



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Preston College**

**December 2011**

**SR 021/11**

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ISBN 978 1 84979 471 8

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

## 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 Preston College carried out in December 2011

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

#### Good practice

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

- well developed schemes of provision and support for work-based learning are evident in the Foundation Degrees in early years, counselling, dance and sport
- the College provides e-resources to its higher education students and the wider public by uploading educational videos on to a popular mobile public portal.

#### 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:

- define more closely the role of the Academic Director in the strategic direction of higher education.

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

- clarify the role of the Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group and its place within the management and reporting structure of the College
- record subject updating and scholarly activity more effectively to ensure strategic oversight and assure maintenance of academic standards
- manage and monitor work-based and work-related learning to disseminate better practice and ensure a consistent quality of student experience
- continue to monitor the accuracy and completeness of published pre-entry 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 Preston College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of University of Central Lancashire and Edge Hill University. The review was carried out by Mr Jonathan Doney, Mrs Daphne Rowlands, Mrs Jenny Steer (reviewers) and Dr John Hurley (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated quality and enhancement review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies; meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions; reports of reviews by QAA; and inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, 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 Preston College is a large tertiary College serving the city of Preston and the surrounding areas of Central Lancashire. The College serves a local population of approximately 250,000. It has shared origins with the University of Central Lancashire with whom it works closely as a partner college. The College offers a broad curriculum in all areas of learning except land-based qualifications. A range of higher education programmes has been offered at Preston College since 1985. The campus is situated at Fulwood, to the north of the city. Part-time courses for adults are provided in three community centres.

5 In 2010-11, there were 16,662 learners enrolled at the College. The majority of the 3,142 learners, aged 16 to 18, were enrolled on full-time courses at advanced level. Most adults follow part-time courses. In addition, there were 732 learners on apprenticeships, over 4,700 on Train to Gain provision, and 1,265 informal learners. Around a fifth of learners are from minority ethnic groups, which is a higher proportion than that in the local community. In the same year, there were 278 full-time and 276 part-time indirectly funded higher education enrolments. Students progressing from further education programmes at the College constitute about half of full-time enrolments.

6 The following programmes are provided in conjunction with the College's validating partner. The student numbers on programmes in July 2011 are shown in brackets:

### Edge Hill University

- Foundation Degree in Counselling (42)
- Certificate and Diplomas in Post Compulsory Education and Training (34)

## University of Central Lancashire

- Foundation Degree in Accounting and Financial Studies (21 )
- Foundation Degree in Administration Management (5)
- Foundation Degree in Business Studies (37)
- Foundation Degree in Children, Young People and their services (11)
- Foundation Degree in Early Years Education and Care (47)
- Foundation Degree in Integrated Care and Education of Children and Young People (13)
- Foundation Degree in Forensic Science (31)
- Foundation Degree in Operations Management for Hospitality and Tourism (5)
- Foundation Degree in Sports Coaching (39)
- Foundation Degree in Sports Development (19)
- Foundation Degree in Theatre and Performance (20)
- Foundation Degree in Professional Dance Practice (15)
  
- BA (Hons) Dance, Performance and Teaching (one module to be delivered in College)
- BSc (Hons) Science - Foundation Entry (35)
  
- HNC Business Studies (33)
- HNC Construction (28)
- HNC Electrical and Electronic Engineering (23)
- HNC Mechanical and Production Engineering (17)
- HNC Mechatronics (1)
- HNC Project and Quality Management (12)
- HND Engineering Management (Project & Quality) (4)
  
- Certificate in Office Basics - Information Technology (9)
- University Certificate of Achievement - Bridge to Construction (12)
- University Certificate in Project Management (4)
- Certificate in Computer Technology (7)
- Advanced Certificate in Computer Networks (27)

## Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 Higher education programmes are delivered in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire and Edge Hill University. The agreement with the University of Central Lancashire specifies that the College will provide programmes in accordance with the Academic Regulations of the University, which retains overall responsibility for standards and the quality of student experience. College programme teams are responsible for delivering programmes, including teaching, assessment and student academic guidance, to these standards and report annually to the University. In the agreement with Edge Hill University, the College is responsible for the admission of students, programme delivery, the operation of student assessment, and the delivery of student support and guidance. The University maintains overall responsibility for standards. Both universities appoint external examiners and maintain overall control of public information.

## Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Visual and performing arts programmes relocated from the Park Campus in September 2011 to a new building, consolidating provision on the Fulwood campus. The Park Campus will be sold for redevelopment. A new strategic plan, launched in



September 2010, describes five aims that underpin the College's 'Path to Excellence'. A new Principal and Chief Executive have been in post since January 2011 and a restructuring of the management team has created a post of Academic Director with responsibility for higher education.

## **Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission**

9 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A student focus group planned the submission, supported by College quality assurance staff. A template was provided for student representatives to discuss with their course groups. Feedback from these discussions was summarised by staff, and approved by students, and presented as the student written submission.

10 Reviewers also held a meeting with students during the review visit. All students at the meeting were aware of the student submission and about half had been actively involved in its preparation. The student meeting provided more detail about key areas of higher education but broadly confirmed the conclusions of the submission. The reviewers have drawn on student perceptions, alongside other evidence, throughout the report.

## **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?**

11 The College's systems for managing and delivering higher education are firmly and directly based on partnership agreements with the universities. The lines of reporting within the College have changed recently as part of a general reorganisation of management. The College has an institution-wide approach to quality improvement. Several systems from further education apply to higher education, such as the monitoring and review processes that focus on attendance and student progress. These have had a positive impact on withdrawal rates, which halved between 2009-10 and 2010-11.

12 The management of higher education courses is embedded within academies, led by heads of department, covering both further and higher education. Course teams are responsible to the heads who oversee the management and delivery of academic standards. A quality improvement team has an overview of practice across programmes and all aspects of quality enhancement. Heads of department are members of the College Management Team, which in turn reports to an Executive Leadership Team. Heads work closely with, but are not line managed by, an Academic Director who has responsibility for higher education.

13 The Academic Director is a member of College management and leadership teams, chairs a Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group, and is the main contact between the Universities and the College. With a designated member of the quality improvement team, the Academic Director has an overview of the management and standards of higher education and is responsible for coordinating reporting on higher education, specifically to the College leadership. While the functions of the Academic Director support higher education effectively, it is not clear to the team how this role, as

currently defined, can initiate development and enhancement within the new management structure. It is advisable for the College to define more closely the role of the Academic Director in the strategic direction of higher education.

14 The Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group comprises 34 members from various levels of the organisation including course leaders and managers. Its terms of reference are extensive but in the main it serves as an operational planning and advisory group, acting within the parameters of the partnership contracts. Much of its work is carried out in task and finish groups. It does not review annual reports directly but acts on issues identified through annual reporting and shares identified good practice. The group has been effective in responding to the Developmental engagement, and in preparation for the Summative review. What is less clear, however, is how effective the group is in coordinating and developing the diverse elements of higher education practice in the College, or the Group's articulation with the new management and committee structure. It is desirable for the College to clarify the role of the Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group and its place within the management and reporting structure of the College.

15 There are effective arrangements for managing academic standards at programme level. Course tutors and module tutors are responsible for assuring standards, supported by active participation in partnership networks providing opportunities to review assessment processes and decisions and share effective practice. There are regular course team meetings including student and tutor representation.

### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

16 At programme approval the College follows the relevant university requirements and references the FHEQ, benchmark statements, and the *Code of practice*. Where the College has been responsible for new course design, such as the FdA Professional Dance Practice, the curriculum is informed by discussion with employers and aligned with the FHEQ and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The College uses the relevant university templates for programme specifications and module descriptors, which are included in course handbooks and module information packs respectively. A higher education staff workshop in 2010 mapped College policies against the *Code of practice* ensuring that, for example, student discipline, complaints and compliments, and internal verification of assessment, meet the guidelines.

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

17 The College has an embedded process for annual monitoring and improvement which conforms to the requirements of the universities. General curriculum improvement audits, based on subject areas, extend to higher education provision. They include meetings with students and staff to gather feedback on the management and quality of the provision. There are effective processes for ensuring the standards of assessment which include robust systems of internal verification and moderation on all programmes. These ensure that all aspects of assessment are closely linked to the intended learning outcomes, which students confirmed. External examiners' reports confirm that student work is of an appropriate academic standard.

18 The College has established a comprehensive and effective annual higher education quality assurance procedure which meets the requirements of both awarding bodies. Staff produce module reports, informed by student feedback and achievement data. Course leaders work with heads of department to produce course-level annual

monitoring reports. These confirm that the course teams are maintaining academic standards. The reports are informed by module reports, external examiners' reports, programme meetings and course-level data. Course reports are internally validated by the Quality Improvement Manager and the Academic Director before submission to the relevant university. Each course report contributes to the College Annual Monitoring Report produced for each university. The institutional reports are received and considered by the Student Quality and Standards Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Corporation Board. The minutes for 2010-11 confirm that the committee considered higher education academic standards in relation to student surveys, complaints and compliments, self assessment, and the IQER Developmental engagement report. The reports serve the requirements of the universities but the College does not develop its own overview to assist the strategic direction of higher education. For its future development, the College may wish to produce a consolidated overview of higher education.

### **What are the College's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standard(s)?**

19 The College and the universities provide staff development opportunities which support academic standards. Staff teaching on higher education programmes can attend conferences and events provided by their awarding body. Staff development days are built into the academic year, giving scope for higher education developmental events. Staff development needs are also identified through the Higher Education Quality Support Group. The list of higher education specific events for 2010-11 shows that the College has identified and acted upon development issues, for example those relating to assessment and marking.

20 Individual staff development is identified and planned through annual appraisal. While there is no systematic reduction in teaching contact hours to support higher education staff development, individual timetables can be adjusted by negotiation to give more time for subject updating through further qualifications or scholarly activity. This is recorded in staff curriculum vitae, but not systematically. More general staff development is also noted in staff development records. It is desirable for the College to record subject updating and scholarly activity more effectively to ensure strategic oversight and assure maintenance of academic standards.

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

## **Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities**

### **How are responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?**

21 The College has rigorous partnership agreements which outline the responsibilities for learning opportunities. Responsibility for learning opportunities is delegated and reported through the College management and committee structure, as outlined in paragraphs 11 to 15.

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

22 Both awarding bodies have robust validation procedures which clearly establish the obligations for course teams. The management and assurance of teaching, student support and resource provision are outlined in the subsequent sections of this report. Regular reviews of programmes take place within team meetings to ensure the relevance of learning opportunities. These are reported and reviewed through the mechanisms outlined in paragraphs 17 to 18.

### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

23 The College ensures that staff are familiar with the Academic Infrastructure through staff development activities. Full reference is made to relevant aspects of the *Code of practice* during validation and in monitoring of programmes. The College has mapped the precepts of the *Code of practice* to its own internal practices in addition to following the guidance of the relevant awarding body. The mapping is stored on the Electronic Resource Information Centre. New higher education staff are trained to use this resource at induction. This is an effective approach to ensuring familiarity with the Academic Infrastructure.

24 Work-based learning is integrated into a number of Foundation Degrees and generally takes account of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. Well-developed schemes of provision and support are evident in the Foundation Degrees in early years, counselling, dance and sport. The team considers that this good practice could be disseminated more widely in the College. Work-based and work-related learning are regulated by individual programme specifications. There is no overarching College policy or principles for work-based or work-related learning in higher education to ensure that provision and support are equally well developed on all programmes. It is desirable that the College manages and monitors work-based and work-related learning to disseminate better practice and ensure a consistent quality of student experience.

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

25 The self-evaluation document states the expectations that staff are qualified at, or above, the level that they are teaching and that all staff must have a teaching qualification. The College monitors and checks that the correct level of qualification has been obtained, using a standard procedure, before submission to the relevant awarding body for approval. The team found that staff are appropriately qualified for the roles they undertake.

26 The College has a comprehensive system for measuring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. A robust policy ensures that all staff are observed while teaching. Observers in higher education lessons are paired with an experienced higher education lecturer to ensure the evaluation is appropriate to the level of teaching which is taking place. Support is organised to facilitate improvement where necessary. An annual report for the executive group reviews the quality of teaching at higher education level. The report shows that 77 per cent of lessons were graded as good or better, and strategies are in place to improve the remainder of lessons through individual staff support.

27 Student views are collected in surveys, which are considered in College committees. Students confirmed that a wide range of teaching and learning approaches are used, that the quality of teaching overall is good, and that lecturers are knowledgeable and up-to-date. Good quality constructive feedback is given, which enables students to improve

their work. The College has fully addressed a recommendation on the quality and consistency of feedback, made in the Developmental engagement, leading to enhanced student satisfaction. The College enhances teaching and learning effectively.

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

28 The College states that it has a range of effective student support services. Students confirmed that they receive key information about their programmes and the support the College offers during induction. Student handbooks state relevant pastoral information. Students starting late receive an induction pack and library information. Learner support and pastoral services are publicised through the Freshers' Fair. Students are well informed about support services and have easy access to them.

29 All full-time students have timetabled tutorial sessions that include both group and personal tutorials. These provide monitoring and feedback on students' progress as well as effective academic support. Help with study skills is provided, including advice on referencing and good academic practice. Tutors refer students to relevant student services for further academic or pastoral support when appropriate. Part-time students do not have timetabled tutorials but confirmed that they have access to staff if they require additional support or guidance. Extended projects receive tutorial support and part-time students also have access to tutors through the intranet portal.

30 Students on work placements receive a negotiated learning agreement which defines expectations and outcomes between the student and the workplace provider. This ensures students are adequately supported. A named College contact is given to the student and employer. The team identified comprehensively documented and effective placement and work-based learning schemes in early years, counselling, dance, and sport curriculum areas. The academies maintain close relationships with employers in a number of other areas including engineering.

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

31 The College and its university partners provide a range of higher education staff development events to support the quality of learning opportunities. The College has clear procedures for requesting staff development, which is tailored to individual needs through the appraisal process. Targets for development are set during the appraisal process and are then monitored throughout the year. Heads of department hold budgets for staff development. Progress has been made following the Developmental engagement in centrally collating the courses and development which staff have undertaken, but a more systematic approach remains desirable.

### **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?**

32 The self-evaluation states that resources are appropriate for higher education programmes. The awarding bodies check resources at validation. Resources are also monitored during programme reviews. The team observed good quality resources for science and technology programmes. An annual business plan is produced by departments in line with the College's strategic plan. This identifies capital and physical resource needs. A capital bidding process exists for managers to bid for resources, for which staff can put forward requests. The College has recently provided high quality new accommodation for dance subjects. The College is responsive to student needs; for example, as a result of

feedback, the Foundation Degree in Counselling successfully requested new audio-visual equipment to enhance the learning experience. The Major Project Group considers projects outside departmental needs, for example, disability ramps. Resource management for higher education is effective.

33 A separate library is available for higher education students with quiet study areas. Higher education students have access to the partner university libraries and confirmed that the University of Central Lancashire Library, also in Preston, is convenient and accessible with a wide range of books. A large range of e-books and journals is also available through College and University portals. Library resources and electronic publications sustain higher education programmes appropriately.

34 An Information Learning and Technology Strategy Group oversees the development of electronic resources. The College has developed the use of its virtual learning environment to provide information and support learning, disseminating good practice identified in the Developmental engagement to provide a consistently valuable learning resource for students. In addition, the College provides e-resources to its higher education students and the wider public by uploading educational videos on to a popular mobile public portal. A wide range of carefully chosen demonstrations and resource materials are available, which students stated were interesting and helpful. The team considers this to be good practice for dissemination across the sector.

**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?**

35 The College aims to 'ensure high quality internal and external communication including website, prospectuses and promotional materials'. Under the Memorandum of Cooperation between the College and the University of Central Lancashire, the College is jointly responsible for advertising and promoting its higher education courses. The agreement between the College and Edge Hill University states that the responsibility for and control of the accuracy of all public information, publicity, and promotional activity relating to its provision rests with the University. The College produces a range of materials including a Higher Education Prospectus, web-based information, a useful general Student Handbook, and course specific items including handbooks and fact sheets.

36 The College publishes information and guidance on its higher education courses via its website with a direct link found on the home page. Concise course information and comprehensive downloadable programme fact sheets are also available. The website is regularly checked to ensure that it continues to meet stringent compliance and accessibility guidelines. Information is easily accessible and feedback has confirmed that navigation is straightforward.

37 Comprehensive and well-presented course handbooks are produced to standard templates provided by both universities. Generic content is provided by the universities with the College adding course specific information. Content for these is compiled by course managers and subject teams at the College.

38 Programme and module information packs, assessment descriptors, and schedules are available to students in both printed and electronic form, from the College's virtual learning environment. Students confirmed that they could easily access this information remotely and that they find this a useful and definitive source of programme information. In addition to these, the College is pioneering the particularly innovative use of mobile telephone technology to download some course materials. Students also have access to online information from both partner universities.

39 All College information for students is available, on request, in a range of formats. These include large print, Braille, audio and other languages, and the College can respond appropriately to students' differing needs in this respect.

**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 Both universities maintain an overview of information and publicity relating to their validated programmes. The College has in place a detailed procedure for the production and review of its higher education documents and marketing materials with roles and responsibilities clearly defined. Information is checked by faculty and marketing teams. These mechanisms ensure that information is accurate, complete and regularly reviewed.

41 Responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of all publicity and information lies with the College's Marketing Team, which is managed by the Head of Marketing. A member of the Marketing Team works closely with higher education course managers to compile drafts which are checked and approved within each Academy and the Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group. Once approved, copies are collated by the College's higher education administrative officer who sends them to the appropriate university's marketing team for final approval.

42 Course handbooks and module information packs are compiled by course teams at the College with support from subject specialists at the universities. Handbooks are reviewed annually and approved as part of the annual monitoring process. Students confirmed that they had received a handbook and that they find them useful, accurate and complete. Module information packs are comprehensive and clear with intended learning outcomes clearly distinguished.

43 The Developmental engagement in assessment conducted in September 2010 identified inconsistencies in pre-entry information for students, in particular relating to assessment and progression information, and advised that this matter be addressed. The College has taken steps to improve these issues and, in response, course leaflets have been updated and more information about assessment added to the prospectus. The team consider it desirable that the College continue to monitor the accuracy and completeness of published pre-entry information.

44 The College website is managed by the E-Learning Development Coordinator who reports to the Head of E-Learning Development. Course leaders and their teams generate course information which is passed to the marketing team who update the information on the website. This is subject to the same rigorous checking procedures with the universities. The marketing team ensure only current and authorised versions are uploaded.

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

## **C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment**

45 A Developmental engagement in assessment was carried out in September 2010. The lines of enquiry were:

**Line of enquiry 1:** To what extent do assessment tasks ensure that the intended module outcomes are effectively assessed?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How does the College ensure that the quality and timeliness of feedback to students enables the learners to improve their future course work performance?

**Line of enquiry 3:** To what extent does the College ensure that the assessment information given to students is accurate/appropriate and how effectively is this information communicated to students?

46 Good practice was found in the collaborative processes between the College and its principal partners and in its internal verification processes. Examples of developmental feedback were identified through collaborative student working in theatre studies and careful tutoring and mentoring for construction projects and counselling programmes. Students were well informed about assessment through module information packs and, in some areas, through use of the College virtual learning environment.

47 Developmental areas included the need to clarify and strengthen the management and reporting structures for higher education. Consistency needed to be improved with regard to pre-entry information on assessment and the quality of feedback on assessment to ensure it was always timely, related to intended learning outcomes, and gave students sufficient detail on how to improve their work. Staff were encouraged to keep better records of their higher education specific professional development and scholarly activity.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

48 The College offers a portfolio of 13 Foundation degrees which constitute just over half of the total enrolments. Other provisions include Higher Nationals, University Certificates and a top-up BA (Hons). Foundation degrees cover business, childcare, counselling, hospitality, science, sports, and performance curriculum areas.

49 Foundation Degrees are run in accordance with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*, which is embedded in the validation documents. The principal functions delivered by the College, assessment, teaching and support are well-founded. Good practice in work-based learning was found in counselling, early years, sports and dance programmes. The College management systems do not fully facilitate the strategic management of higher education.

50 All the conclusions referred to in paragraphs 51 to 58 apply to Foundation Degrees.



## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

51 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Preston College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies; University of Central Lancashire and Edge Hill University.

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

- well developed schemes of provision and support for work-based learning are evident in the Foundation Degrees in early years, counselling, dance and sport (paragraphs 24 and 30)
- the College provides e-resources to its higher education students and the wider public by uploading educational videos on to a popular mobile public portal (paragraphs 34 and 38).

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

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

- define more closely the role of the Academic Director in the strategic direction of higher education (paragraph 13).

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

- clarify the role of the Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group and its place within the management and reporting structure of the College (paragraph 14)
- record subject updating and scholarly activity more effectively to ensure strategic oversight and assure maintenance of academic standards (paragraphs 20 and 31)
- manage and monitor work-based and work-related learning to disseminate better practice and ensure a consistent quality of student experience (paragraph 24)
- continue to monitor the accuracy and completeness of published pre-entry information (paragraph 43).

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 standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

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 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.

58 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

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

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.

**Preston College action plan relating to the Summative review: December 2011**

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>well developed schemes of provision and support for work-based learning are evident in the Foundation Degrees in early years, counselling, dance and sport (paragraphs 24 and 30)</li> </ul>	<p>Implement sharing good practice workshop and produce guidance booklet</p>	<p>May 2012</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Manager</p>	<p>E-Learning course plans updated and summary report produced</p>	<p>Information Learning Technology Strategy Group</p>	<p>Audit of work-based Learning during 2012/13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College provides e-resources to its higher education students and the wider public by uploading educational videos on to a popular mobile</li> </ul>	<p>Sharing good practice workshop implemented and e-learning plans updated</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>E-Learning Manager</p>	<p>Good practice guide on work-based Learning produced</p>	<p>Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group</p>	<p>Audit of e-learning plans during 2012/13</p>

public portal (paragraphs 34 and 38).						
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>define more closely the role of the Academic Director in the strategic direction of higher education (paragraph 13).</li> </ul>	Job description of Academic Director amended	April 2012	Principal	Role clearly defined and recognised in organisation	Executive Leadership Team	Evaluation through appraisal process and annual HE report
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarify the role of the Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group and its place within the management and reporting structure of the College (paragraph 14)</li> </ul>	Terms of reference, reporting mechanism, membership and authority of Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group clearly defined	April 2012	Academic Director	All in place  HE Strategy implemented	Executive Leadership Team	Annual monitoring reports

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>record subject updating and scholarly activity more effectively to ensure strategic oversight and assure maintenance of academic standards (paragraphs 20 and 31)</li> </ul>	<p>Mechanism introduced to record subject updating and scholarly activity</p> <p>Skills audit in place for all teaching staff</p>	Dec 2012	Academic Director	<p>Annual higher education staff development review and plan produced</p> <p>Skills audit undertaken by all higher education staff</p>	Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group through to Executive Leadership Team	Annual evaluation of subject updating and scholarly activity produced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage and monitor work-based and work-related learning to disseminate better practice and ensure a consistent quality of student experience (paragraph 24)</li> </ul>	Implement sharing good practice workshop and produce guidance booklet	May 2012	Quality Improvement Manager	Good practice guide on work-based learning produced	Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group	Audit of work-based learning during 2012/13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue to monitor the accuracy and completeness of published pre-entry information (paragraph 43).</li> </ul>	Audit accuracy and completeness of published pre-entry information	January 2013	Quality Improvement Manager	Published pre-entry information accurate and complete	Higher Education Quality and Standardisation Group	Annual evaluation of published pre-entry information produced

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