Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

New College Nottingham

May 2012

SR 070/12

Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*)
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published. Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's

management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

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

Executive summary

The Summative review of New College Nottingham carried out in May 2012

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

Good practice

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

- the Higher Education Course Leaders' meetings provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and provide an excellent forum for sharing good practice
- the availability of accessible and comprehensive resources to support staff involved in higher education provision through the Higher Education Academic Staff Handbook and 'HE Tutornet'
- the many opportunities provided by the College and employers which enable students to acquire and demonstrate work-related skills and enhance their employability
- the multiple opportunities for students to provide feedback on their learning experiences and the timeliness of actions taken by the College in response to students' views
- the provision of an accessible and comprehensive system of support which addresses the needs of all higher education students
- the support and encouragement provided for scholarly activity, subject updating and sharing good practice through the organisation of an annual higher education conference.

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 Programme Standards and Quality Reports fully and consistently utilise data and provide detailed responses to external examiners' comments in the review and evaluation of provision.

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

- develop procedures to monitor student handbooks across the higher education provision in order to promote greater consistency in the presentation and content of programme information.

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 New College Nottingham (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel and Nottingham Trent University (the College). The review was carried out by Mr Maldwyn Buckland, Ms Colette Coleman, Mr Millard Parkinson (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 the College's Higher Education Strategy, annual monitoring reports and validation and review reports. Evidence was used from meetings with staff, students and employers. 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*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4   New College Nottingham is a large further education college formed from a series of mergers in 1998-99 between four colleges in the Nottingham conurbation. The Lace Market buildings in the heart of the city's creative industries area comprises the main campus and is home to the College's Lace Market centres for art, design and fashion. There are further centres in Hucknall, Bath Street and Basford Hall. The College's mission is 'Excellence, employability and enterprise: our promise to present and future generations'. This underpins the College's higher education strategy to increase the participation of local people in higher education by providing learning opportunities for progression that support personal aspirations and employers' priorities. The programmes are validated by Edexcel and Nottingham Trent University.

5   The College's provision has recently been reorganised into five curriculum clusters, each of which is comprised of Academies. Higher education is currently delivered in nine of these. Each curriculum cluster has a Director and the provision has its own Director of Higher Education, who is also responsible for international development. There are 17,722 students enrolled on all programmes. In higher education there are 605 full-time and 165 part-time directly funded students and 81 part-time franchised students; a total of 851 students, or 739.73 full-time equivalent students. The College offers the following higher education programmes in conjunction with Edexcel and Nottingham Trent University, with full-time equivalent student numbers given in brackets.

Nottingham Trent University

- Certificate in Education PGCE (40.5)
- FdA Broadcast Media (25)
- FdA Business Management (67.7)

- FdA Design (30)
- FdA Early Years Studies (24.8)
- FdA Fashion (32)
- FdA Fashion Interpretation and Practice (33.7)
- FdA Hospitality Management (70.7)
- FdA Law (33)
- FdA Multimedia (41)
- FdA Music and Sonic Arts (46)
- FdA Supporting Teaching and Learning in School (10)
- FdA Teaching and Learning (30)
- FdA Theatre Arts (66)
- FdA Tourism Management (46.3)
- BA (Hons) Business Studies (13.5)
- BA (Hons) Design (14)
- BA (Hons) Digital Media Design (19)
- BA (Hons) Service Sector Management (14.5)
- BA (Hons) Sonic Arts (13)
- BA (Hons) Theatre Arts (16)

Edexcel

- HNC/D Building Services Engineering (25.5)
- HNC/D Civil Engineering (16.5)
- HNC Construction (12)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6   The College works in collaboration with two awarding bodies in the delivery and assurance of its higher education courses. The institutional agreement with Nottingham Trent University clearly sets out the responsibilities of the College and the University and the governance and financial arrangements of the partnership. The College is an Edexcel-approved centre and delivers its Edexcel Higher National awards in line with Edexcel requirements.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7   The College completed a £200,000 upgrade of its higher education facilities at the Basford Hall campus in 2011, providing specialist teaching and staff accommodation. The College intends to create a Higher Education Centre at its city campus. In 2011, the College withdrew the FdSc Computing due to low take-up and is currently engaged in a detailed review of its curriculum offer to ensure strategic fit with the mission of the College as it moves forward. Nottingham Trent University has recently withdrawn from its franchise arrangement with the College for the delivery of teacher education provision. The College is seeking a new partner in this curriculum area and is reviewing its partnership arrangements in the context of recent changes to higher education funding and the College's strategic plan.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The students chose to produce a DVD addressing the three core themes of the review. The Students' Union interviewed students about their

experiences. Students were encouraged to discuss among themselves and engage in a structured dialogue based on a series of prompt questions. The team also met full and part-time students during the review visit. The DVD submission and the meeting with students were helpful and productive.

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?

9   Higher education is well managed as part of the overall provision of the College. The Assistant Principal (Quality) reports on higher education to the College's executive group and to the College Board of Governors. Higher education is managed by the Director of Higher Education and International Development working closely with the Director of Standards. The Director leads a central higher education team comprising the Higher Education Curriculum Manager, the Higher Education and International Operations Manager, the Higher Education Standards and Programme Development Manager, and the Higher Education Recruitment and Development Officer.

10   The College delivers higher education programmes within a faculty structure which contains both higher education and further education provision. Heads of faculties have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the standards of the provision they offer and ensuring compliance with College procedures for the management of higher education. Each programme has a leader managed by a programme area manager responsible for a number of programmes. The Director of Higher Education and International Development and the central higher education team have established effective working arrangements with faculty heads, programme area managers and programme leaders

11   The Academic Board receives reports on higher education. There are also themed Directorate meetings which consider higher education. Within each faculty a system of inter-semester reviews, together with regular programme team meetings, learner voice boards, and examination boards provides effective oversight of higher education standards and the progress of students. A regular Higher Education Course Leaders' meeting enables practitioners from across the College to discuss and share information about higher education provision and contribute to the development of policy and practice. Staff also confirmed that this is a valuable forum for sharing good practice and to disseminate details of internal and external changes to higher education. The Higher Education Course Leaders' meetings provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and provide an excellent forum for sharing good practice. This is good practice.

12   The College has strong partnerships with its awarding bodies which effectively contribute to the management of standards. Guidelines from the awarding bodies clearly identify the location of mutual responsibilities for the development and enhancement of standards. Nottingham Trent University appoints verifiers to liaise with the College at programme level and manage the collaborative arrangements. University verifiers are normally subject specialists and their role is to ensure, through a spirit of partnership, that the academic standards and quality of the provision are maintained. College staff enjoy close working relationships with University verifiers who act as critical friends to the programme teams.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13   The College's use of the Academic Infrastructure is well developed and firmly established in quality assurance processes. Understanding of the Academic Infrastructure is tested in review and validation events undertaken with the University. In meetings with the team, staff demonstrated their understanding of the components of the Academic Infrastructure and gave examples of how they applied it in the development and delivery of higher education programmes. Programme design is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the University and reflects the principles and precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. Templates prepared for validation incorporate programme specifications, while consideration of subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ ensure appropriate levels for the award. Published guidelines on assessment reflect the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*.

14   Foundation Degrees align with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Validation and approval events with the University involve employers, and programme specifications demonstrate the centrality of work-based and work-related learning in course content and in teaching and learning. Regular staff development events, and information available to staff on the College intranet, further demonstrate the College's robust approach to engagement with the Academic Infrastructure.

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?

15   A range of quality assurance processes and structures assures the College that it discharges its responsibilities for the provision effectively. These include planning and target setting, regular meetings with University verifiers, the external examining process, the operation of examination boards, and periodic review processes undertaken with the awarding bodies.

16   The College has a clearly defined system of annual programme monitoring and reporting. Each programme completes an annual Programme Standards and Quality Report which includes an action plan. On University programmes the reports feed into the Centre Standards and Quality Report. Following internal moderation by senior staff both the programme reports and the Centre report are sent to the University for feedback and approval. Programme standards and quality reports are also sent to the relevant external examiners. The College's Academic Board receives programme standards and quality reports, and action plans are monitored within faculties through a system of inter-semester reviews and are considered at programme team meetings. External examiner reports are scrutinised within the College by the Director of Standards who feeds back to programme teams and highlights strengths and any areas that require action. The implementation of external examiner recommendations is monitored by the central higher education team and there is evidence that actions are addressed. Responses to external examiner reports in the programme standards and quality reports sometimes lack detail.

17   The programme standards and quality reports engage with a range of evidence including progression and achievement data, external examiner comments and student feedback, and the template is well structured to reflect on academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. However, the reports vary in their evaluative quality and the level of analysis of evidence. The University's oversight of the annual monitoring process commented on a number of reports which required remedial action, including the need for

revised data, more analysis and revised responses to issues raised by the external examiner. It is advisable that the Programme Standards and Quality Reports fully and consistently utilise data and provide detailed responses to external examiners' comments in the review and evaluation of provision.

18   Edexcel appoints external examiners for its awards. On the University awards, the College nominates external examiners for approval by the University. External examiner and University verifier reports confirm that the internal verification of assessment and moderation of student work broadly ensures fair and transparent marking. Action taken following the Developmental engagement to ensure that marking is more rigorous in programmes identified by external examiners as marking too generously has been successful. The Developmental engagement also recommended as desirable that the College review its documentation to provide consistency in the internal verification process. This has been addressed and all programmes now use a common internal verification template and checklist.

19   The College has developed an informative intranet site known as 'HE Tutornet' to support staff involved in higher education. The site houses the Higher Education Academic Handbook for Staff which provides a single point of reference for all staff teaching on higher education programmes. This contains information about the College's higher education strategy, organisation structures for higher education, and roles and responsibilities, as well as guidance for staff regarding expectations in relation to quality assurance and enhancement procedures. In addition, the 'HE Tutornet' site provides a wide range of additional resources and links to other websites to support staff in undertaking their roles and to share good practice. This includes information on annual monitoring, assessment guidelines, the conduct of examination boards, lesson observation, the role of QAA, and the Academic Infrastructure. Programme staff confirmed that the Higher Education Academic Handbook for Staff and the additional resources available through 'HE Tutornet' are valuable and helpful in supporting the effective management of standards and the quality of learning opportunities as well as the induction of new staff. The availability of accessible and comprehensive resources to support staff involved in higher education provision through the Higher Education Academic Handbook and 'HE Tutornet' is good practice.

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

20   The management and delivery of staff development involves an effective combination of College, awarding body and staff-directed activities. The College's arrangements for staff development are set out in the cross-college Quality Manual for Staff. The Director of Standards manages a dedicated higher education budget and the College promotes and supports the importance of scholarly activity through the provision of remission from teaching for staff teaching on higher education programmes. Development needs for individual staff are identified through annual professional development reviews. Identification of specific staff development needs may also arise as part of the annual strategic planning process and in response to external drivers. Staff development records are systematically retained and staff evaluate development activities undertaken during the year through the process of Professional Development Review.

21   Requests to support postgraduate qualifications are agreed with the Director of Higher Education and International Development who reviews the potential impact of requests with the relevant head of faculty. Programme teams report on staff development activities annually in the programme standards and quality reports. The College provides a programme of continuing professional development activities which can be accessed by higher education staff throughout the academic year. Collaborative working with the

University makes an important contribution to the enhancement of academic standards. For example, staff on the FdA Law programme have attended and made presentations at the University annual learning conference.

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?

22   Arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those relating to academic standards detailed in paragraphs 9 to 12. The day-to-day management of the quality of learning opportunities is the responsibility of programme leaders and managers. The Director of Higher Education and International Development and the Director of Standards monitor the quality of learning opportunities through the processes of annual programme review, scrutiny of external examiner and University verifier reports, and analysis of student feedback.

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

23   The processes by which the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its responsibilities are explained in paragraphs 15 to 19. Learning opportunities are explored as part of programme approval, validation and review processes with the awarding bodies. The evaluation of learning opportunities is incorporated into the annual programme monitoring process.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

24   The College effectively engages with the Academic Infrastructure as detailed in paragraphs 13 to 14. For example, the assessment of higher education students and the feedback that they receive is informed and supported by assessment guidelines contained in the Higher Education Academic Handbook for Staff which references the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students.* The College processes for work-based and placement learning are aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning.*

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

25   The College publishes a Teaching and Learning Strategy statement in the Quality Manual affirming its commitment to the enhancement of teaching practices and improvement of the student learning experience. The Developmental engagement recommended as desirable the development of a comprehensive teaching, learning and assessment strategy to reflect the vocational approaches utilised on the higher education provision. A draft Teaching and Learning Strategy is currently under review by the senior management team incorporating the College's new key priorities of excellence, employability and enterprise.

A further desirable recommendation in the Developmental engagement, to develop a documented strategy for employer engagement, is under consideration.

26   There is a well-developed system of regular teaching observation. In addition to graded observation undertaken as part of the College's scrutiny of teaching and learning, higher education staff are encouraged to participate in ungraded peer review. Guidance on peer review and a feedback form designed specifically for higher education provision is available on 'HE Tutornet'. Staff confirmed that peer review is a useful opportunity to enhance support for developing teaching and sharing good practice.

27   The College has good links with employers on a broad range of programmes and these have been used well to support students' learning. The College's approach to making available a wide variety of work-based experiences to enhance students' assessment opportunities was identified as good practice in the Developmental engagement. This also applies to the provision of a broad range of work-related learning opportunities through, for example, placement, project activities and employer feedback on student performance. Extensive use is made of guest speakers from industry. The BA (Hons) Service Sector Management programme held its second annual professional and academic conference in 2012 which involved presentations by employers and industry representatives. The many opportunities provided by the College and employers, which enable students to acquire and demonstrate work-related skills and enhance their employability, is good practice.

28   The College places importance on the achievement of representative, reliable and informed student feedback. A wide variety of methods are used to capture the student voice, including tutorials, consultation with student representatives at course team meetings, 'post-it' events, focus groups, and end-of-module questionnaires. Students on eligible programmes take part in the National Student Survey (NSS) and the College has introduced its own survey modelled on this to canvas the views of all higher education students before they complete their programmes. Learner voice boards aimed at all College students are held on each campus and some faculties, such as the Faculty of Food, Hospitality, Tourism and Aviation, hold learner voice boards specifically for higher education students. Student feedback is used by programmes in the preparation of programme standards and quality reports which ensures that student concerns are effectively and systematically addressed. Student feedback is also reported to the senior management team. In addition, the College runs an annual Governors' Conference and a Students' Conference as part of its annual planning. In 2012 both the Governors' and Students' Conferences ran concurrently to foster a shared vision of the College's strategic intent. Students confirmed that the College is responsive to their views and provided examples of changes made in response to their feedback. The multiple opportunities for students to provide feedback on their learning experiences and the timeliness of actions taken by the College in response to students' views are good practice.

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

29   Support for students, including pre-entry and during their studies, is comprehensive and addresses a wide range of needs. There is effective liaison between the teaching teams, the learning resource centre and other student services, and a clearly articulated system for accessing support for students with additional learning needs. The College systematically monitors student retention and performance across all higher education courses. Where retention has fallen below targets the College has taken appropriate action. This includes, for example, improving access to resources in response to student feedback, and the provision of enhanced advice and guidance on progression for students on programmes in multimedia, design and theatre.

30   Students with specific learning needs are effectively supported by the Additional Learning Support team. Learning advisers based on each campus ensure that all students have access to advice and guidance relating to personal development needs. The College also provides a comprehensive range of other services for students, such as welfare support, counselling and financial advice and guidance. Higher education staff are knowledgeable about the student support services, and workshops are available to ensure that their awareness and knowledge is kept up to date. There is a strong system of accessible and flexible individual tutorial support which students appreciate.

31   The Academic Coaching and Employability Skills (ACES) Team provides a range of academic support activities including assistance with language development, essay writing, research skills, referencing and presentation skills. The services provided by the ACES team have been designed to recognise the vocational nature of the higher education provision at the College and the diverse backgrounds of students, some of whom have been out of formal education for some time or lack traditional academic entry qualifications. The ACES team also provides effective support for international students. Students can access these resources directly or through referral by teaching staff. News about ACES and information about resources are also available through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. The provision of an accessible and comprehensive system of support which addresses the needs of all higher education students represents good practice.

32   The College assures itself of the effectiveness of support for students by analysing student feedback from students and external examiners, and advice from the University verifiers. The student written submission and the team's meeting with students indicate that students are happy with the support they receive.

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

33   The College's effective staff development arrangements have been referred to in paragraphs 20 and 21. Individuals are supported to undertake higher level qualifications and several course leaders have been supported to present conference papers. 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. Over several years the College has organised an annual themed higher education conference. In 2011, the Conference ran over two days and involved a range of external speakers focusing on assessment strategies, teaching and learning approaches, and ways to enhance the learning environment. The conference has been effective in stimulating a range of subsequent developmental activities within faculties. The support and encouragement provided for scholarly activity, subject updating and sharing good practice through the organisation of an annual higher education conference represents 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?

34   Resources for higher education programmes are reviewed and determined through the annual business planning process. The suitability and accessibility of learning resources are scrutinised during the validation process and reviewed subsequently through the College's and awarding bodies' review processes. The College is responsive to the needs of students through the provision of appropriate resources for programme areas.

35   The College's Learning Resource Centres provide a range of hard and electronic resources to support all College programmes. The College has responded to student

requests for more essential reading texts. The Learning Resource Centres also offer one-to-one resource workshops for students with a named staff member who leads on the relevant curriculum area. Students also benefit from access to the library resources at the University.

36   The College's programme of estate enhancement has led to considerable refurbishment to create new dedicated higher education teaching and social spaces at Basford Hall and the City campus. There is a long-term strategy in place to create a Higher Education Centre at the city campus. Improvements have been made to wi-fi access. However, the College acknowledges that information technology facilities are outdated in some cases and it is taking steps to address this. There is effective use of a virtual learning environment to support teaching and learning and students report very positively on the availability of resources through the virtual learning environment.

> **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?

37   Under the terms of its agreements with the awarding bodies the College is responsible for publishing all information relating to its higher education provision. The College produces a comprehensive higher education prospectus which provides detailed information on individual programmes, including entry requirements, programme content, assessment and progression opportunities. The College website includes an area for higher education which provides an appropriate and accessible range of general information and programme-specific materials. The Higher Education Prospectus is available to download.

38   All students receive a Higher Education Student Handbook containing general College information, assessment guidelines, and information about academic misconduct. Students also receive a Programme Handbook containing programme-specific information and the programme specification, as well as a Module/Unit Handbook. The content requirements for the handbooks are described in the Higher Education Academic Handbook for Staff. The handbooks and a range of additional programme information are available on the College's virtual learning environment.

39   The College publishes an Employer Information Pack and Workplace Procedure File which outline the responsibilities of both the College and the employer and provides guidance for students on work placement. All students undertaking work placement are required to undertake a Learning Diary. In addition, programme-specific information is provided including the template for the Learning Diary and an introductory letter to the employer confirming contact details and broader health and safety requirements.

What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing? How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?

40   There are clearly understood and effective processes in place which contribute to assuring the accuracy and completeness of information. The production of publicity and marketing material is coordinated centrally in the College through the Marketing Unit and in

accordance with the College visual identity and house style guidelines. There is an agreed marketing calendar, with deadlines for the production of key documents. The prospectus is planned in advance with senior managers and those responsible at faculty and programme level to ensure that programme information is accurate. Drafts are sent to the Director of Higher Education and International Development for approval and finally signed off by the Assistant Principal (Quality).

41   Under the terms of its agreement with the University, it is the College's responsibility to secure approval for the information it publishes about University-validated provision. Evidence provided to the team confirmed that these requirements are adhered to.

42   All handbooks provide useful information and comply with the minimum requirements. However, there is variation in presentation and in the level of detail. Programme leaders are responsible for compiling handbooks and for issuing these to students. It is desirable that the College develop procedures to monitor handbooks across the higher education provision in order to promote greater consistency in the presentation and content of programme information.

43   The College produces a number of documents to support the process of producing public information including photography and copyright release forms. There is a College policy to guide the use of social media technologies. The Developmental engagement identified as good practice in assessment the process of using social media sites to give feedback. This is done in line with the College Social Media Protocols and is being closely monitored by programme teams. The College also has an Acceptable Use of the Internet policy which is available to students on the College intranet.

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

C   Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

44   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in May 2011. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College and ensured that all IQER core themes could be addressed. The lines of enquiry were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: To what extent are academic standards maintained and developed through the design of real, vocationally relevant assessment activities?

Line of enquiry 2: Is feedback constructive and timely and does it promote student learning and academic development?

Line of enquiry 3: How does the College ensure that information on assessment is accurate and understood by students?

45   The Developmental engagement team identified four areas of good practice. The mapping of assessment criteria with work-related learning outcomes in the BA (Hons) Service Sector Management handbook; the College's approach in making available a wide variety of work-based experiences enables students to achieve an appropriate range of work-related skills; the cross-college moderation process which is particularly well managed

and ensures that written feedback is timely, constructive and promotes learning; and the use of voice recording and social media to provide feedback to students is especially well developed and promotes a continuous and effective dialogue with students.

46   The team also made four recommendations. It considered it advisable for the College to ensure more rigorous marking where marking criteria were identified by external examiners as being interpreted too generously. It considered it desirable that the College review its existing disparate strategic statements in relation to teaching, learning and assessment to develop a comprehensive teaching, learning and assessment strategy. It also considered it desirable that the College review documentation to provide consistency in the internal verification process and develop a documented strategy for employer engagement on higher education programmes.

D   Foundation Degrees

47   The College offers 14 Foundation Degrees in a range of vocationally related areas, including business, design, early years, teaching and learning, media, music, theatre, fashion, hospitality, and tourism. All programmes have healthy recruitment and have been developed with contributions from employers.

48   Foundation Degrees are clearly in line with the College's Higher Education strategy and its mission to meet the needs of employers and the regional economy. The College also values Foundation Degrees as vehicles for widening participation and progression. Many employers offer work placements, provide live briefs and projects, and offer feedback on assessment and performance.

49   All conclusions indicated in paragraphs 51 to 54 are equally relevant to the Foundation Degrees provided by the College.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

50   The team has identified a number of features of good practice in New College Nottingham'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, Nottingham Trent University and Edexcel.

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

- the Higher Education Course Leaders' meetings provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and provide an excellent forum for sharing good practice (paragraph 11)
- the availability of accessible and comprehensive resources to support staff involved in higher education provision through the Higher Education Academic Staff Handbook and 'HE Tutornet' (paragraph 19)
- the many opportunities provided by the College and employers which enable students to acquire and demonstrate work-related skills and enhance their employability (paragraph 27)
- the multiple opportunities for students to provide feedback on their learning experiences and the timeliness of actions taken by the College in response to students' views (paragraph 28)
- the provision of an accessible and comprehensive system of support which addresses the needs of all higher education students (paragraphs 29, 30 and 31)

- the support and encouragement provided for scholarly activity, subject updating and sharing good practice through the organisation of an annual higher education conference (paragraph 33).

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

53   The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:

- ensure that the Programme Standards and Quality Reports fully and consistently utilise data and provide detailed responses to external examiners' comments in the review and evaluation of provision (paragraph 17).

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

- develop procedures to monitor student handbooks across the higher education provision in order to promote greater consistency in the presentation and content of programme information (paragraph 42).

55   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

56   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

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

New College Nottingham action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2012						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the Higher Education Course Leaders' meetings provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and provide an excellent forum for sharing good practice (paragraph 11)	Maintain cycle of Higher Education Course Leaders' meetings to facilitate discussion on higher education provision; contribute to development of policy and practice; and enable sharing of good practice Use Higher Education Course Leaders as forum to correlate information	June 2013	Director of Higher Education and International Development/Head of Higher Education	Lecturers working collaboratively; practice shared and adapted; schedule of meetings issued with minutes/ actions published	Assistant Principal Quality/Heads of Academy/Higher Education Course Leaders	Programme Standards and Quality Reports/Higher Education Course Leaders' meeting minutes
• the availability of accessible and comprehensive resources to support staff involved in higher education provision through	Annual review of Higher Education Academic Handbook for Staff; monitor and maintain HE Tutornet	August 2013	Higher Education Standards and Programme Development Manager/Higher Education Office	Maintain comprehensive intranet resource supporting effective delivery, improved standards and enhanced quality	Director of Higher Education and International Development/Deputy Principal Resources/Heads of Academy/higher education lecturing	Programme Standards and Quality Reports/ All College higher education documentation

the Higher Education Academic Staff Handbook and 'HE Tutornet' (paragraph 19)				of learning opportunities	staff	
• the many opportunities provided by the College and employers which enable students to acquire and demonstrate work-related skills and enhance their employability (paragraph 27)	Maintain and develop wide variety of work-based experiences, including guest speakers from industry, to enhance students' assessment opportunities and enhance employability Map current engagement with employers where higher education provision is concerned Link to Work-Based Learning Strategy and Higher Education and Skills Strategy	June 2013	Director of Higher Education and International/Head of Higher Education/ Assistant Principal Enterprise/Heads of Academy/ Higher Education Course Leaders/Higher Education 'Intrapreneurs'	Introduction of employability skills module during academic year 2012-13 National Student Survey feedback to exceed benchmarks by at least 5% Student destination survey overall progression to employment to exceed national benchmark by 10% Strategies for employer engagement for Higher Education provision to be disseminated via HE Tutornet	Assistant Principal Enterprise and College Directorate/Academic Board; Heads of Academy/Higher Education Course Leaders; made public	National Student Survey/on-programme student feedback; Programme Standards and Quality Review/Course Review
• the multiple opportunities for students to	Review mechanisms to collect and respond to student views;	March 2013	Director of Higher Education and International	Continuous improvement in constructive and	Assistant Principal Quality/Director of Higher Education	National Student Survey/on-programme

provide feedback on their learning experiences and the timeliness of actions taken by the College in response to students' views (paragraph 28)	dissemination to Higher Education Course Leaders and other higher education lecturing staff		Development/Head of Higher Education/Cluster Directors/ Heads of Academy/all higher education lecturing staff	timely feedback and actions promoting student learning and academic development	and International Development/Cluster Directors/Heads of Academy/Higher Education Course Leaders	student feedback; Programme Standards and Quality Reports
• the provision of an accessible and comprehensive system of support which addresses the needs of all higher education students (paragraph 29, 30, 31)	Maintain and build upon cross-college and higher education student support processes, including: advice and guidance; language development; academic and employability support	June 2013	Director of Higher Education and International Development/Head of Higher Education/Cluster Directors/ Heads of Academy/all Higher Education lecturing staff/Academic Coaching and Employability Skills (ACES) team	No adverse external examiner/university verifier comments regarding systems of student support in reports for 2012 and 2013	Assistant Principal Quality/Director of Higher Education and International Development/Cluster Directors/Heads of Academy/Higher Education Course Leaders	National Student Survey/on-programme student feedback; Programme Standards and Quality Reports
• the support and encouragement provided for scholarly activity, subject updating and sharing good practice through the organisation of an annual higher education conference (paragraph 33).	Support staff to undertake higher level qualifications; provide developmental activities within Clusters/Academies delivering higher education Continue to support delivery staff in subject updating; encourage	July 2013	Director of Higher Education and International Development/Head of Higher Education/Cluster Directors/Heads of Academy	Improving higher education staff qualification profile; currency of vocational expertise of lecturing staff to be maintained Scholarly activity records to reflect high level of	Assistant Principal Quality/Deputy Principal Resources/Higher Education Course Leaders and lecturing staff	Programme Standards and Quality Reports Personal Development Reviews

				activity		
	scholarly activity and provide opportunities to share good practice through structured provision via rolling programme of staff development			Sharing of staff expertise and good practice at higher education conferences		
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 Programme Standards and Quality Reports fully and consistently utilise data and provide detailed responses to external examiners' comments in the review and evaluation of provision (paragraph 17).	Review procedure for production, moderation and approval of Programme Standards and Quality Reports Liaise with validating University in further development of report template and accompanying guidance for completion to improve consistency in data recording, analysis and evaluation	January 2013	Assistant Principal Quality/Director of Higher Education and International/Head of Higher Education/HE Standards and Programme Development Manager	Introduction of agreed data set into Programme Standards and Programme Reports to ensure consistency and rigour in data evaluation	Assistant Principal Quality/Academic Board	Cross-college moderation of reports; approval by Academic Board
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:						
• develop procedures to	Review production of programme	March 2013	Head of Higher Education/Higher	All programmes produce	Assistant Principal Quality/Director of	Internal moderation;

monitor student handbooks across the higher education provision in order to promote greater consistency in the presentation and content of programme information (paragraph 42).	handbooks for all higher education programmes, including provision of revised template, guidance and moderation guidelines		Education Standards and Programme Development Manager/Higher Education Course Leaders	handbooks to the required level of presentation, consistency and content through audit	Higher Education and International	Course Review; Student feedback External Examiner reports; Higher Education Course Leaders' minutes