



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

New College Swindon

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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 New College Swindon carried out in November 2010

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or 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 provision of the *Code of practice* on the College's virtual learning environment to support consistency of approach across the higher education provision
- the development and use of a matrix, which clearly outlines the College's different management responsibilities for higher education across the partnerships with awarding bodies
- the team ethos in the FdA Professional Photography to develop higher education management processes fully in line with the Academic Infrastructure, engage with small businesses and share experiences within and outside the College
- the recent commencement of a rigorous training programme for higher education staff in connection with the Academic Infrastructure
- the College's participation in the Wessex Partnership of Colleges in relation to the awards of Bath Spa University, which supports the development and sharing of good practice
- the annual Self Assessment Report for the FdA Professional Photography is a model of good monitoring practice at course level
- the appointment of an Advanced Practitioner for higher education whose role will be to support the development of higher education teaching and learning and quality processes
- the College website, which contains much useful information about courses and is easy to navigate
- the Course Handbook for the FdA Professional Photography lays out the academic appeals procedure for students with clear adherence to the *Code of practice, Section 5*
- written information given to employers and students regarding work placements is well organised, comprehensive and helpful.

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:

- clarify the role and terms of reference of the Higher Education Coordinator position in the College and how this relates to the role of the Director of Curriculum
- align APEL management practices with the intent of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* to ensure the early identification of APEL opportunities, that APEL is valued as an educational process, and that it is used to its fullest extent and is effectively deployed as a marketing tool with employers
- implement a more detailed and rigorous analysis of course self assessment reports to ensure important matters are highlighted in the higher education self assessment report for appropriate management overview and involvement
- revise the College additions to the course and higher education self assessment report formats so that they are fit for purpose for higher education
- include a requirement to review the involvement of employers in Foundation Degree annual monitoring reports
- set out clearly the range of data and analysis required for the quality health checks and annual monitoring
- undertake mapping of all relevant sections of the *Code of practice* related to the quality of learning opportunities to measure the alignment of management practices with these
- monitor the quality of the materials on and accessibility of the virtual learning environments to ensure parity of opportunity for all students
- implement a procedure for checking the accuracy and consistency of information in handbooks.

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

- develop a closer working relationship between higher education staff and the Business Development Unit to fully implement the Employer Responsiveness Strategy and develop the portfolio of Foundation Degrees within this
- when formalising peer observation arrangements for staff teaching in higher education, ensure fair coverage while spreading good practice and consistency across the provision
- consider introducing methods for tracking and gaining an overview of the use to which scholarly time is put and its beneficial impact on teaching and learning
- undertake closer monitoring of the staff take-up of development events at partner universities
- ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to information on every programme in the prospectus
- ensure terminology used for the titles of publications is consistent across all programmes
- ensure consistency of information given to all students whereby handbooks contain information on where details of appeals processes may be found.

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 Swindon. 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 Bath Spa University, the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England, Bristol, and Thames Valley University. The review was carried out by Mr David Gardiner, Ms Patricia Millner and Ms Daphne Rowlands (reviewers) and Dr Gordon Edwards (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in November 2010. 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 and reports of reviews by QAA. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 New College Swindon is a general further education college with more than 2,800 14-18 year olds, over 13,000 adult students, and 500 staff, offering 900 courses from pre-entry to level 7. At the time of the Summative review there were 117 students (112.5 full-time equivalent) enrolled on higher education programmes, primarily Foundation Degrees. This reflects approximately three per cent of the College's provision. The College's mission, which informs the Higher Education Strategy, is to provide quality education, training and services that meet customer needs, encourage individuals to reach their full potential, support lifelong learning and help young people, the community and business to prosper. As part of this, the College aims to put customers first, and provide services in ways that are flexible, responsive, friendly and efficient.

5 The College provides its higher education in collaboration with Bath Spa University, the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England, Bristol, and Thames Valley University. The following programmes are offered by the College:

Bath Spa University

- FdEd Early Years (24 FTE)
- FdEd Teaching Assistants (16 FTE)
- BA/BSc - Year 1 Combined Awards: English, Psychology, Sociology (6 FTE)

University of Gloucestershire

- FdA Professional Photography (19 FTE)

- FdA Accounting with Business Management (4 FTE)

University of the West of England, Bristol

- FdSc Health & Social Care Practice (29 FTE)
- FdSc Computing & ICT (9 FTE)

Thames Valley University

- FdSc Computer Systems Management (5.5 FTE).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The responsibilities in the partnership of the College with each awarding body are defined in memoranda of agreement, and fuller details are given in a separate matrix of responsibilities. The University of Gloucestershire programmes are validated; the remainder are franchised. The partnership agreements and responsibility matrix indicate very different levels of delegated powers between franchised and validated programmes. In the validated programmes, the College has a high level of management responsibility across all core themes. In the franchised programmes, the opposite is the case.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 Both the awarding bodies and the College have input into decisions of whether to run or close programmes, reflecting the success of recruitment and provision. Within the past five years, courses which were closed include HND/Cs in Computing and an FdSc Health & Social Care Management, both being replaced by Foundation Degrees in similar fields, but with a different focus. The FdA in Accounting with Business Management will be phased out in the coming year. The College will use feedback from reviews and marketing to revise this programme and its marketability, and seek another partner in the coming year.

8 Changes to individual programme specifications have also occurred using evaluation of feedback from all stakeholders. For example, the programme in photography underwent significant rewriting in response to such feedback, to be validated as the FdA in Professional Photography in May 2008. All Bath Spa University programmes were rewritten for September 2009 to reflect the University's institutional decision to restructure teaching into three terms and year-long modules, rather than semesters. The financial implications for the College were noted in the Developmental engagement, but feedback on the learning experience and results at this stage suggest that students have responded well to the changes.

9 A regular annual target has been to increase student numbers across the courses. Proactive recruitment, targeting progression of Access and A-level students, as well as regional employers and recession-affected adults during 2009-10, increased enquiries and applications, and recruitment for 2009-10 for the first time saw numbers in excess of 100, with all programmes running. However, the individual size for each subject year remained small and the complexity of managing the variations for so few was commented on in the Developmental engagement. Decisions about the sustainability of programmes are confirmed in early September in a curriculum meeting, while recruitment figures are forwarded on request to update the Principal, the Curriculum Development Group and senior management team during the year.

10 In view of the current capping situation on higher education numbers, proposed growth for the immediate future is moderate, but with a clear Higher Education Strategy and, in particular, more focus on employer engagement. But, as the situation is uncertain, the College decided to put the 2011-12 prospectus on hold until the situation became clearer. The prospectus became available at the time of the visit. The College has a Business Development Unit, which is now more closely charged with evaluating employer requirements and formulating higher education responses which are within the College's scope.

11 To support growth and expansion plans across the College, major new building and infrastructure work has recently commenced. This will include a dedicated higher education centre of classrooms and adult learning space within a £10m new annex. This has been funded from College resources as a strategic move to increase the quality of learning opportunities for higher education students and will meet requests for a more adult higher education and professional environment recorded in years of staff-student reviews.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

12 A group of students was briefed on the purposes of IQER by the coordinator at the preparatory meeting. A student written submission was also made available to the team before the visit. On the visit, the team met with a representative range of students in a dedicated meeting.

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?

13 Within the College there is a line management structure, which outlines responsibilities for higher education delivery and quality assurance. Lecturers delivering modules within a higher education programme form a team headed by a Course Leader, who may also be a Team Leader with responsibility for further education courses. Team Leaders from related curriculum areas report to a Curriculum Manager. There are four such curriculum managers with higher education programmes in their areas and they are lead by the Director of Curriculum, who is a member of the senior management team.

14 There is also a Higher Education Coordinator in the College, who has responsibilities to both the Director of Curriculum and the Director of Customer Services and Quality. The role of the Higher Education Coordinator is to establish and maintain overall systems for higher education planning, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance and to ensure coherence and consistency across all the provision, in line with the agreements with the partner awarding bodies. However, the position of the Higher Education Coordinator does not appear on the organisation chart and the terms of reference of this role and how it relates to that of the Director of Curriculum and the overall process of managing standards is not clear. It is therefore not clear who within the senior management team has ultimate responsibility for higher education programmes. It is advisable, therefore, to clarify the role and terms of reference of the Higher Education Coordinator and how this relates to the role of the Director of Curriculum.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 The College has a Higher Education Strategy which makes a clear distinction between further and higher education. Higher education uses the Academic Infrastructure as the basic model and the strategy supports higher education standards by clearly mapping progression from further to higher education, outlining approaches for increasing employer engagement and detailing higher-level professional programmes that map into higher education.

16 In programmes validated by the University of Gloucestershire, course leaders in the College have always written programme specifications under the guidance of the Academic Infrastructure. These have to be approved by the College's senior management team. The Academic Infrastructure is also embedded in all other programme specifications. These act as the template for teams proceeding in their higher education considerations and development.

17 There is an increasing focus on embedding the *Code of practice* and associated terminology into higher education matters at the College. All sections of the *Code of practice* are available locally on the College's virtual learning environment. This is good practice that helps support and reinforce consistency of approach in the College across curriculum developments, management of standards and consolidation of Higher Education development.

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?

18 The College delivers its higher education programmes in partnership with four Universities. Each of these delegate different powers to the College for the management of standards, the highest level of delegation being associated with the programmes validated by the University of Gloucestershire. In the franchised programmes with other universities, the level of management delegation to the College is much lower. In view of this complicated situation, the College has devised, as the first point of reference, a responsibility matrix to support the formal partnership agreements. This clearly outlines the responsibilities resting exclusively with the College and those resting with the awarding bodies. This forms an ongoing basis for discussion and is an aspect of good practice in this particular situation, which reduces the possibility of any misunderstandings.

19 Although there are different levels of delegation across the awarding bodies, the College feels that this does not present any special complications, because staff in a particular curriculum area deal with one awarding body only. However, course leaders are also charged with the spreading of good practice across the College, and the responsibility matrix is a useful framework to support this activity. For example, in the case of the FdA Professional Photography, where the College is delegated a considerable amount of responsibility for developing programme specifications and the management of curriculum and standards, there is a team ethos to develop higher education processes and procedures which are fully in line with the Academic Infrastructure. The team then shares their experiences and helps develop good practice across the College. The programme team has received appropriate support from the University of Gloucestershire in this area, and the University Link Tutor has taken some of the developments for dissemination to other colleges in the region.

20 The College has a clear view of what most local employers require for the benefit of their businesses going forward. However, direct engagement with the private sector is still at

an embryonic stage, particularly regarding the promotion of Foundation Degrees to the employers, the accompanying emphasis on skills development, the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL) and work-based development and assessment. However, the College does have a closer engagement and clearer mission with its public sector employers in connection with the FdSc Health and Social Care and FdEd Teaching Assistants. Also, the work of the course team in the FdA Professional Photography may be used as a model of developmental practice with small to medium-size and microbusinesses.

21 Responsibility for employer engagement to identify the need for any new Foundation Degree depends on whether there are franchised or validated arrangements with the awarding body. Setting up and developing a new course for a specific employer currently takes some time depending on the validating procedure. There is a clear appreciation and understanding among College and awarding body staff of the complications of quickly developing and validating demand-led Foundation Degrees for specific needs. However, the College has developed an Employer Responsiveness Strategy which has been in operation for approximately 18 months. This clearly outlines the College's vision, mission and approach to working with and responding more quickly to employers, both in the public and private sectors. It also clearly identifies new market sectors the College could be involved in, and this in turn is backed up by the annual Business Services Plan produced by the College's Business Development Unit. However, the working relationship between higher education staff and the Business Development Unit is still at a relatively early stage of development. It is desirable for this to become closer to fully implement the Employer Responsiveness Strategy and develop the portfolio of Foundation Degrees within this.

22 Currently, the College has had little involvement with the process of APEL on its Foundation Degrees. It has experienced little demand from individuals, employers or organisations, either for entry or later credit award and module exemption. However, since the Developmental engagement in November 2009 the College has taken the opportunity to promote APEL opportunities more prominently, and regulations for APEL have been placed on the College's virtual learning environment. Nevertheless, some students are still unclear about the role of APEL and at least one student felt that, with a number of years as a small business owner, they might have benefited from APEL.

23 Where isolated individual claims for APEL occur at College level, there is an informal advice process which directs the claimant to awarding body regulations. The awarding body then takes over responsibility. There appears to be little if any continuous professional development for College staff regarding APEL. Overall, a significant amount of development work is still required to align APEL practices with the intent of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and enthuse employers and students returning to study of the benefits of APEL. As part of this, it is advisable to develop a strategy which owns, appreciates and values APEL both as a genuine higher educational process and a marketing tool for employers.

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

24 The College's self-evaluation comments on the commencement two years ago of a rigorous higher education training programme. This is aimed at both management and programme delivery staff and deals with the requirements and subsequent benefits of the implementation of the Academic Infrastructure. Such training is intended to enable higher education teams to measure and evaluate provision with more consistency and focus across awarding bodies.

25 Much of the work on staff training regarding academic standards is currently ongoing as the higher education management team revises self assessment reports to be more exclusively higher education-oriented. However, the higher education management team are aware that all full-time staff have timetables which include further as well as higher education responsibilities. Therefore, the work in progress on the new self-evaluation report formats should not multiply the demands on course leaders and curriculum team managers, who are responsible for the quality standards of both further and higher education.

26 There have been in-house staff development activities specific to higher education since 2009. In 2010 there was a staff development day on the Academic Infrastructure. There have been nine days of training at the end of the academic year 2009-10 and a further seven at the beginning of the academic year 2010-11. Although these training days were not exclusively on higher education, significant components were dedicated to this. The teaching curriculum ceases every Wednesday at 3.00 pm to allow the opportunity to update higher education staff on new and ongoing developments. This is now a formal process. All staff significantly involved in higher education also receive a 10 per cent reduction in class contact time to concentrate exclusively on scholarly activity related to higher education. The impact and benefit of this activity has not yet been measured.

27 All the College's higher education partners also offer training and development time for staff. Bath Spa University has established a regional partnership network, the Wessex Partnership, covering its awards. This affords partner colleges the opportunity to share experience in a non-competitive environment, which includes the sharing and development of good practice, moderation and marking, course rewrites, assessment modification and new themes. In addition to the formal meetings, staff members of the Wessex Partnership find email contact and visits to each other's colleges a useful process to develop and share expertise. College staff speak highly of the development opportunities offered by this partnership. The College's other awarding bodies also meet with their network of colleges to share experiences, but not in a formal partnership.

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?

28 Responsibilities and arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities in higher education and delegation of these within the management structure are broadly the same as those for academic standards that are outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14.

29 The memoranda of agreement and supporting matrix of responsibilities developed by the College give a clear overview of the College's delegated responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities. Course leaders have operational oversight and key responsibility for the quality of their higher education programme. Along with the Higher Education Coordinator, they work closely with the link tutor from the awarding institutions.

30 A Quality Improvement Board has recently been set up to replace the previous Academic Board. The membership includes the College Principal, senior management and

other academic and support staff. The Higher Education Coordinator takes reports to this board as part of the regular reporting cycle. For example, the October meeting of this body receives information about recruitment to the higher education programmes.

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

31 In the first instance, validation procedures carried out by the partner universities ensure that the College has appropriate and sufficient resources for the awards they provide. Thereafter, the Curriculum Team Manager, along with the Course Leader, has responsibility for the continuing adequacy of appropriate learning opportunities, in line with the signed agreement with the awarding body for their individual programmes. The Higher Education Coordinator has the overview of all programmes and monitors the ongoing maintenance of all the higher education provision in alignment with the requirements of each of the four partner universities.

32 Staff within course teams work effectively together through informal and formal meeting arrangements so that any issues can be dealt with quickly at an early stage. Close working relationships with the link tutors at the partner universities successfully ensure the College maintains its obligations in terms of learning opportunities for students. The Wessex Partnership is a particularly supportive partnership of colleges, through which College staff can develop and share their understanding of the demands of the Bath Spa University awards in terms of quality assurance. The Director of Customer Services and Quality is able to use his experience of sitting on the Academic Quality and Standards Committee of the Wessex Partnership to inform evaluation of learning opportunities for higher education students at the College.

33 The College has a formal system for annual quality monitoring and assurance, which links in with the quality assurance systems of the partner institutions. Students complete an end-of-module evaluation, which the module tutor uses to inform their delivery and assessment practice. These are collated by the Course Leader, who prepares the annual course monitoring form, the basic format of which is determined by the awarding university. Although there are variations, these generally report on key data such as retention and achievement, student survey feedback, staff development, learning resources and external examiner reports.

34 The College, on its own behalf, has supplemented the universities' course monitoring forms with its own template. The course monitoring forms identify good practice and areas for development, which inform a Quality Improvement Plan. The course-level reports are forwarded to the partner university and used to inform the Curriculum Area Self Assessment Report and the overall higher education Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan, which are considered at senior management team meetings and the Corporation Board. The annual Self Assessment Report completed for the FdA Professional Photography, which includes an analysis of employer involvement, is a model of good monitoring practice at course level.

35 Detailed examination of these arrangements for annual quality monitoring and self-assessment reporting reveal some weaknesses, both in the overall conceptual design of the system and in its operation by staff. The present Higher Education Self Assessment Report format reflects the further education Ofsted review model and needs to be revised to be fit for purpose for higher education. College staff support this view. Furthermore, most Foundation Degree annual monitoring reports do not include a requirement to review or evaluate the involvement of employers. This is important to include, since the effectiveness

of employer engagement is central to the success of a Foundation Degree. The team also found an instance where an important matter raised in the 2009-10 course-level Self Assessment Report for the FdSc Computing and ICT programme was not picked up in the overall Higher Education Self Assessment Report and the later Higher Education Management and Quality Review process. Although the matter was addressed at course level, College staff acknowledge that it should have been recorded in the overall higher education review processes to allow appropriate management overview and involvement. It is therefore advisable to introduce the above structural improvements and revise the College additions to the course and Higher Education Self Assessment Report formats. Also, to implement a more detailed and rigorous analysis of course-level self-assessments to ensure important matters are highlighted in the Higher Education Self Assessment Report. These improvements should be introduced so that they are in operation in the next quality cycle.

36 The annual quality monitoring process and follow-up on quality improvement action plans is further considered by the Board of Study for each course. The membership of this group includes student representation from each level of study, an adviser from the partner university, the Course Leader, academic staff, associated technical and learning support staff, the Higher Education Coordinator and, if appropriate, the Director of Quality. Issues from Boards of Study may be referred to senior management or other areas of the College as well as being brought to the attention of the awarding institution.

37 In addition to the above processes, the College operates Quality Health Checks on a twice-yearly basis. The Quality Health Checks are data driven and take into consideration a wide range of information, which can be used to help teams prepare for the annual quality monitoring process. The need for better gathering of quality data and sharper scrutiny has been highlighted already by the College. In the process of reviewing its Quality Policy, the College is advised to set out clearly the range of data and analyses required for Quality Health Checks and annual monitoring.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

38 This is described broadly in paragraphs 15 to 17.

39 At validation, higher education programmes have the elements of the Academic Infrastructure embedded within them. Subsequently, the College generally places reliance on the partner universities to ensure observance of the Academic Infrastructure in relation to quality of learning opportunities, via the annual monitoring procedures. In the case of the franchised awards from the University of the West of England, Bristol, Bath Spa University and Thames Valley University, responsibility for most aspects of quality assurance is undertaken by the university. In courses validated by the University of Gloucestershire, there is greater capacity for the College to take responsibility for quality issues and ensure alignment with the Academic Infrastructure. For example, the Course Guide for the Foundation Degree in Professional Photography lays out the academic appeals procedure for students, with clear adherence to the *Code of practice, Section 5*.

40 In the future, the College intends to make greater use of the Academic Infrastructure when addressing matters raised in paragraph 35 above. It is intended that a new format for the course and higher education Self Assessment Reports will deal more explicitly with the Academic Infrastructure, for example in terms of evaluating the programme outcomes against *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. As part of this, the College is also advised to undertake mapping of all relevant sections of the *Code of practice* related to the quality of learning opportunities to measure the alignment of its management practices with these. Examples include *Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*,

Section 3: Disabled students and Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance.

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

41 The College operates lesson observations, which grade teaching sessions using the further education model. Where a member of staff teaches across higher and further education, it is ensured that they are observed at least once in a higher education context in a three-year cycle. The College recognises the need for a different approach for higher education, and has initiated an informal ungraded peer observation scheme where more in-depth discussion takes place between colleagues on pedagogy and academic skills. The University of the West of England, Bristol, has supported the development of this peer observation system. The College has also appointed an Advanced Practitioner for higher education, whose role will be to support the development of higher education teaching and learning and quality processes.

42 Although peer observation of higher education teaching currently takes place in an informal way, results are documented and used as evidence in the Quality Health Checks and quality monitoring Self Assessment Reports. As part of the process of exploring and further developing its peer observations, the College intends that peer observation in a higher education class should occur once per year for each staff member, including part-time and agency staff. However, managers are conscious that tutors teaching across both further and higher education sectors should not be unduly burdened by multiple observations. It is desirable that the College, when formalising its arrangements for peer observation in higher education, ensure appropriate and fair coverage while spreading good practice and consistency across the provision.

43 Staff teams report the significant benefit gained from their links with partner universities and colleges. For example, the opportunities to visit and observe in partner colleges in the Wessex Partnership and the dialogue ensuing from colleagues from Bath Spa University observing teaching at the College have been valuable to College staff in developing their teaching at higher education level.

44 It is expected that staff teaching higher education hold a qualification higher than the level at which they are teaching or appropriate, current professional experience. The partner universities check the qualifications and background of potential lecturers at validation. Tutors at the College are also expected to hold a teaching qualification or be working towards one, although this is not demanded by the partner universities. Students are very complimentary about the quality of teaching they receive. They feel their lecturers are well qualified and up to date in their subject area and professional practice. They appreciate particularly the input of professional and academic experts in master classes, on a range of pertinent topics such as equality and diversity, learning and every child matters. These sessions also provide the opportunity to meet students from other higher education programmes.

45 Although generally very positive about the beneficial effect of small group sizes on teaching and learning, students recognise that often they may not be exposed to the breadth of opinion and experience a larger cohort might afford. Staff also voice this concern. Some students express anxiety about the potential move to a larger university environment when they progress to level 6 study.

46 Managers make themselves aware of the quality of teaching and learning from a range of reports, including student feedback in module evaluations, quality circles and staff-

student reviews, the observation reports and information from the annual quality monitoring programme. The staff performance review process in the College enables the line manager and member of staff to discuss professional development related to higher education and identify appropriate training opportunities.

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

47 The College considers the learner voice to be significant in giving assurance that students are supported effectively. There are a number of events where students are able to provide feedback on their experience, including student representation on official College course boards and the board of study managed by the awarding body. Students are also able to take part in termly staff-student reviews and less formal quality circles on each programme. These events are minuted and actions arising are reported back to students at subsequent meetings, verbally through the course leader and through the posters displayed in student areas of the College. Students consider that the College is responsive to their needs and express satisfaction that their concerns are listened to and acted upon.

48 The College considers that surveys carried out by form filling are of limited use, although they are used for specific, targeted purposes. For example, the Higher Education Assessment Survey was used to get an overview of assessment processes and the timeliness, quality and usefulness of feedback. Students highlight the way a blog was used to enable them to convey their opinions on their course and where delivery methods had been changed as a result of the blog.

49 A comprehensive two-day induction event is highly appreciated by students. In this, students are introduced to staff, the College environment, the library and course requirements, and also undertake an initial diagnostic assessment to determine academic skills needs. This is followed up during the first term by one-hour study skills classes in all programmes. Subsequently, in later terms, skills sessions are programmed to meet emergent needs, which are rapidly identified and responded to in the small class groups.

50 Every student has an allocated personal tutor. The College has identified that high quality, supportive tutoring has had tangible benefits to students on a number of courses in terms of academic progression. Students have allocated tutorial times each week, and these are used for one-to-one academic and pastoral discussions, group sessions or study skills delivery. An online tutoring resource is also beginning to be used to set and track targets agreed for students during tutorial meetings.

51 Higher education students benefit from the wide range of service available in the College. These include careers guidance, counselling, chaplaincy, financial advice, health and welfare and additional support, for example one-to-one assistance for dyslexia following initial diagnosis. The higher education budget is top-sliced to provide funding for support for additional needs where a student may not be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance. The services are well advertised to students in the higher education prospectus, posters and a higher education students leaflet. The awarding universities offer similar areas of support and the College engages in regular discussions with partners to ensure there is an adequate level of support for higher education students. The College intends to introduce monitoring in the future to be better informed about how higher education students use the overall range of services.

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

52 Staff teach across both further and higher education. The College has a clear policy on staff development, which is linked to annual performance review and appraisal. Professional development needs identified at appraisal are addressed through in-house and supported individual activities. Staff who teach on higher education programmes are provided with a 10 per cent of teaching time allowance for scholarly activity. Although this is recorded on an individual's continuing professional development file and is discussed with their line manager at appraisal, there is no system for obtaining an overview of the benefits of this investment across the whole higher education provision. It is desirable for the College to consider introducing methods for tracking and gaining an overview of the use to which this time is put and its beneficial impact on teaching and learning across the higher education provision.

53 Recent in-house development events for higher education staff have included sessions to share good practice on tutoring and assessment, and to inform staff on wider issues such as the Academic Infrastructure. Staff also have the opportunity to attend events at their partner institutions, although it is not clear how well these are taken up. It is desirable that the College undertake closer monitoring of this. Close working relationships with partner institutions result in much informal development by course teams. For example, Early Years staff have shared practice in teaching and learning and have developed assessment and moderation procedures with colleagues in the university.

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?

54 The adequacy of learning resources in terms of the learning outcomes for programmes is checked at validation by the awarding institution. Ongoing sufficiency, accessibility and appropriateness is monitored by course teams and Curriculum Team Managers, informed by student feedback and reflection prompted by the annual monitoring processes. Higher education students are registered at the partner university as well as the College. As such, they are able to access facilities at both institutions, though the uptake of libraries and learning support at universities continues to be low.

55 The library maintains a separate budget for higher education books and journals and liaises with course leaders to ensure required reading material and any additional texts are available and sufficient for the group sizes. Students express general satisfaction with levels of book stock and access, although students on the Combined Studies programme found that there were insufficient copies of books to meet the needs of the group and had subsequently bought the books needed.

56 The College is developing an e-learning strategy. There is an increasing use of the virtual learning environment for students to access class notes, lecture slides and other learning sources. Assessments are submitted online through Turnitin software. However, student views on the use of the virtual learning environment are mixed. Some find it extremely helpful and use it on a daily basis, whereas others, after having initial problems getting into the sites, have given up. This applies both to the College and partner universities' systems. The College is advised to introduce monitoring of the quality of materials and accessibility of the virtual learning environments to ensure parity of opportunity for all students.

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?

57 The College's self-evaluation does not contain a full list of all public information it is responsible for publishing. However, the matrix of responsibilities does contain a partial list and the team was able to establish further details during the visit.

58 The College is responsible for publishing its overall higher education prospectus, although approval is needed from its partner universities for the material used within the prospectus. The College has also published its Higher Education Strategy, which was submitted to HEFCE in January 2010.

59 The College is responsible for producing the handbooks issued to students, both the generic handbook issued to all higher education students and the handbook for each validated course within its provision. Module handbooks, unit guides and assessment guidance given to students are also within the remit of the College for the validated programmes. The awarding body is responsible for these on the franchised programmes but they can be customised by the curriculum team.

60 Assignment briefs and forms used for marking, assessment and feedback are produced by the College for the validated programmes of the University of Gloucestershire. For other programmes, these are provided by the awarding body, or, in the case of Bath Spa University programmes, through the Wessex Partnership.

61 The College publishes student services guides for higher education students and is also responsible for information issued to employers prior to students going out on placements. The College website is maintained by the College and the accuracy and completeness of information on it, including programme information sheets, is the responsibility of the College. Programme specifications are outlined within the course handbooks produced by the College for the validated programmes and the awarding body for the franchised programmes

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?

62 The College website contains pages which include an explanation of university and higher education. Information is provided by relevant curriculum managers and the text is signed off by university partners. The team found that the website contains much useful current information about courses and is easy to navigate. It allows users to choose a subject area of interest and obtain information pertaining to the courses. The website provides links to the universities which validate its higher education programmes. Students find the information posted on the website useful. Information on success rates is published on the website, but this differs from information published in the higher education Self Assessment Report, which feeds into the College Self Assessment Report.

63 Useful information sheets are provided for each of the higher education courses. These are available on the website and as hard copies within the College. The format adopted is standardised. Staff indicate that a clear timetable is produced as part of the annual cycle to inform managers of the relevant deadline for information sheet material and to ensure that this is current and accurate. A flowchart describing how information sheets are produced is also available, which indicates the involvement of the College's Marketing Department, the internal approval point and external review by awarding body partners. The College has ultimate sign-off responsibility for all information sheets.

64 A flowchart for producing the prospectus is also available. This indicates how the production of information sheets feeds into the development of the prospectus. Prospectus text is sent to university partners for approval and sign off. The College has ultimate sign-off responsibility for the prospectus, which is checked by the Marketing Manager and Admissions Assistant. College staff state that there is close liaison with partner universities to ensure accuracy and completeness of prospectus information. For most programmes, the information in the prospectus includes details of some of the modules to be studied. A general description of teaching and learning and how assessment will take place is also included. Entry requirements are clearly stated and progression opportunities are listed on most courses. However, language used is inconsistent between courses and in some cases progression is not mentioned at all. Details are given of course entry codes and how to apply. It is not clear in the prospectus which University is responsible for each award and this might be confusing for applicants. It is desirable that the College consider how to ensure a more consistent and comprehensive approach to information included in its prospectus.

65 The College provides students with handbooks for their programmes of study, and a generic higher education guide is also given to all students. Students also receive module guides and course handbooks from the appropriate validating institution; these follow the relevant institution's regulations. Agreement on content is reached between partners and the College and they are revised annually. Students state that they find the handbooks useful and containing sufficient information for their purposes. The information contained within handbooks varies across programmes. The handbooks which are produced by the College for the franchised programmes contain some information which has not been updated from previous years. For example, a course handbook relating to 2010-11 refers to an induction programme beginning in September 2008. Also, academic levels in some handbooks are incorrect and refer to levels 1 and 2, compared with information sheets which refer correctly to levels 4 and 5. It is advisable to ensure that a robust procedure is in place for checking the accuracy and consistency of information in course handbooks.

66 The terminology used by the College in relation to handbooks given to students is inconsistent and potentially confusing. For example, the self-evaluation refers to student handbooks and course guides, whereas the matrix of responsibilities refers to course handbooks and unit handbooks. It is desirable to ensure terminology used for the titles of such publications is consistent across all programmes.

67 The academic appeals process is not clearly stated in the generic student handbook for higher education. Students indicate that they are unsure where they find information on appeals procedures. However, the Course Handbook for the FdA Professional Photography lays out the academic appeals procedure for students with clear adherence to the *Code of practice, Section 5*. Information on appeals is available for the franchised programmes on the relevant partner websites, but it is not clearly signposted for students in the course or module handbooks. It is desirable for the College to ensure consistency of information given to all students whereby handbooks contain information on where details of appeals processes may be found.

68 Written information given to employers regarding work placements is generally well organised and complete. This is agreed by employers to be comprehensive and helpful. Students indicate that information given to them before placements is useful and thorough and that employers appear well prepared when they undertake their placements.

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

69 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in November 2009. The scope of the provision at that time included seven Foundation Degrees and a first year of the BA/BSc Combined Award. Awards were validated or franchised by Bath Spa University, the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England, Bristol, and Thames Valley University. The lines of enquiry relating to assessment were:

Line of enquiry 1: The effectiveness of feedback in formative and summative assessments.

Line of enquiry 2: How induction and study skills produce outcomes that affect learning and teaching.

Line of enquiry 3: The way public information reflects assessment and achievement.

70 A number of good practices were identified. These included a variety of assessment and feedback methods, feedback which was particularly effective in developing professional skills, continuous professional development for staff on assessment practices and the detailed and useful information on assessment in course handbooks.

71 The reviewers identified three advisable recommendations. These covered the need to provide clearer information and raise awareness of APEL, incorporate the APEL policy in the College's Higher Education Strategy and clarify the situation with regard to classification of Foundation Degrees. It was also considered desirable, among other things, to enhance employer engagement, spread the good practice on assessment feedback observed in the University of Gloucestershire programmes and standardise information in course information sheets.

D Foundation Degrees

72 The College offers the following Foundation Degrees in conjunction with its four awarding bodies. Current full-time equivalent student numbers in each case are indicated in brackets.

Bath Spa University

- FdEd Early Years (24 FTE)
- FdEd Teaching Assistants (16 FTE)

University of Gloucestershire

- FdA Accounting with Business Management (4 FTE)
- FdA Professional Photography (19 FTE)

University of the West of England, Bristol

- FdSc Computing & ICT (9 FTE)
- FdSc Health & Social Care Practice (29 FTE)

Thames Valley University

- FdSc Computer Systems Management (5.5 FTE).

73 All conclusions and summaries of judgements in section E below relate to the Foundation Degree provision.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

74 The Summative review team has identified a number of areas of good practice in New College Swindon'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.

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

- the provision of the *Code of practice* on the College's virtual learning environment to support consistency of approach across the higher education provision (paragraph 17)
- the development and use of a matrix, which clearly outlines the College's different management responsibilities for higher education across the partnerships with awarding bodies (paragraph 18)
- the team ethos in the FdA Professional Photography to develop higher education management processes fully in line with the Academic Infrastructure, engage with small businesses and share experiences within and outside the College (paragraphs 19, 20)
- the recent commencement of a rigorous training programme for higher education staff in connection with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 24)
- the College's participation in the Wessex Partnership of Colleges in relation to the awards of Bath Spa University, which supports the development and sharing of good practice (paragraph 27)
- the annual Self Assessment Report for the FdA Professional Photography is a model of good monitoring practice at course level (paragraph 34)
- the appointment of an Advanced Practitioner for higher education whose role will be to support the development of higher education teaching and learning and quality processes (paragraph 41)
- the College website, which contains much useful information about courses and is easy to navigate (paragraph 62)
- the Course Handbook for the FdA Professional Photography lays out the academic appeals procedure for students with clear adherence to the *Code of practice, Section 5* (paragraph 67)
- written information given to employers and students regarding work placements is well organised, comprehensive and helpful (paragraph 68).

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

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

- clarify the role and terms of reference of the Higher Education Coordinator position in the College and how this relates to the role of the Director of Curriculum (paragraph 14)
- align APEL management practices with the intent of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* to ensure the early identification of APEL opportunities, that APEL is valued as an educational process, and that it is used to its fullest extent and is effectively deployed as a marketing tool with employers (paragraph 23)
- implement a more detailed and rigorous analysis of course self assessment reports to ensure important matters are highlighted in the higher education self assessment report for appropriate management overview and involvement (paragraph 35)
- revise the College additions to the course and higher education self assessment report formats so that they are fit for purpose for higher education (paragraph 35)
- include a requirement to review the involvement of employers in Foundation Degree annual monitoring reports (paragraph 35)
- set out clearly the range of data and analysis required for the quality health checks and annual monitoring (paragraph 37)
- undertake mapping of all relevant sections of the *Code of practice* related to the quality of learning opportunities to measure the alignment of management practices with these (paragraph 40)
- monitor the quality of the materials on and accessibility of the virtual learning environments to ensure parity of opportunity for all students (paragraph 56)
- implement a procedure for checking the accuracy and consistency of information in handbooks (paragraph 65)

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

- develop a closer working relationship between higher education staff and the Business Development Unit to fully implement the Employer Responsiveness Strategy and develop the portfolio of Foundation Degrees within this (paragraph 21)
- when formalising peer observation arrangements for staff teaching in higher education, ensure fair coverage while spreading good practice and consistency across the provision (paragraph 42)
- consider introducing methods for tracking and gaining an overview of the use to which scholarly time is put and its beneficial impact on teaching and learning (paragraph 52)
- undertake closer monitoring of the staff take-up of development events at partner universities (paragraph 53)
- ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to information on every programme in the prospectus (paragraph 64)
- ensure terminology used for the titles of publications is consistent across all programmes (paragraph 66)
- ensure consistency of information given to all students whereby handbooks contain information on where details of appeals processes may be found (paragraph 67).

79 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.

Integrated quality and enhancement review

80 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.

81 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

New College Swindon action plan relating to the summative review: November 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of the <i>Code of practice</i> on the College's virtual learning environment to support consistency of approach across the higher education provision (paragraph 17) 	<p>Review applicability to a wider range of courses</p> <p>Use in revising annual review process</p>	May 2011	Quality Improvement Team, Student Services Manager	Increasing consistency of approach	Quality Improvement Team	Quality manager to evaluate provision at end-of-year reviews and include in report to Senior Management Team (SMT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development and use of a matrix, which clearly outlines the College's different management responsibilities for higher education across the partnerships with awarding bodies (paragraph 18) 	<p>Continue to review periodically to ensure accuracy</p> <p>Consider impact in the current review of College management responsibilities and structure</p>		HE Coordinator, curriculum team managers (CTMs), SMT	Clear appreciation of roles and remit by management as well as course leaders	Higher Education Management and Quality Review (HEMQR)	End-of-year reviews - include check in HE Self Assessment Report (SAR)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the team ethos in the FD Professional Photography to develop higher education management processes fully in line with the Academic Infrastructure, engage with small businesses and share experiences within and outside the College (paragraphs 19, 20) 	Continue to share this as good practice	Ongoing	Course leaders of FDs, Business Development Manager, Professional Development Officer	Greater level of engagement with Academic Infrastructure and employer involvement in Foundation Degrees	HEMQR	Course SARs - then reflected in HE SAR by HE Coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the recent commencement of a rigorous training programme for higher education staff in connection with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 24) 	<p>Continue to review key areas for College HE Staff Development Day and continuing professional development (CPD) programme</p> <p>Encourage participation in HE CPD events for greater standardisation and professional updating</p> <p>Through the performance review process, separately indicate developmental needs and sharing good</p>	July 2011-ongoing	HE Coordinator, Professional Development Advisor	Greater use of terminology within course documentation, increased awareness at cross-college management levels of the <i>Code of practice</i>	HEMQR	Monitor progress through scrutiny of SARs, Health Checks, staff appraisals

	practice through the HE Team within College					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's participation in the Wessex Partnership of Colleges in relation to the awards of Bath Spa University, which supports the development and sharing of good practice (paragraph 27) 	Continue to promote and participate whenever possible	Ongoing - include in annual reviews	Course leaders, CTMs, HE Coordinator	Continued sharing of good practice and common goals	HEMQR	Evaluation of CPD on Development Days recorded in notes, staff appraisals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the annual Self Assessment Report for the FdA Professional Photography is a model of good monitoring practice at course level (paragraph 34) 	Use in revising the template for all level 4/5/6 courses	May 2011	HE Coordinator, Interim Director of Quality	Improved quality and greater consistency in HE course SARs for 2010-11	HEMQR	Checklist of information to be included in SARs at course level and team levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the appointment of an Advanced Practitioner for higher education whose role will be to support the development of higher education teaching and learning and quality processes (paragraph 41) 	Job description currently being drafted and approved for advertisement - this individual will have responsibilities for teaching and learning observations to HE-approved standards, structures and guidelines	March 2011-	Human Resources and Quality Improvement Manager	Evaluate quality success rates and student entitlements, compile external examiner reports and summarise findings for the annual Health Checks and HEMQR,	Quality Improvement Manager	Evaluation at Health Checks and through SARs Standardisation and monitoring of teaching standards

				share best practice and evaluate improvements needed for passing to Quality Health Checks and Advanced Practitioner best practice workshops		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College website, which contains much useful information about courses and is easy to navigate (paragraph 62) 	Continue to develop. Part of recruitment and marketing cycle	Ongoing - review July 2011	E-learning and marketing teams	Students (current and potential) and staff are able to find answers and information	E-learning and marketing managers	Analysis of feedback from students, HEIs and staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Course Handbook for the FdA Professional Photography lays out the academic appeals procedure for students with clear adherence to the <i>Code of practice, Section 5</i> (paragraph 67) 	Review when considering how to best promote awareness for franchised courses where handbooks are produced by HEIs	March 2011	Course leaders	Increased student awareness of policies and procedures	HE Coordinator	Analysis of student feedback

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written information given to employers and students regarding work placements is well organised, comprehensive and helpful (paragraph 68). 	Ensure all FD programmes use this, share with Business Development Managers, place on virtual learning environment (VLE) for easy access, review appropriateness for a wider range of courses in the College	March 2011-	Course leaders, business development managers	Students, staff, mentors and employers feel well informed and supported throughout the work placements	HE Coordinator	SAR - question included to check
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify the role and terms of reference of the Higher Education Coordinator position in the College and how this relates to the role of the Director of Curriculum (paragraph 14) 	Part of College-wide review of roles and responsibilities in management structure spring/summer 2011	April 2011	HE Coordinator, Director of Curriculum and Interim Director of Quality	Published confirmation of a revised structure with clear reporting channels	SMT, Governors, Curriculum and Quality Committee (subcommittee of the Corporation)	HE Coordinator to check management flow chart of responsibilities is updated and accurate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> align APEL management practices with the intent of the <i>Foundation Degree qualification benchmark</i> to ensure the early identification of APEL opportunities, that APEL is valued as an educational process, and that it is used to its fullest extent and is effectively deployed as a marketing tool with employers (paragraph 23) 	Review APEL guidance with HEIs, QAA <i>Code of practice</i> and benchmarks - clarify guidance for promotional material and interviews, check with partner universities	August 2011	Course leaders and Business Services Manager (Business Services Manager) Marketing Manager (Marketing)	Increased recruitment, procedure to cover guidance on Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)	HE Coordinator	IAG process, accuracy of pre-entry information - scrutiny of recruitment profiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a more detailed and rigorous analysis of course self assessment reports to ensure important matters are highlighted in the higher education self assessment report for appropriate management overview and involvement (paragraph 35) 	Training to track, collect, review and use data more effectively, review the trigger questions for evaluating data	June 2011	Course leaders, CTM, HE Coordinator, Interim Director of Quality	Integrated link of programme reviews to College SAR process	Quality Improvement Team	Director of Quality to evaluate audit trails through appropriate minutes, reviews and feedback

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revise the College additions to the course and higher education self assessment report formats so that they are fit for purpose for higher education (paragraph 35) 	Review HEI templates and reporting requirements, revise templates used by College for end-of-year SAR	June 2011	HE Coordinator, Director of Quality, Quality Improvement Manager	SARs for HE programmes will reflect Academic Infrastructure and HE requirements of data collection at course, curriculum and team levels	HEMQR and Director of Quality	Responsiveness to Academic Infrastructure as well as College success indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include a requirement to review the involvement of employers in Foundation Degree annual monitoring reports (paragraph 35) 	Revise templates to require that feedback be included in the SARs, explore best practices of gaining feedback/report on employer engagement/ experience with learners on the courses, explore the desirability of sending a copy of the SAR to employers for comments	June 2011	Course leaders and Business Services Manager with Business Development Unit	Increased employer engagement, ability to check appropriateness of degree content and student skills	HEMQR and Quality Improvement Team	Review feedback and methods, evaluate appropriacy and benefits after end-of-year reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> set out clearly the range of data and analysis required for the quality health checks and annual monitoring (paragraph 37) 	Review pre-health check MOT pro forma to ensure it is fit for HE purpose	March 2011	Quality Manager with Quality and Tutoring Manager	Capture of relevant HE data	Director of Quality and SMT	Accuracy of information collected for Health Checks reflecting best forecast

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertake mapping of all relevant sections of the <i>Code of practice</i> related to the quality of learning opportunities to measure the alignment of management practices with these (paragraph 40) 	<p>Revisit course specifications, review and attach in course documentation policy on disability, equality of opportunities, assessments practices and feedback, etc</p>	<p>July 2011</p>	<p>Course leaders in conjunction with CTMs, Student Services Manager</p>	<p>Sharper focus for staff and students on good practices and precept of degree provision</p>	<p>HEMQR and Quality Improvement Team</p>	<p>Review course documentation at end of year</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor the quality of the materials on and accessibility of the virtual learning environments to ensure parity of opportunity for all students (paragraph 56) 	<p>Part of remit of the newly established team for developing and monitoring virtual learning environment</p>	<p>July 2011</p>	<p>Innovation and Learning Resource Team and E-learning team</p>	<p>All students able to access good-quality subject learning materials as well as advice and guidance about study, policies and procedures from within College and at home</p>	<p>Director of Curriculum, SMT</p>	<p>Scrutinise and monitor student and staff feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement a procedure for checking the accuracy and consistency of information in handbooks (paragraph 65). 	<p>In prep for next year - meeting of course leaders where material is scrutinised, best practices noted and revisions recorded</p> <p>Balance between information in HEI handbooks and what else is covered in College handbook -</p>	<p>HE Development Day July 2011</p> <p>September 2011</p>	<p>Course leaders with HE Coordinator</p>	<p>No discrepancies or omissions of key information, greater consistency of style</p>	<p>HE Coordinator</p>	<p>Check if all information in the public domain to report to the HEMQR in October - include item on agenda as checkpoint</p>

	institute annual checking and sign-off process to ensure all handbooks which College is responsible for are updated accurately					
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desirable to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a closer working relationship between higher education staff and the Business Development Unit to fully implement the Employer Responsiveness Strategy and develop the portfolio of Foundation Degrees within this (paragraph 21) 	Increase the inclusion in discussion and planning meetings, Curriculum and Development Group (CDG), relocation of HE classrooms with Business Services in the new annexe	September 2011	HE Coordinator, course leaders, Business Services Manager and Business Development Manager	Greater awareness of the different elements of employer engagement in a range of programmes in the College portfolio	SMT	SARs - evidence of meetings and planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when formalising peer observation arrangements for staff teaching in higher education, ensure fair coverage while spreading good 	Introduce an annual observation calendar	June 2011	CTM/Ls, Professional Development Advisor, Curriculum Manager - Skills for Life	Meet minimum target on HE profile	Quality Improvement Team	Review through appraisal and CPD reviews

practice and consistency across the provision (paragraph 42)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider introducing methods for tracking and gaining an overview of the use to which scholarly time is put and its beneficial impact on teaching and learning (paragraph 52) 	Methods of recording (revised CV annually), annual performance review - questions built into guidance for CTL/CTM	May 2011	Professional Development Advisor and HR, CTM/L	Clearly indicated and recorded HE scholarly activity and reflective practices	Human Resources and HE Coordinator	Review through appraisal and CPD reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertake closer monitoring of the staff take-up of development events at partner universities (paragraph 53) 	Include in annual review brief, copy Professional Development Advisor into emails from HEIs promoting training and development	July 2011	Professional Development Advisor, course leaders, CTMs	Clearly indicated and recorded HE scholarly activity and reflective practices	SMT	Monitor staff development records and target staff to attend as part of performance review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to information on every programme in the prospectus (paragraph 64) 	Produce checklist of what must be included	August 2011	Marketing Manager, HE Coordinator, course leaders, HE Admissions Assistant	No discrepancies picked up by anybody	LAG audit trail	Analysis of feedback from course leaders, marketing and students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure terminology used for the titles of publications is consistent across all programmes (paragraph 66) 	Review on HE Development Day, then ruthless checking	July 2011	Marketing Manager, HE Coordinator, course leaders, HE Admissions Assistant	No discrepancies picked up by anybody Annual checking process implemented effectively	IAG audit trail	Monitoring through analysis of feedback from course leaders, marketing and HEIs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure consistency of information given to all students whereby handbooks contain information on where details of appeals processes may be found (paragraph 67). 	Put Appeals Policy notifying where to look in the partner university websites available on HE Moodle site, review handbooks on HE Development Day, consider good practices developed by other College programmes - (course leaders' evidence of how they promote it to learners)	July 2011	Course leaders, with HE Coordinator	Students more aware of appeals procedures for their individual programme Annual checking process implemented effectively	HEMQR	Include question in feedback survey and raise at Staff Student Review (SSR) and take appropriate action if required

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