

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Leicester 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 Leicester College carried out in May 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:

- the introduction of the curriculum management boards enhances the monitoring of standards and provides an effective means of sharing good practice within cognate subject areas
- the rigorous and comprehensive attention to detail conducted in the self-assessment and quality improvement cycle at programme level makes a particularly positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards
- the virtual higher education staff room provides extensive guidance and is well used by staff to assure academic standards and share expertise
- the College initiative to extend the National Student Survey to all higher education students enables it to evaluate the student view of its higher education provision in its entirety
- the scholarly activity scheme supports staff to engage with their subject at the leading edge of the discipline, informing and enhancing teaching and learning
- the College's recent acquisition of a city centre live performance venue enriches the existing work experience opportunities for FD Performance and FD Creative Sound Technology students
- the Employers' Guide to Training 2010-11 enables employers to make informed decisions about training and development for their employees and integrates more closely the College's higher education provision with employment sectors.

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 the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee is utilised more effectively to monitor and record all actions and decisions resulting from internal and external quality reviews
- continue to monitor carefully its information technology provision to ensure that it supports the learning of higher education students adequately.

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

- explore ways to share salient points of external examiner reports with students
- take a systematic approach to seeking employers' views
- review its teaching and learning strategy, procedures and related documents to include a more explicit reference to higher education
- review its induction process for new staff and those new to teaching higher education to include higher education-specific guidance
- ensure full implementation of the College's plan to include references to accreditation of prior experiential learning opportunities in promotional materials.

A Introduction and context

- This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Leicester 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 Bedfordshire, Coventry University, De Montfort University, the University of Leicester and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mr David Fallows, Mrs Viki Faulkner and Mr Peter Hymans (reviewers) and Dr Susan Hill (coordinator).
- 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, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagements in assessment and work-based learning. A summary of findings from these Developmental engagements is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.
- 3 In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree (FD) awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the FD programmes delivered at the College.
- Leicester College is one of the largest general further education colleges in England and the only further education college in the city of Leicester. In 2009-10, there were approximately 28,500 students, including over 5,500 full-time students. In 2009-10, 35 per cent of students were from areas of relative deprivation and 43 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. In 2010-11, 659 students are enrolled on higher education programmes, accounting for 507 full-time equivalents.
- Apart from the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, all higher education programmes sit at levels 4 and 5 of the FHEQ. A total of 11 curriculum areas deliver higher education programmes across all three campuses: Abbey Park (10 programmes within teacher education, engineering, care, business and performing arts); St Margaret's (12 programmes within creative arts and media, and computing) and Freeman's Park (four programmes within construction, hair and beauty and sport).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

The College works in collaboration with five awarding bodies in the delivery and assurance of its higher education courses. There are written agreements with the four university partners, and the College is an Edexcel approved centre. Currently, five Edexcel programmes are offered. The College has a long history of collaboration with De Montfort University and currently 13 programmes are either franchised or validated by the University. Four programmes within teacher education and sport are franchised by the University of Bedfordshire. Collaboration with Coventry University commenced with the introduction of the Foundation Degree qualification and the University validates three such programmes. The

Foundation Degree in Educational Studies, now in its final year, is awarded and delivered wholly by the University of Leicester.

7 The College offers the following programmes in 2010-11, with full-time equivalent numbers of students shown in brackets:

University of Bedfordshire

- Certificate in Education/Postgraduate Certificate in Education (41.5)
- HND Sports Science (8)
- University Diploma in Teaching English, ESOL and Numeracy (Continuing Professional Development) (5)
- FdA Sports Coaching (8)

Coventry University

- FdA Artistic Make-up and Special Effects (25.10)
- FdA Fashion and Costume Craft (29)
- FdA Print and Digital Media Production (4.68)

De Montfort University

- HND Business and Finance (29)
- HNC/D Computing part-time (23.50)
- HND Computing full-time, year 2 only (8)
- FdA Children, Families and Community Health full-time (32)
- FdA Children, Families and Community Health part-time (18.50)
- FdA Creative Sound Technology (17)
- FdA Footwear (29)
- FdA Graphic Design and eMedia (22.11)
- FdA Performance (Acting) (19)
- FdA Performance (Dance) (24)
- FdA Photography and Video (photography pathway) (31)
- FdA Photography and Video (video pathway) (22)
- FdA Photography and Video part-time, years 1 and 2 only (18.09)

University of Leicester

FdA Educational Studies for Teaching Assistants (Early Years) (4.69)

Edexcel

- HNC/D Business Studies (19)
- HNC Construction (11)
- HNC/D Graphic Design (9)
- HNC/D Mechanical or Electrical/Electronic Engineering (39.75)
- HND Travel and Tourism (9)

Recent developments in higher education at the College

- The College has sought to ensure that for any one discipline there is only one awarding body and anticipates that the number of programmes will reduce to around 22 by 2011-12 without reducing overall full-time equivalent student numbers. This will also reduce the number of awarding bodies to four.
- In 2009, two Foundation Degrees in Performance (Acting) and Performance (Dance) were validated by De Montfort University through a newly devised validation service that allows for the development of programmes that sit outside the University's Faculty strategy. To ensure progression through to level 6, a one-year Honours Degree Professional Studies top-up programme is due to be validated in June 2011.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. After a student briefing, the College engaged an independent facilitator to assist the students in the collection and collation of the broad higher education student experience. The facilitator carried out a student survey and arranged meetings with student representatives from across the provision. The team found the written submission helpful and it broadly agreed with the views of students that the team met.

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?

- The responsibilities delegated to the College are set out in institutional and programme level agreements with the university awarding bodies. The College is also an Edexcel approved centre. In the case of university-awarded programmes, academic standards are set by the relevant university through their programme approval and assessment procedures.
- The College's curriculum management is conducted through 10 cross-college curriculum area managers who have the major responsibility for their provision. They report to assistant principals and the senior leadership team. Operationally, programmes are managed by programme leaders who report to programme area managers within subject clusters. The programme area managers are themselves managed within groups of cognate subject areas by curriculum area managers. There is a clear reporting line from programme leaders through to governors, for whom the Higher Education Office prepares an annual report on the progress of the higher education strategic plan.
- Programme leaders are fully aware of their responsibilities under the partnership agreements for assuring and reporting on academic standards. They report strong support from awarding bodies, whose representatives confirm their confidence in College staff. A

recent collaborative review carried out in March 2011 by the College's main awarding body, De Montfort University, asserted confidence in the College's management of its provision.

- A key component of the management of higher education in the College is the Higher Education Office. The Assistant Principal (14-19 and Higher Education) and Higher Education Coordinator oversee the annual process of self-evaluation, monitoring the completion of programme self-evaluation documents. In addition, they work with curriculum area managers and programme leaders in validation meetings to ensure that annual monitoring is rigorous.
- Following the IQER Developmental engagement in April 2010, the College made a decision to strengthen the management of higher education within curriculum areas. Five curriculum management boards were set up to take an overview of provision. The boards are chaired by curriculum area managers and attended by programme leaders, the Higher Education Office and library staff. The team found ample evidence of the effectiveness of these boards, including the sharing of good practice and records of detailed discussion of employer engagement, student success and programme evaluation. The team considers that the introduction of the curriculum management boards enhances the monitoring of academic standards and provides an effective means of sharing good practice within cognate subject areas.
- A subcommittee of the College's Academic Board, the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee, was set up in 2007-08 to take overall responsibility for the quality and standards of the provision. It is chaired by the Deputy Principal for Quality and Planning and has a cross-college staff membership, two student representatives and a representative from De Montfort University.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

- The FHEQ, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant subject benchmark statements are used in the design of programmes and during the approval process. Programme specifications show that programme intended learning outcomes are aligned with the FHEQ, relevant subject benchmark statements and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* where relevant. The Higher Education Office notifies staff of revisions to the Academic Infrastructure, and supporting materials are posted on the virtual staff room and provided in hard copy.
- In 2007-08, the College instituted assessment boards for the Edexcel provision not covered by the licence of its partner university which brought the College in line with the Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students. The boards include the participation of the external examiner and enable a full discussion of student achievement and results. The College's Academic Regulations for Higher Education were drawn up to ensure greater engagement with the same section of the Code of practice. These regulations were established for 2009-10 and have been helpful in securing adherence to requirements for internal verification, the management of deadlines and processing bad academic practice.

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

19 The College ensures that programme leaders managing university-awarded provision attend programme management boards at the host institution or engage with university-run partner college network events, as appropriate. Programmes awarded by a

university have nominated link tutors who visit the College regularly and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

- The College operates a thorough, rigorous and comprehensive annual self-evaluation process at programme level. Programme leaders produce self-evaluation reports based on the previous year's action plans and a clearly identified range of matters, such as student achievement and retention, and feedback from internal verification activities. Programme leaders record good practice and actions required from external examiners into the self-evaluation report. The team found that external examiner reports are used effectively to identify actions necessary to maintain and enhance academic standards. However, students are not informed of the findings of external examiners and the team considers it desirable that the College share salient points of external examiner reports with students.
- Self-evaluation reports are discussed with link tutors and then follow the quality processes of the awarding body. Following production, the reports are validated through a meeting with the Higher Education Coordinator and the relevant curriculum area manager. In addition to annual monitoring, programme leaders have termly one-to-one meetings with their programme area manager where targets and actions are discussed. Scrutiny of programme-level self-evaluation reports and records of one-to-one meetings show the reflective and evaluative manner in which self-evaluation is carried out and that staff go beyond the requirements of awarding bodies in monitoring the effectiveness of their programmes. The rigorous and comprehensive attention to detail conducted in the self-evaluation and quality improvement cycle at programme level makes a particularly positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards.
- An overall Annual Monitoring Report for higher education is produced by the Assistant Principal (14-19 and Higher Education) building upon evidence from programme self-evaluation documents. The 2009-10 report covers all the relevant factors concerning academic standards, but does not include consideration of programmes with low success rates or contain an overview of retention and achievement across the higher education provision. This report is presented and discussed at the Higher Education Quality and Standards Improvement Committee. The team could find no evidence that overall retention and success data was discussed by the committee in the current monitoring round, although data concerning programmes with low rates of success and retention was available to the committee in previous years. The team was reassured that evidence at programme team level shows good retention and achievement data in the last year under review.
- The introduction of the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee in 2007-08 has provided an opportunity for the College to focus clearly on higher education quality and standards. However, the findings and action plans of the two Developmental engagements were not reported fully to the committee and, as stated in paragraph 22, overall retention and achievement was not clearly monitored. While the team found no evidence that standards are currently at risk, the team considers it advisable for the College to ensure that the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee is utilised more effectively to monitor and record all actions and decisions resulting from internal and external quality reviews.
- In response to the Developmental engagement in assessment, the College has extensively revised its procedures for internal verification of all assessment practices. A review conducted by the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee found a comprehensive engagement with the procedures which has resulted in improved consistency of processes. This view is supported by external examiners and the team's findings. External examiner reports also indicate that the contextualised grading criteria adopted in the HNC Engineering programme have been successful in clarifying expectations for distinction quality work.

- Following the Developmental engagement in work-based learning, staff considered the re-introduction of an employers' forum, but, based on past experience, felt that it would not be effective. Informal contact with employers is widespread and enhances the provision significantly. However, there is currently no mechanism to gather information routinely from employers about standards and quality once programmes are approved. The team considers it desirable for the College to take a systematic approach to seeking employers' views.
- The Higher Education Office has developed written guidance and good practice guides and a virtual higher education staff room to support teaching staff. The team found that the virtual staff room is well resourced and maintained, with active staff engagement monitored closely by the Higher Education Coordinator. The virtual higher education staff room provides extensive guidance and is well used by staff to assure academic standards and share expertise. This is good practice.

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

- The College's Higher Education Strategy Document outlines clearly the contribution that staff development makes to the assurance of standards. All staff participate in the annual cycle of appraisal and professional development which informs college-wide and individual staff development needs. Higher education staff development days have been employed to share knowledge of the revised internal verification and work experience policies. There is also an annual higher education conference which, in 2010 for example, focused on good practice in assessment and work-based learning.
- Priorities for staff development are identified for each member of staff as part of the staff appraisal process. Additionally, curriculum area managers determine subject and/or professional updating requirements for subject teams. The Higher Education Office supports and encourages staff to attend staff development activities organised by awarding bodies. As other individual needs arise, requests are considered by the Head of Standards and Development and appropriate action is taken. The College has supported a number of staff teaching on higher education programmes to pursue qualifications that have the potential to enhance the provision. Currently, 22 staff are engaged in study for further qualifications. The team finds that the College provides appropriate opportunities and support for staff to undertake relevant staff development.

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?

The responsibilities for the management and reporting of the quality of learning opportunities are the same as those for academic standards detailed in paragraphs 11 to 16. The Assistant Principal (14-19 and Higher Education) has overall responsibility for the management of the systems and processes for managing the quality of the learning opportunities across the higher education provision. With the assistance of the Higher

Education Coordinator and the Curriculum Manager for Quality and Standards, reports from the curriculum areas are analysed and appropriate actions are taken.

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

- The College's mechanisms for assuring itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to awarding bodies are described in paragraphs 19 to 23.
- As a result of the Developmental engagement in work-based learning, in September 2010 the College reviewed and revised its Work Experience Policy and supplementary documentation. The effectiveness of this policy is being monitored formally through the higher education curriculum management boards. The documentation is comprehensive and contains clear guidance for employers, students and College staff on their roles and responsibilities for the work-based learning elements of programmes.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

The Academic Infrastructure has been embedded progressively into the management of higher education. Higher education guidance and policy in key areas, such as work-based learning, is devised in line with the precepts of the *Code of practice*. Other sections of the *Code of practice* have been considered by relevant managers alongside College policies and procedures, and the College is discussing undertaking a mapping exercise to monitor engagement with all sections of the *Code of practice*.

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

- The College has a cross-college Learning and Teaching Strategy which sets out the College's aims and priorities for the period 2009-12. The strategy was reviewed in 2010 and key priorities identified for the 2010-11 session, such as the raising of teaching standards and the use of individual learning plans for students. However, there is no explicit reference to higher education teaching and learning within the strategy.
- The College's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Handbook applies across the College and provides detailed and clear guidance for staff. Although the strategy is sound, and the guidance contained within the College's documentation for teaching and learning is clear and helpful, it is referenced to further education standards and practices. The inclusion of sections related to higher education practice and requirements would be beneficial to staff delivering higher education programmes.
- The College's policy for the observation of learning and teaching is comprehensive and includes a requirement for 50 per cent of all staff to be observed and graded annually, with the remaining 50 per cent having a developmental observation. All staff who receive a grade 3 or 4 have a further graded observation the following year. During observations, a Learning Observation Record is completed by the observer and the outcomes are discussed with the member of staff observed. In the 2009-10 College analysis of higher education teaching observations, 81 per cent of the 33 observed lessons were graded as good or better. The level of analysis also includes points of good practice and areas for development. While the system operates effectively, it would benefit from a greater focus on higher education practice and needs. The team considers it desirable that the College reviews its learning and teaching strategy, procedures and related documents to include a more explicit reference to higher education.

- The College's Higher Education Strategy 2009-12 indicates that staff appointments are monitored to ensure that they are appropriately qualified. In addition, relevant awarding bodies verify new staff qualifications and experience. Curriculum vitae confirm that existing staff are suitably qualified and experienced.
- The student written submission refers to the enthusiasm of the teaching staff and their support, commitment, approachability and professional attitude. The National Student Survey for 2009-10 showed that Leicester College students found that the quality of teaching was good. Students present at the student meeting confirmed this and cited examples of staff with valuable current industry knowledge and experience. Using the National Student Survey methodology, the College has extended the survey to include all higher education students. The results from this survey, in conjunction with the national results, provide information that enables the College to evaluate the student view of its higher education provision in its entirety. The team considers this initiative to be good practice.

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

- 38 Students' individual needs are identified during the application process and throughout their time in the College. The student services team offers a wide range of support, drawing upon its effective links with curriculum areas to ensure that students have appropriate tutorial and specialist support. Students confirmed that support from academic and support staff is excellent. Student services departments complete annual self-evaluations which inform the overall College Self Assessment Report. These reports are well structured and provide College managers with the information required to ensure that student services are making a significant contribution to the quality of the student learning experience.
- All students receive a full induction on enrolment, the effectiveness of which is monitored through programme leader meetings with programme area managers. They are allocated a personal tutor who is a member of the course team. Personal tutors take responsibility for the academic progress of their students and communication takes place at regular intervals. Currently, an electronic individual learning plan, hosted on the virtual learning environment and remotely accessible, is being piloted as a means of recording individual tutorials. Information from the individual learning plans is collated to produce a group profile for each programme to enable programme leaders and managers to ensure appropriate support for each student.

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

- The College's overall arrangements for staff development are described in paragraphs 27 and 28.
- An induction programme for new staff includes the appointment of a mentor. Existing staff teaching higher education for the first time are supported initially by their curriculum area manager and College advanced practitioners. However, there is no reference to higher education requirements in the Staff Induction Booklet for new staff and there is no guidance for managers on supporting existing staff new to teaching higher education. The team considers it desirable for the College to review its induction process for new staff and staff new to teaching higher education to include higher education-specific guidance.

- Curriculum area managers organise appropriate training events for staff to refine approaches to teaching and learning and keep abreast of subject-specific developments. These occur particularly during College staff development days. Staff also attend events organised by awarding bodies, such as the session on teaching and learning for higher education in further education at De Montfort University.
- The College has introduced a new process for staff to apply for support, in the form of teaching remission, to undertake scholarly activity/research projects. In 2010-11, six such opportunities were available and three were approved by the relevant Higher Education Curriculum Management Board. The team was impressed by the College's commitment to supporting staff engagement with research. The introduction of the scholarly activity scheme supports staff to engage with their subject at the leading edge of the discipline and enhances teaching and learning. This opportunity makes a significant contribution to the development of scholarly activity and research in the College's academic community and is good practice.

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?

- The College has an effective process for allocating capital and revenue expenditure. Curriculum areas develop capital investment proposals annually, informed by issues identified through annual programme monitoring and higher education curriculum management boards. The Capital and Maintenance Programme Board determines institutional priorities and has oversight of all capital expenditure. Curriculum area managers articulated the processes for allocating budgets for non-capital expenditure, and library resources are considered at higher education curriculum management boards which campus librarians attend. The College has also been successful in attracting industry-sponsored equipment in some curriculum areas, such as digital media. In 2009, the College acquired a city centre live performance venue at Upper Brown Street. This resource ensures that FD Performance (Acting), FD Performance (Dance) and FD Creative Sound Technology students are able to develop their professional practice in a working theatre environment and enriches their existing work experience opportunities.
- Students provide feedback on the quality of resources through the student representative system both at programme level meetings and at the Higher Education Student Forum. Their comments are recorded and processed effectively to the relevant curriculum or support service manager for response and action. Student views on resources are also recorded in the programme level higher education self-evaluation reports.
- The student written submission refers to widespread concern about computer facilities, internet provision and the speed of the internet service. Students attending the meeting with the team confirmed this view. The team acknowledges the College's planned investment in information technology systems over the summer, but at the time of the review students were still experiencing difficulties. The team considers it advisable for the College to continue to monitor carefully its information technology provision to ensure that it supports the learning of higher education students adequately.

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?

- The College is responsible for publishing marketing and student support information related to its courses. The College produces an annual prospectus which gives an overview of higher education programmes available. The guide is available in hard copy and on the College website and provides extensive guidance to prospective applicants. Information published in the prospectus, on the website, in programme leaflets and online directories, is the responsibility of the College's Marketing Department. There is a clear production schedule for gathering and checking information from programme teams.
- The Leicester College Learner Handbook 2010-11 provides an effective introduction to the College and is a useful supplement to the programme-specific materials provided at student induction in handbooks, programme specifications and the awarding body welcome packs. Each programme also has a dedicated area of the virtual learning environment which holds programme-specific materials and generic guidance.
- The Employers' Guide to Training 2010-11 is a comprehensive resource for employers, downloadable from the College website. This booklet makes clear links for employers to relevant training provided by the College at further and higher education levels. The College uses its existing Customer Relationships Management System to target its marketing activities to employers, through selected mailshots of the guide. This builds on the well-established employer links at further education level. The booklet enables employers to make informed decisions about training and development for their employees and integrates more closely the College's higher education provision with employment sectors.

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?

- As a result of rigorous quality assurance checks by programme and curriculum area managers, the College's Course Database provides an accurate and up-to-date source of information for the prospectus and website. The Higher Education Office reviews draft copy of the prospectus and website updates as a further check of accuracy and completeness. There are clear lines of communication with all awarding bodies, and marketing materials are submitted for final approval prior to printing. Awarding body representatives confirm that the College complies with procedures agreed within the terms of the partnerships.
- Students raised concerns in the student written submission about information related to student fees and financial support. The College has a flowchart for staff in Student Services to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the steps to be taken in advising and guiding higher education students who are enrolled with different awarding bodies. To ensure that prospective students receive accurate information about the current position on fees, all promotional materials, website, prospectus and leaflets, now contain a single email address and phone number so that enquiries can be directed centrally to staff who have access to a centralised database to obtain an accurate picture of current fees and bursaries.
- The Developmental engagement in assessment identified that a more consistent approach to approving handbooks would be beneficial. All handbooks have been reviewed and staff are working to adopt a common format. A new system has been introduced and draft handbooks, following annual revisions, are submitted to curriculum management

boards for approval. Public information is now a standing agenda item for curriculum management boards. This is a positive move which extends opportunities for discussion and sharing good practice between programme areas.

The Developmental engagement in work-based learning identified the need to make explicit the opportunities for students to claim accreditation of prior experiential learning. The College's academic regulations now include reference to the College policy on accreditation of prior learning. However, the College has not yet implemented its intended plan to include reference to the policy in promotional materials, such as the prospectus. The team considers it desirable for the College to ensure full implementation of this plan.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagements

Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

The Development engagement took place in May 2009 and explored three lines of enquiry agreed with the College which allowed all IQER core themes to be addressed. The lines of enquiry were as follows:

Line of enquiry 1: The effectiveness of the College's Internal Verification policy and its implementation in maintaining academic standards.

Line of enquiry 2: The quality and timeliness of feedback to students on summative coursework.

Line of enquiry 3: The extent to which information given to staff and students on the conduct of assessment is consistent across the College, complete and accurate, and reflects the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students.*

- The team identified a number of areas of good practice: the effective use of the policies and procedures contained in the new Higher Education Assessment Guidance and Regulation document demonstrated enhancement in those areas in which it had been piloted; the thorough process of internal verification of assignment briefs before issue; one-to-one feedback on assessments in HNC Construction and HNC Photography, provided additional valuable learning opportunities for students; the innovative practice in providing feedback through electronic marking systems on the FdA Educational Studies for Teaching Assistants; the best examples of module guides, such as in FdA Artistic Make-up and Special Effects were valued by students. The College's initiative to engage in a higher education peer review of assessment, carried out by peers from two other colleges in the East Midlands and an external consultant in April 2008, led directly to enhancement through the development of the comprehensive Higher Education Assessment Guidance and Regulation document.
- The Developmental engagement also identified some areas for development. The team considered it advisable for the College to ensure that the internal verification process

for marked work was applied consistently and focused on the maintenance of academic standards in all programmes rather than acting simply as a mechanical check of the assessment process. Furthermore, the internal verification findings should feed into programme monitoring in a transparent and auditable way. The team considered it desirable for the College to ensure the consistent use of the appropriate internal verification forms and encourage the greater use of sampling grid pro formas, to ensure effective sampling of students' work across modules; develop contextualised grading criteria for higher grades, to provide more focused feedback and guidance for students; and disseminate the best practice in the provision of information evident in some student handbooks, to ensure that core content is provided in all handbooks. In addition, the team felt the College should continue to develop the virtual learning environment to enable students to access information on assessment more readily.

Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in work-based learning

The Development engagement took place in April 2010 and explored three lines of enquiry agreed with the College which allowed all IQER core themes to be addressed. The lines of enquiry were as follows:

Line of enquiry 1: The effectiveness with which work-based learning is planned and provided for within Foundation Degrees and vocational higher education programmes, in general, to assure academic standards.

Line of enquiry 2: How effective are work-based learning opportunities in developing students' skills and knowledge for employability?

Line of enquiry 3: The extent to which public information to students, employers and mentors regarding work-based learning is consistent within the College and with the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning.*

- The team identified a number of areas of good practice. The FdA Performance was an innovative model of work-based learning that has the potential to promote student employability within the sector and the inclusion of standing agenda items on work-based learning and staff development in the Programme Management Board for the FdA Performance ensured discussion of the quality of work-based learning. An extensive guest lecturer and vocationally relevant student visit programme maintained industrial currency and enhanced student employability while the effective use of live briefs with formative feedback to students from employers, particularly in the creative arts and media area, enhanced students' knowledge of the world of work. Finally, the FdA Fashion and Costume Craft Work Placement Handbook was a good example of a comprehensive guide that helped students prepare for work placements.
- There were also some areas that the team recommended for further development. The College was advised to complete its review of the Work Placement Policy, ensure that it was fit for purpose for higher education and that it was implemented rigorously across the provision. The team also advised the College to: review the effectiveness of support systems for students while on placement to ensure that students were clear about their progress and their levels of achievement; adopt a more systematic approach to agreeing and signing off written information on work-based learning for students; and ensure that employers and mentors/supervisors received comprehensive written guidance on their role and responsibilities and the nature of the programme involved. In addition, the team made several desirable recommendations: the College should ensure that programme and curriculum area management processes were used fully to record discussions and decisions

on work-based learning; seek ways to build upon the existing links with employers at further education level; record formally the agreement between employers and the College prior to students going on placement; make explicit the opportunities to use the workplace to claim accreditation for prior experiential learning; evaluate the effectiveness of student work-based learning in the innovative FdA Graphic Design and eMedia and disseminate the findings across the provision; and develop strategies to ensure that comprehensive written information on work-based learning is provided to students consistently across the provision.

D Foundation Degrees

- The College has developed 15 Foundation Degrees in association with university partners to provide a distinctive approach to higher level skills, informed by the needs of employers. Part-time Foundation Degree provision caters more to students already in employment while full-time Foundation Degrees develop work-readiness for those yet to start their careers. The opportunity to progress to honours immediately upon graduating or at a later stage is built into all Foundation Degrees. In 2009, two Foundation Degrees in Performance (Acting) and Performance (Dance) were validated by De Montfort University through a newly devised validation service. This new procedure allows for the development of programmes that sit outside the University's Faculty strategy. To ensure progression through to level 6, a one-year Honours Degree Professional Studies top-up programme is due to be validated in June 2011.
- Foundation Degrees provide enhanced work-based learning opportunities and progression for a wide range of learners including those currently in employment and those seeking to gain employability skills. Strengths of provision include good relationships with employers, and learning resources and tuition that are up to date and accord with best professional practice and standards.
- The team concludes that the College has effective mechanisms for the management of Foundation Degrees. Programmes are reviewed and reports written according to partnership requirements and provide transparent evaluation of provision which is monitored at senior management level both in the College and by university partners. The good practice and recommendations listed in paragraphs 64 to 67 apply equally to Foundation Degrees.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

- The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Leicester College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, Edexcel, De Montfort University, Coventry University, the University of Bedfordshire and the University of Leicester.
- In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice**:
- the introduction of the curriculum management boards enhances the monitoring of standards and provides an effective means of sharing good practice within cognate subject areas (paragraph 15)
- the rigorous and comprehensive attention to detail conducted in the self-assessment and quality improvement cycle at programme level makes a particularly positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards (paragraph 21)

- the virtual higher education staff room provides extensive guidance and is well used by staff to assure academic standards and share expertise (paragraph 26)
- the College initiative to extend the National Student Survey to all higher education students enables it to evaluate the student view of its higher education provision in its entirety (paragraph 37)
- the scholarly activity scheme supports staff to engage with their subject at the leading edge of the discipline, informing and enhancing teaching and learning (paragraph 43)
- the College's recent acquisition of a city centre live performance venue enriches the existing work experience opportunities for FD Performance and FD Creative Sound Technology students (paragraph 44)
- the Employers' Guide to Training 2010-11 enables employers to make informed decisions about training and development for their employees and integrates more closely the College's higher education provision with employment sectors (paragraph 49).
- The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.
- The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:
- ensure that the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee is utilised more effectively to monitor and record all actions and decisions resulting from internal and external quality reviews (paragraphs 22, 23)
- continue to monitor carefully its information technology provision to ensure that it supports the learning of higher education students adequately (paragraph 46).
- The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:
- explore ways to share salient points of external examiner reports with students (paragraph 20)
- take a systematic approach to seeking employers' views (paragraph 25)
- review its teaching and learning strategy, procedures and related documents to include a more explicit reference to higher education (paragraphs 33 to 35)
- review its induction process for new staff and those new to teaching higher education to include higher education-specific guidance (paragraph 41)
- ensure full implementation of the College's plan to include references to accreditation of prior experiential learning opportunities in promotional materials (paragraph 53).
- 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.
- 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.

Integrated quality and enhancement review

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.

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Leicester College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 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: • the introduction	Assistant Principal 14-	Sept 2011	Assistant Principal	Timely data	HE Quality	Through report to	
of the curriculum management boards enhances the monitoring of standards and provides an effective means of sharing good practice within cognate subject areas (paragraph 15)	19/HE and Curriculum Manager Quality and Students 14-19/HE to attend curriculum management boards HE Co-ordinator to chair all HE curriculum management boards to improve consistency Further synchronise the work plan of both HE Quality Standards Improvement Committee and curriculum management boards to ensure timely reporting Implement greater reporting of HE Quality Standards		14-19/HE Curriculum Management Board members HE Co-ordinator Curriculum Manager Quality and Students 14-19/HE	reporting of student retention and achievement against targets Development of HE curriculum offer Enhancement of student experiences across cognate subjects	Standards Improvement Committee	HE Quality Standards Improvement Committee HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12	

• the rigorous and comprehensive attention to detail conducted in the self-assessment and quality improvement cycle at programme level makes a particularly positive contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards (paragraph 21)	Improvement Committee at course team meetings Realign curriculum management boards to improve 'cognateness' Launch a pilot scheme which will aim to dovetail to a greater extent the HE Programme Self Evaluation Document with the ongoing Programme Area Manager and Course Team Leader 1:1 meeting process	Sept 11 Jun 12	Curriculum Manager Quality and Students 14-19/HE HE Coordinator Programme leaders Programme area managers/curriculum area managers	New HE Self Evaluation Document piloted at start of year to streamline formative and summative self evaluation Greater engagement of the self assessment process through closer liaison with curriculum area managers and programme area managers	Curriculum Area Effectiveness Panels Quality Unit Team Meetings	HE Quality Standards Improvement Committee HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12
the virtual higher education staff room provides extensive guidance and is well used by staff to assure	Maintain currency of site Continue to monitor participation rates Ensure that staff new	Sept 2011	HE Coordinator	HE staff room site Participation statistics Records of inductions to new	Assistant Principal 14-19/HE Head of Quality Improvement	HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12

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academic standards and share expertise (paragraph 26)	to HE receive HE Staff Room induction			HE staff		
the College initiative to extend the National Studer Survey to all higher education students enable it to evaluate the student view of its higher education provision in its entirety (paragraph 37)	Leicester College National Student Surveys are reported	Dec 2011	Assistant Principal 14-19/HE Director of Marketing HE Coordinator Programme leaders	All courses have a Key Information Set posted on their Moodle site Rate of student access to this document can be measured Improved scores on student surveys in relation to students being kept informed	HE Quality Standards Improvement Committee HE Student Forum	HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12
the scholarly activity scheme supports staff to engage with the subject at the leading edge of the discipline, informing and enhancing teaching and learning (paragraph 43)			Assistant Principal 14-19/HE Curriculum Area Managers HE Coordinator Programme leaders	Increased number of scholarly activity applications HE Curriculum Management Board minutes	HE Curriculum Management Boards	HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12 HE Programme Self Evaluation Documents
the College's recent acquisition of a city centre	To develop a greater sense of HE community the college	Sept 11 Jun 12	Curriculum Manager Quality and Students for 14-19/HE	Evidence of events	HE curriculum management boards	HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12

live performance	will extend this			Student feedback		
venue enriches and enhances the existing work experience opportunities for FD Performance and FD Creative Sound Technology students (paragraph 44)	valuable resource to a broader cross section of HE programmes for use as a venue for conferences, guest lecturers etc, to be attended by HE students Use the facility to increase the sense of community amongst Leicester College HE students		Curriculum Area Manager for Performing Arts and Music HE Coordinator Programme leaders HE student representatives	Student reedback	HE Student Forum	HE Conference 2012 HE curriculum management boards
the Employers' Guide to Training 2010-11 enables employers to make informed decisions about training and development for their employees and integrates more closely the College's higher education provision with employment sectors (paragraph 49).	A new Employers' Guide to Training will be published for 2011- 12 and will contain a case study relating to HE level training Information for employers has been enhanced by a new employers' newsletter and the current addition contains several articles about HE level students	Aug 11	Head of Sales and Marketing	Publications Employer feedback	HE Quality Standards Improvement Committee	Marketing Self Evaluation Report

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Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the College to:						
ensure that the Higher Education Quality, Standards and Improvement Committee is utilised more effectively to monitor and record all actions and decisions resulting from internal and external quality reviews (paragraphs 22, 23)	All actions to be reported and updated at each HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee meeting throughout the 2011-12 academic year HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee to ensure robust monitoring of progress against actions and decisions across all HE provision HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee to ensure thorough recording and reporting to Academic Board	July 2012	Deputy Principal Quality, Planning & Corporate Services	All actions and decisions monitored and recorded at/by the HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee All actions completed in timely manner	Academic Board Curriculum Strategy & Quality Improvement Committee	Monitoring and Review Reports to the Corporation's Curriculum Strategy & Quality Improvement Committee
continue to monitor carefully its information technology provision to	Capital summer works already identified and programmed will improve the IT infrastructure and be	July 2012	Deputy Principal Quality, Planning and Corporate Services	IT provision meets students' needs and supports the HE learning experience	HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee	Student feedback
ensure it supports the	completed by the start of the 2011-12		Assistant Principal 14-19/HE	Students report	Academic Board	

learning of higher education students adequately (paragraph 46).	Phase 2 of the IT network infrastructure upgrade approved for summer 2012 and annual IT refresh approved for 2011-12 IT provision to be specific agenda item for HE Forums Student feedback from forums and surveys to be monitored, evaluated, and reported to HEQSI		HE Co-ordinator	positively about IT provision		
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
explore ways to share salient points of external examiner reports with students (paragraph 20)	Consult programme leaders and curriculum area managers at HE Conference Produce a template for course meetings to incorporate standard agenda items and include external examiner feedback	Dec 2012	Assistant Principal 14-19/HE HE Co-ordinator	All salient points feed into Self Evaluation Document and Key Information Set Key Information Set is distributed to all HE learners Student feedback	HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee	HE Programme Self Evaluation Documents HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12 Subsequent external examiner reports

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	Include a section in the Leicester College Key Information Set for specific actions from external examiner reports					
take a systematic approach to seeking employers' views (paragraph 25)	Evidence improved links with HE employers using the Customer Relations Manager database A research activity will be arranged to investigate the currency of HE programmes from an employers' perspective Provide greater clarity on the process of securing employer feedback through the Work Experience Policy	July 2012	Assistant Principal 14-19/HE	Increased liaison with employers evidenced through the Customer Relations Manager database Work Experience Policy 2011-12 Employer feedback Research report Dissemination activity at HE conference	Curriculum Leaders Group Curriculum management boards HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee	HE Annual Monitoring Report 2011-12
 review its teaching and learning strategy, procedures and related documents to include a more explicit reference to higher 	Teaching and Learning strategy will be reviewed in line with the College's overall strategy 2012-15 and will incorporate explicit reference to HE All relevant strategies	July 2012	Quality Improvement Learning and Teaching Committee Deputy Principal Quality, Planning and Corporate Services	Updated policy supports HE provision	Senior Leadership Team HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee	Report to Senior Leadership Team and Corporation

education (paragraphs 33 to 35) • review its induction process for new staff and those new to teaching higher education to include higher education-specific guidance (paragraph 41)	will be reviewed with specific reference to HE where applicable Review annually the College's Staff Induction process Ensure staff induction addresses the needs of those new to teaching HE HE information, advice and guidance to be available and accessible to all HE teaching staff HE co-ordinator to become a member of the College	July 2012	HR Director Assistant Principal 14-19/HE Staff Development Manager HE Co-ordinator	Induction process includes HE specific guidance Staff new to teaching HE receive thorough induction HE information, advice and guidance produced and published	HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee Academic Board	Annual report on Staff Induction process Staff feedback
ensure full implementation of the College's plan to include references to accreditation of prior experiential learning opportunities in promotional materials (paragraph 53).	Observation team Clear statements regarding Accreditation of Prior Learning will be included in the website, 2012/12 HE Prospectus and programme/course handbooks	Sept 2012	HE Co-ordinator	Production of programme/course handbooks, prospectus and an update of the website Increase in Accreditation of Prior Learning claims on HE programmes	HE Quality Standards and Improvement Committee	Annual monitoring report on Accreditation of Prior Learning claims

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