Dr Glenn Barr, Mr Daniel Morgan (reviewers) and Dr Judith Foreman (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 the awarding body, meetings with staff, students, employers and the partner institution, 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 The College mission statement is 'Working in partnership to improve learning, skills and employability in the local community'. In 1990, Kirkby College of Further Education merged with Knowsley Central Tertiary College to form Knowsley Community College. The College has Beacon College Status. Knowsley Community College is a large provider of further education, with over 12,000 school leavers and adults choosing to study at the College each year. Offering a range of qualifications at different levels in a variety of subjects, the College works in partnership with Knowsley Metropolitan Council, local schools and employers to meet local skills need and engage the community in lifelong learning.

5 Since 1991, as part of its strategic plan, the College has developed its higher education provision to meet local employer and community needs. It now offers courses in initial teacher training and a small range of Foundation Degrees in partnership with Edge Hill University. There are 63 part-time students and 66 full-time students, making a total of 105 full-time equivalent (FTE) students following higher education courses across the curriculum sectors of teacher training, business and management, information technology and accountancy.

6 The College currently offers the following higher education courses funded by HEFCE. FTE student numbers are in brackets.

- FdA Accountancy (23)
- FdA Business and Management (22)
- FdSc Information Technology (29)
- FdA Leisure and Tourism Management (18)
- Certificate in Education - Post-Compulsory Education and Training (11)

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education - Post-Compulsory Education and Training (2)

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

7 The sole partner of the College is Edge Hill University. The agreement is for indirect funding only and includes Foundation Degree programmes to meet the needs of local students and employers. Teacher training for the post-compulsory education and training sector is also delivered.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Following a review of collaborative partnerships by Edge Hill University, and changes in demand for some provision, the number of students on higher education courses has declined on the previous year. There has also been a loss of courses in a range of subject areas including health, education, theatre, and full-time accountancy provision. The Foundation Degree provision in business and management is in its final year of delivery. The College remains committed to offering locally relevant and accessible higher education and is seeking new ways of sustaining this over the long term. In 2007 the College invested in a new Management Information and Innovation Centre to enhance the teaching environment. Higher education students have benefitted directly from this development through access to good quality classrooms, up-to-date information technology resources and a dedicated higher education room in the centre.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education courses at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The submission was produced following a survey undertaken by the College and a follow-up meeting with higher education students facilitated by a member of staff at Edge Hill University's Student Union. Ten students from across the higher education provision attended the session. The key matters addressed in the submission include students' experience of placements, student representation and their opportunities to take part in the management of quality and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, student services, learning resources, module handbooks and progression opportunities. The team was able to discuss these and other matters with students at meetings during the visit to the College.

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 Higher education at the College is well managed as part of the overall provision of the College. The main management body is the Board of Governors, to which the senior management team report. The senior management team consists of the Principal, two vice-principals and three assistant principals. Each vice-principal and assistant principal takes responsibility for different aspects of the College's activities. Responsibility for higher

education provision within the College is clearly defined, with an assistant principal providing oversight and day-to-day management devolved to the Higher Education Development Manager.

11 The College has an effective partnership with its single awarding body which enables it to achieve and maintain academic standards through its teaching and assessment practices. Clear guidelines from the awarding body set out mutual responsibilities for the development and quality management of awards and the implementation of academic regulations and processes.

12 There are appropriate arrangements for managing standards. Course and quality improvement teams meet every four weeks to monitor student progress and teaching, learning and assessment strategies across a number of programmes. As part of its agreement with the University, the College produces annual programme monitoring reports, which are scrutinised by the Higher Education Development Manager before being submitted to the University for approval and feedback. The College produces an institutional annual monitoring report, bringing together common issues identified in programme reviews, for submission to the University Collaborative Provision Manager. Reports on the standards of achievement in students' assessed work are also produced by programme and subject verifiers appointed from within the University internal faculty structure.

13 Overall, there are effective reporting and communications mechanisms and clear lines of responsibility for managing the higher education provision.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14 Staff knowledge and use of the Academic Infrastructure are strong. Subject and qualification benchmarks and the FHEQ are used in the process of developing Foundation Degrees prior to validation by the awarding body. Relevant sections of the *Code of practice* are applied to inform quality procedures.

15 Foundation Degrees at the College conform to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Validation and approval documents record the involvement of employers in the initial consultation process and the centrality of work-based learning modules in the programme specifications. In meetings with the team, both students and employers confirmed work placement activities as effective in facilitating the application of classroom theory to the practice of the workplace. Placements allow students to undertake projects of clear benefit to the employer, such as creating a staff handbook, a nutrition pack to be used in a nursery and computer network enhancements. Students praised the College for providing them with skills invaluable for further study and subsequent employment.

How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of validating partners and awarding bodies?

16 The agreement with the awarding body requires the College to apply its academic regulations. The College effectively performs its responsibility for publicising procedures and identifying claims for mitigating circumstances and allegations of unfair means which are adjudicated by the awarding body. Staff, students and documentary evidence confirm that regulations are robustly applied.

17 The College assures itself that it is meeting the requirements of the University through the annual reports it produces and through the University's own periodic and annual review processes. The College's internal quality systems require all course teams to complete an annual course-level self-assessment document with associated action plan

using student feedback and data relating to retention, achievement and success. This is part of the College's aim to encourage all staff to reflect on their performance. The Developmental engagement recommended that it was desirable for the College to embed the course-level self-assessment process in all courses, to ensure that higher education monitoring is systematically integrated into the College's quality assurance process, and fully contributes to the creation of the annual monitoring report for the awarding body.

The self-evaluation acknowledges that the annual monitoring reports produced for the University are not yet fully informed by the course-level review process. Evidence provided to the team confirms this judgement, as the course-level action plans examined contain little detail or measurable outcomes and it was not always clear how statistical data and evidence collected from students at module and course level is analysed as part of the review process. The College is advised to ensure that action plans provided through course-level self-assessment fully utilise all available evidence and contain clearly identifiable actions, responsibilities and timescales.

18 The annual reports provided for the awarding body provide a more informed and evaluative account of the quality of provision. The awarding body review of these reports shows an improvement in their efficacy since 2009, while also recognising scope for improvement in assigning actions and the use of data.

19 External examiners appointed by the University confirm that the standards and quality of the provision are sound and that students are achieving the intended learning outcomes. The College contributes to the written responses and action plans to take forward external examiners' recommendations coordinated by the University. As noted in the Developmental engagement, external examiner reports aggregate comments across courses and across modules delivered within the University and other partners. There are opportunities for external examiners to comment on specific College matters and this was evident in one report. However, it is not always possible to distinguish comments and suggestions about the College's own courses.

20 The action plan arising from the Developmental engagement identified how areas of good practice were to be shared with other college partners. As a result of the uncertainty arising from the reduction in student numbers by the awarding body, the College was unable to host the planned dissemination event. However, the evidence presented to the team shows the good practice in assessment to have been maintained. For example, students and employers confirmed the continued strength of placement opportunities and employer contribution to feedback. Students also confirmed the comprehensiveness of information on assessment and that they received timely feedback.

21 The Developmental engagement recommended that it was desirable for the College to take steps to ensure that the agreed word limits were adhered to in the marking process. Staff confirmed that this matter has been discussed with the awarding body but that it was the decision of the University not to penalize students for overlong work. The Developmental engagement also regarded as desirable that the College develop a formal policy for the internal moderation of assessed work. Staff assured the team that this has now been done. However, the document has not yet been through the required College approval process for new policies.

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

22 The College has Investors in People status and is committed to staff development as an opportunity through which 'individuals can develop their potential whilst ensuring the college continues to provide effective, accessible education and training, delivered in a professional manner'. Staff development is designed to facilitate the College Strategic Aims

and Objectives, and cost-benefit calculations measure the effectiveness of the activities undertaken. A well-attended annual staff development programme organised by the College underpins improvement in standards and the quality of teaching and learning across the institution. The awarding body process of checking qualifications ensures that staff are appropriately qualified for teaching to the required level of the awards offered. The College does not provide remission or direct funding for staff to improve their qualifications at master's or postgraduate professional level, but does provide interest-free loans. Staff teaching on higher education courses receive additional remission from teaching in order to undertake relevant scholarly activity. Staff new to teaching are well supported with reduced timetables for the first year, and the support of a mentor for one hour per week. Induction for staff new to teaching on higher education courses is also provided by the University, which provides information about regulatory and procedural matters relating to the delivery of awards. Staff effectively maintain the currency of their knowledge through attendance at professional network events, courses offered by the awarding body and undertaking relevant project work.

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

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?

23 The College's management structure is outlined in paragraph 10. With reference to the management of the quality of learning opportunities, clear responsibilities and reporting mechanisms are in place and are effective (staff meetings; student feedback and meetings). The College's Quality Improvement Manager oversees a systematic annual teaching observation and improvement process. Data on retention and achievement, and centrally administered and analysed student survey data are provided to support the annual monitoring of learning opportunities.

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

24 The College's overall approach to ensuring that it is fulfilling its obligations to the University is outlined in paragraphs 16-21. Clear guidelines from the awarding body set out mutual responsibilities for the provision and enhancement of learning opportunities. Learning opportunities are explored as part of the validation process. The College takes part in periodic course reviews with the University and the evaluation of learning opportunities is incorporated into the annual course monitoring process.

25 The Developmental engagement noted as good practice the range of appropriate work placement opportunities for students, underpinned by a placement agreement which incorporates a role for employers to provide formative feedback on student performance. The team concurs with the conclusion of the Developmental engagement and judges that the successful collaboration between the College and employers supports the needs of students by providing them with skills that are invaluable for further study and subsequent employment.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 See paragraphs 14-15. The application of the Academic Infrastructure is explored and tested in the context of course validation and is described in the definitive course documents. The College has undertaken mapping of sections of the *Code of practice* to evaluate and improve its own procedures. This process has been particularly helpful in providing assurance relating to admissions and the support of disabled students.

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

27 The College has a clear strategic and operational focus on teaching and learning, which is fully understood by staff. A documented teaching and learning strategy is underpinned by strategies for retention and achievement, and a systematic approach to the observation of teaching to maintain and improve practice. A team of Advanced Teaching Practitioners managed by the College's Quality Improvement Director is deployed on a risk basis wherever the need for support or improvement is identified. The College has effective mechanisms that report on the quality of teaching and learning through the annual monitoring process, using progression and achievement data, information arising from the observation of teaching, and student feedback.

28 College-wide student opinion surveys are carried out annually and the results of these are used to inform self-assessment reports. Student feedback on modules is also captured and this provides statistical data on a range of criteria relating to the learning experience.

29 Student feedback confirms high levels of satisfaction with learning opportunities. In the meeting with the team, students commented very positively on the enthusiasm of staff and their ability to make learning interesting and intellectually stimulating. As a result of this, students stated that they felt more confident in achieving their learning goals and in tackling unfamiliar problems. Effective integration of theory and practice supported by the work placement was confirmed as good preparation for the workplace.

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

30 The Student Charter sets out a range of entitlements relating to support services. The induction of new students is well managed and appreciated by students. In addition to information about College services, students also receive comprehensive information from the University in printed form and through a CD. Students who met the review team confirmed that they have access to regular meetings with their personal tutor.

31 The College's Student Services function has recently achieved Matrix Guidance Council re-accreditation and provides a comprehensive range of information, advice and guidance. There is effective liaison between the teaching teams and the study centres to ensure that students receive a full range of accessible support. The students appreciate the support that is available to enhance their learning opportunities and were very positive about the support received from staff in the study centres. The review team judges that the range and accessibility of learning support services provided through the learning centres make a significant contribution to the effective take-up of learning opportunities by students and to their successful achievement of appropriate standards.

32 The College regards the development of Foundation Degrees, with their focus on work experience, as crucial to serving the needs of local and regional employers. While students are very positive about work placements, they raised some concerns about the lack of clarity with regard to their responsibilities for obtaining work placements. The team

considers that it would be desirable for the College to publicise responsibilities for finding work placements and clarify the role of students in that process.

33 The College seeks to ensure that assessments are designed to support learning and that students receive constructive written feedback which is provided in a timely manner to aid learning. Students are also expected to receive verbal feedback through individual and group tutorials. External examiner reports confirm that students receive good quality and supportive feedback on assessment.

34 An effective quality assurance process involving activities managed by both the College and University incorporates students' and external examiners' views on the quality and nature of learning support.

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

35 Staff development opportunities are outlined in paragraph 22. All lecturers are registered with the Institute for Learning and are required to undertake a minimum of 30 hours of professional development each year to maintain registration. Staff development needs are identified through annual appraisal, the operation of the teaching observation process, and in the context of course monitoring and development.

36 An annual programme of generic professional development sessions is aimed at all staff in the College and the College holds two teaching and learning 'showcase' days during the year, where staff can disseminate and demonstrate new techniques and resources in teaching and learning. Staff also participate in collaborative annual development days and events with the University and other colleges to enhance assessment practice.

37 Staff are encouraged to undertake scholarly activity to support their subject and there is remission from teaching to undertake this. A variety of individual examples of external professional activity and scholarly projects appropriate to support higher education teaching and learning was provided to the team during meetings with staff.

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

38 The process of allocating resources to higher education is integrated into the overall College capital and human resource arrangements. Students also have the opportunity to use the learning resources at the University. At course level the suitability and accessibility of learning resources are scrutinised during the validation process and reviewed subsequently through University and College periodic and annual monitoring processes.

39 An effective virtual learning environment is used by staff and students. In 2007 the College opened a new Management Information and Innovation Centre (MIIC) which is used to deliver the majority of higher education courses. The centre has good quality classrooms and information technology resources. The facility includes a large open learning resource centre, which is stocked with the required books and journals. In their written submission and during the review, students expressed some concerns regarding the level of noise in the learning resource centre, which is also sometimes used for teaching. The College is aware of these difficulties and is responding by making students aware of alternative study spaces in learning centres at the institution used by other groups of students and curriculum areas. The team recommends as desirable that the College continue to find ways of ensuring that students have access to quiet study areas which are conducive to their learning needs.

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 body 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?

40 The College produces a range of materials relating to the marketing of the higher education portfolio in general, and materials specific to each course. Materials include a prospectus, which covers both further and higher education provision at the College, and course factsheets on the website. The awarding body provides students with accurate written information on students' entitlements, regulations and complaints and appeals procedures. Prospective students are able to obtain access to the programme specifications prior to entry on the awarding body website. The College holds 'open days' targeted at school leavers and adults to promote higher education courses. The College website is being redeveloped to ensure accessibility for visually impaired students and those with different language needs. Students confirm that their experience of the College courses matches or exceeds the expectations arising from the information provided prior to enrolment.

41 Students receive useful information on the College support services in booklet and electronic form at induction as well as a student handbook and electronic copy of the awarding body regulations. Course handbooks and the virtual learning environment provide detailed information for students, including assessment calendars, and provide links to the awarding body website and virtual learning environment. Clear guidance is provided on mitigating circumstances and extensions policy in handbooks, supplemented with posters explaining plagiarism penalties.

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 The College works in collaboration with the awarding body on the production of publicity information related to its courses. This is coordinated centrally in the College through its marketing function. The College prospectus is planned well in advance, with directors and learning transition managers responsible for ensuring that factsheets and databases are up to date. Staff cannot directly update the website but use a database system to update the course information. The College is required to seek formal approval from the awarding body for publicity material, including advertisements, prospectuses, leaflets, press releases and web information. The process of checking at College and awarding body levels is not formally documented.

43 The Developmental engagement team judged that information published by the College about assessment on higher education courses in its prospectus and webpages is clear and concise. However, the more general course information currently published in the prospectus is limited in depth and accuracy. The timing of the reduction in awards and student numbers following changes in the agreement with the awarding body in 2010 has inevitably limited the accuracy of the printed prospectus. However, these changes have only recently been reflected in the website information. The College has recently revised its website and factsheets to improve accuracy, but, while most information is clear and accurate, the team identified that some inconsistencies and errors remain across the documentation. For example, the website contains the wrong titles for the Foundation

Degrees in Accountancy and Information Technology. There is a discrepancy between the awarding body and College websites in the FdA and FdSc designation of the Accountancy qualification. The team considers it advisable that the College work with the awarding body to take action to align published information in the various media used, and in particular across the respective websites.

44 Some module handbooks are produced jointly with partner colleges and consequently contain little college-specific information. One handbook erroneously refers to the policies of the partner college. The developmental engagement recommended strengthening internal procedures for monitoring the content of course and module handbooks to ensure accuracy prior to being issued to students. This process has yet to be fully implemented. However, the external examiner for the FdA Business and Management identified the excellent and detailed module handouts across three partner colleges, and students confirm that programme and module handbooks and the virtual learning environment are informative and accurate.

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

45 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in October 2009 and covered all the higher education provision. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College and ensured that all IQER core themes could be addressed.

Line of enquiry 1: How does the College assure itself that its assessment strategy ensures the maintenance of appropriate academic standards?

Line of enquiry 2: What processes are in place to ensure the quality of feedback to students on assessment and do the processes support the learning of all students and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes?

Line of enquiry 3: The systems and procedures the College has in place to ensure that its published information on assessment is comprehensive and accurate and is communicated consistently to all students across the full range of programmes.

46 The Developmental engagement identified four areas of good practice, including the opportunities to engage in collaborative working with other colleagues and the awarding body to assure academic standards and enhance assessment practices. Detailed, constructive and timely feedback on students' assessed work, as well as the range of work placement opportunities organised, were also identified as good practice. Finally, the Development engagement found that published information about assessment methods for each course in course and module handbooks was comprehensive and accessible.

47 There were four desirable recommendations, including to embed the course-level self-assessment process in all courses to enhance annual monitoring and quality improvement and to consider developing a formal policy for the internal moderation of assessed work in order to ensure consistency of practice across programmes and provide transparency with regard to methodology. The College should also consider strengthening internal procedures for monitoring the content of course and module handbooks prior to being issued to students to ensure accuracy.

D Foundation Degrees

48 Foundation Degree development started in 2002 following a strategic decision to move away from Higher National Diplomas and Certificates. The College considers that its higher education strategy has been supported by the advent of Foundation Degrees, particularly because of the flexibility they offer employers and students. All Foundation Degrees are validated by Edge Hill University. Foundation Degree provision has been reduced in the last year due to a reduction in funded student places, following a review of collaborative provision by the University. Foundation Degrees are currently offered in Business and Management, Information Technology, Accountancy, and Leisure and Tourism Management. Of the 130 students enrolled on higher education courses at the College, 106 are enrolled on Foundation Degrees, with 66 studying full-time and 40 studying part-time.

49 Employers are involved in the design and validation of programmes. The Developmental engagement noted as good practice the range of appropriate work placement opportunities for students, which facilitate the application of theory to practice, underpinned by a placement agreement which incorporates a role for employers to provide formative feedback on student performance. The Summative review team concurs with the conclusion of the Developmental engagement and judges that the successful collaboration between the College and employers supports the needs of students by providing them with skills that are invaluable for further study and subsequent employment.

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

- the successful collaboration between the College and employers supports the needs of students by providing them with skills that are invaluable for further study and subsequent employment (paragraphs 15 and 25)
- the range and accessibility of learning support services provided through the learning centres make a significant contribution to the effective take-up of learning opportunities by students and to their successful achievement of appropriate standards (paragraph 31).

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

52 The team agreed a number of areas where the College is **advised** to take action:

- ensure that action plans provided through course level self assessment fully utilise all available evidence and contain clearly identifiable actions, responsibilities and timescales (paragraph 17)
- work with the awarding body to take action to align published information in the various media used, and in particular across the respective websites (paragraph 43).

53 The team also agreed a number of areas where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

- publicise responsibilities for finding work placements and clarify the role of students in that process (paragraph 32)
- continue to seek ways of ensuring that students have access to quiet study areas which are conducive to their learning needs (paragraph 39).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

54 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Knowsley Community 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 sole awarding body, Edge Hill University.

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

- the successful collaboration between the College and employers supports the needs of students by providing them with skills that are invaluable for further study and subsequent employment (paragraphs 15 and 25)
- the range and accessibility of learning support services provided through the learning centres make a significant contribution to the effective take-up of learning opportunities by students and to their successful achievement of appropriate standards (paragraph 31).

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- work with the awarding body to take action to align published information in the various media used, and in particular across the respective websites (paragraph 43).

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

- publicise responsibilities for finding work placements and clarify the role of students in that process (paragraph 32)
- continue to seek ways of ensuring that students have access to quiet study areas which are conducive to their learning needs (paragraph 39).

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 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.

60 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.

61 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

Integrated quality and enhancement review

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

Knowsley Community College action plan relating to the Summative review: February 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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the successful collaboration between the College and employers supports the needs of students by providing them with skills that are invaluable for further study and subsequent employment (paragraphs 15 and 25) 	Creation of a work placement information room on the College Intranet which will highlight areas of good practice, case studies and employer feedback	Ongoing from Summer 2011	Programme leaders, work-based module tutors and College Web Manager	Live room available on intranet	Curriculum Quality Group	Number of page 'hits'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the range and accessibility of learning support services provided through the learning centres make a significant 	Learning Centres to produce HE student profiles highlighting successful use of the range and accessibility of learning support services for use during the induction process	For September 2011	Learning Services Team with input from HE tutors	Profiles produced and included in Learning Centre Induction presentations	Director for Student Services and Manager of Learning Resources	Learning Centre satisfaction survey

<p>contribution to the effective take-up of learning opportunities by students and to their successful achievement of appropriate standards (paragraph 31).</p>						
<p>Advisable</p>	<p>Action to be taken</p>	<p>Target date</p>	<p>Action by</p>	<p>Success indicators</p>	<p>Reported to</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>
<p>The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that action plans provided through course-level self-assessment fully utilise all available evidence and contain clearly identifiable actions, responsibilities and timescales (paragraph 17) 	<p>Revise the current Course Level Self Assessment (CLSA) document to align it with the College Self Assessment process and Award Body Annual Monitoring Report process</p>	<p>July 2011</p>	<p>Assistant Principal (AP)/ HE Development Manager and Quality Director</p>	<p>Production of revised CLSA document for HE programmes</p> <p>More informed Action Plans that feed into the Curriculum Section Self Assessment process and Development Plan</p>	<p>SMT/ Governors/ Curriculum Quality Group/ Awarding body</p>	<p>Meeting September 2011 between AP/HE Development Manager and Quality Director to review the revised documentation and process and its effectiveness</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the awarding body to take action to align published information in the various media used, and in particular across the respective websites (paragraph 43). 	HE programme course information to be submitted to awarding body for approval prior to publication in any format	Spring Term 2012	College Marketing Manager and awarding body Marketing Manager/ programme leaders/awarding body liaison tutors	Biannual checking of published information to ensure alignment	HE Development Manager/ College Marketing Management Group	Student Survey as to the accuracy and effectiveness of the published information
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publicise responsibilities for finding work placements and clarify the role of students in that process (paragraph 32) 	<p>Detailed information about work placements to be included in course handbooks in addition to work placement module handbooks</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities of both the College and students to be fully integrated into the Induction process</p>	<p>For September 2011</p> <p>For September 2011</p>	<p>Programme leaders and work-based module tutors</p> <p>Programme leaders and work-based module tutors</p>	Work placements available for all students	Learning Transition Manager (LTM)	HE Student Survey showing higher levels of satisfaction on work placement process and organisation

	Work placement factsheet to be developed for use during the interview process	May 2011	Programme leaders and work-based module tutors			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to seek ways of ensuring that students have access to quiet study areas which are conducive to their learning needs (paragraph 39). 	<p>LTMs to maintain a record of available rooms which can be accessed by HE students on request</p> <p>Students to be advised on the availability of quiet rooms in the alternative supported study centre at the Kirkby Campus</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>At induction</p>	<p>LTMs</p> <p>Programme leaders</p>	Reduced number of student complaints about the lack of quiet study areas	Programme Boards and Learner Voice	Course Level Self Assessment process

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