



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Seevic College

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Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (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 bodies 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 Seevic College carried out in November 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.

Recommendations

The team has 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:

- take steps to establish a system that describes and guarantees oversight of the entirety of its higher education provision, regardless of awarding partner, that would allow the evaluation and recording of the effectiveness of mechanisms used for sharing experiences and addressing issues
- implement practices, procedures and policies to provide mechanisms by which its higher education provision is managed at all levels within the College. These should include guidance documents and should also refer to where systems for higher education are encompassed by general College policies
- engage with its awarding partners to develop and ensure a meaningful use of the external examiner system in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* and *Section 4: External examining*
- develop its processes for ensuring that its higher education provision and its staff, including part-time and student support staff, are aware of the Academic Infrastructure and its relevance beyond the approval and validation processes of its awarding partners
- introduce a more formal process for evaluating staff development activities across the higher education provision, and develop an overall staff development plan that includes activities that cover all relevant aspects, including the Academic Infrastructure
- take steps to ensure that it is able to demonstrate formally the means by which it assures itself and its awarding partners of the accuracy and completeness of its public 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 Seevic 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 Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Hertfordshire. The review was carried out by Mr Tom Cantwell, Ms Sandra Middleton (reviewers), and Dr Mark Mabey (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 its awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA, and from inspections by Ofsted. There was no Developmental engagement, and the review was conducted by a desk-based study. 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 assist 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 Seevic College is a key provider of post-16 education in South Essex and is currently involved in delivering a wide range of academic, vocational and work-based learning courses for learners aged 14 and upwards, though the majority are within the 16-19 age range. Nearly half of its provision is vocational, mainly BTEC National Diplomas and certificates at levels 1 to 3. The College also offers higher education courses in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Hertfordshire. Currently Seevic College has two campuses in Benfleet and Basildon. At the time of the review Seevic College had approximately 3,600 full-time equivalent students, of whom 3,200 were aged 16-18 years, and 140 new apprenticeships. There are approximately 160 adult learners.

5 Higher education is a small part of the overall College provision and currently has 89 full-time equivalent students studying across four degree programmes.

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The College has partnership agreements with two higher education institutions, Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Hertfordshire. Partnership arrangements are based on memoranda of agreements and contracts that are issued on an annual rolling basis. The Universities' procedures and documentation, including Anglia Ruskin University's Module Definition Forms and the University of Hertfordshire's Definitive Module Documents and the relevant quality information for both institutions for the infrastructure within which the College operates. The Foundation Degree Early Years programme is required to meet the standards, policies and procedures laid out in the University of Hertfordshire's Academic Regulations for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes (incorporating the University academic quality policies and regulations). A hard copy is supplied to the College on an annual basis. The higher education provision offered by the College is as follows (full-time equivalent student numbers are in brackets):

Anglia Ruskin University

- BSc (Hons) Sports Coaching and Physical Education (45)
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (10)
- BA (Hons) Business Management Year One (8)

University of Hertfordshire

- Foundation Degree Early Years (34)

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 The College had planned to expand its higher education provision although this has been somewhat limited by recent Government policy. The College is particularly focused on developing higher education provision in partnership with employers and as part of higher apprenticeships.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College presented a submission to the team. This was compiled by a limited number of students studying on different pathways and gave a fair insight into the involvement of the student voice within the College. The students that were met at the preparatory meeting spoke highly of the College but were not aware of or involved in the preparation of the written submission.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

9 The College has a clear structure for the management and delivery of academic standards. At an operational level this is integrated with the main College business, and managed through the same structures as the further education provision. At a strategic level the College has recently created a dedicated executive level post to lead on higher education strategy, development and implementation. This coincides with a growth in the College's higher education portfolio, from a single Foundation Degree two years ago, to four separate programmes for 2011-12. The two newest programmes have just completed their first cohort cycle. The Higher Education Manager and the Head of Faculty for Social Science and Care form a link between operational and strategic management of the College's higher education portfolio and each of the two awarding partners.

10 A newly formed higher education steering group, chaired by the Vice Principal for Employment and Skills, plans to meet twice each year. Its members include relevant College academy directors and course leaders, as well as the Higher Education Manager. The Higher Education Manager chairs the curriculum management committee, the function of which is to maintain oversight of academic standards, curriculum management and delivery of the programmes, and is validated by Anglia Ruskin University. The College has

very recently adopted a similar meeting structure for the Foundation Degree Early Years validated by the University of Hertfordshire. Structures for the management and maintenance of academic standards are those of the awarding partners. The team found that the College's reliance upon its awarding partners for the management of key elements of academic standards meant that general oversight of the provision was not in evidence. The team also found that while the College has a reporting structure that could allow institution level coordination and management of the higher education portfolio, this was not used to any significant effect. The team does not consider academic standards to be directly at risk because of this, but considers that the means by which the College assures itself that these standards are being met places too much reliance on the relationship between programme teams and the awarding partner. The team also concludes that beneficial features of a truly strategic overview, such as the sharing of good practice or coordination of responses to external examiner reports, cannot be implemented fully until such an overview is established. However, the introduction of the higher education steering group and revised internal quality assurance processes for higher education will assist with a more general oversight of the provision and go some way towards addressing the above. The team recommend that the College should take steps to put in place a system that describes and guarantees oversight of the entirety of its higher education provision, regardless of awarding partner, that would allow the evaluation and recording of the effectiveness of mechanisms used for sharing good practice and addressing issues.

11 The College intends to increase its higher education provision 'through the development of existing and new courses'. However, in light of recent Government announcements this may not be feasible. Such an approach, combined with the already expanded current provision, leads the team to conclude that the College should establish a centralised system for the management of academic standards and quality, and that this should stand apart from and oversee the systems and processes of its awarding partners as described in the memoranda of agreement. The team recommends that the College should implement practices, procedures and policies to provide mechanisms by which its provision is managed at all levels within the College. These should include guidance documents and should also refer to where higher education systems are encompassed by general College policies.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

12 Each programme has been through an approval process that includes alignment with key elements of the Academic Infrastructure. The awarding partners, as part of their routine quality assurance procedures, have provided this alignment. During review the College provided no evidence of its own engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. The team found that College staff were unaware of the Academic Infrastructure as a resource and in all documentation and communication referred only to their awarding partners' 'academic infrastructures'. Consideration of institution-level compliance with the *Code of practice* was not in evidence, despite this being a requirement of each awarding partner's memorandum of agreement.

13 The College places responsibility for the quality of its programmes with individual course leaders. The relationship that programme leaders have with their partner institution is the means by which quality assurance procedures are implemented at individual programme level. Sharing of good practice or addressing issues, such as missing external examiner reports, has not occurred due to reliance on individuals rather than systems. Lack of engagement with the Academic Infrastructure at College level has meant that staff are unaware of some quality processes and procedures and have relied upon direction from awarding partners.

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 the awarding bodies?

14 Each awarding partner has its own means of ensuring that the College meets the required standards of their awards. The College complies with these requirements and has met all of its obligations set out in the agreements. In this way the College has assured itself that it is fulfilling its obligations and, because the provision is very small, there have been no major difficulties in carrying out these duties. To achieve institution-level oversight of these processes the College would need to move from being a passive deliverer of programmes to a self-aware provider of higher education, encompassing the requirements of its partner agreements within its own structure and strategy. The creation of the higher education strategy group is a step in this direction.

15 In order to assure itself that it is meeting all of its obligations the College has created the posts of Higher Education Manager and a senior position that includes responsibility for the higher education element of the College's business. These developments are recent and are indicative of an institution that is moving from an extremely small offer to a slightly larger portfolio of programmes. In making this move the College has yet to implement the mechanisms that will provide it with the assurance that it is able, as an institution, to meet every responsibility that a provider of such a portfolio should meet. The team was unable to find any evidence of these mechanisms, beyond those provided by the awarding partners.

16 The College's Strategic Plan mentions the self-assessment report process in the context of higher education provision and specifically refers to 'IQER criteria for provision'. Much of this document can be read as a higher education self-assessment report, but a separate document to fulfil this purpose would prove far more useful and could have prompted evaluative reflection that was largely missing from the self-evaluation document. However, the revised higher education quality assurance processes will include an internal higher education self-assessment review, which will require specific reference and reflection of key higher education quality processes, and encompass elements of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

17 The reliance that the College places upon the systems of its awarding partners has meant that individual teaching staff have been able to benefit from all attendant processes and training. Although systems and procedures differ between awarding partners, staff attend university moderation meetings, faculty boards, and discipline network groups. Relationships with university link tutors are strong and programme leaders are aware of their individual responsibilities with regard to relevant university processes. Although individual members of staff are aware of their own needs, as well as their programmes' immediate needs, there are gaps in what might be expected of the College considering the ambition to increase provision as part of its strategic plan. Staff training to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards would raise the awareness of higher education staff beyond the immediate routines of course management so that they might, for example, understand the need to engage fully with the external examination process. In the absence of this, a system of cross-college higher education management would check, for example, the external examiner reports for each programme and take action based on their recommendations, as well as following this up with a response to each examiner. The absence of both of these aspects has led to there being, in some cases, no external examiner reports and, in others, undifferentiated reports that refer to numerous delivery

partners. However, it is noted that for the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector provision, which is part of a consortia, the external examiner responds to the consortium rather than individual colleges. The team recommends that the College engage with its awarding partners to develop and ensure a meaningful use of the external examiner system in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* and *Section 4: External examining*.

18 The College has responsibility for the recruitment and training of the staff who teach on its higher education programmes. The College's self-evaluation states clearly that 'the responsibilities for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities lies within each academy'. Although the Vice Principal for Employment and Skills is responsible for overseeing the provision and the Higher Education Manager is responsible for coordinating with an awarding partner, it is also clear that staff utilisation, induction and development has been managed at programme and department level. The team found no evidence in the self-evaluation portfolio of the College identifying, monitoring, evaluating and acting upon any perceived staff development needs.

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?

19 The College follows the learning and teaching policies and procedures laid down by the relevant partner higher education institution. Each programme is assigned to the appropriate curriculum area or academy which is responsible for managing the quality of learning opportunities. Each programme leader is responsible for the operational management of the course. The academy directors within the College and course leaders for the higher education provision share responsibility for complying with both the requirements of the partner institution and the College's own higher education procedures, including those covering the provision of learning opportunities.

20 The College curriculum management committees are chaired by the Higher Education Manager, unless the awarding partner specifies that it should be the programme leader, and has a membership which includes teaching teams, student representatives, the academy director, a student adviser, and university representatives. Duties include maintaining and monitoring learning opportunities and agreeing the annual monitoring report required by the College, as well as agreeing the equivalent reports for the awarding partners and discussion of programme organisation, resources, and student issues. This recent innovation has occurred as a result of the expansion in the number of degree programmes offered by the College over the past two years, and the recognition that a more coordinated College oversight of the provision is required.

21 The team notes that the College has attempted to develop systems which would provide the necessary qualitative and quantitative information required by the College and its partners within a single annual monitoring review, rather than burdening teams with additional requirements. Review of documentation also confirmed that this annual monitoring report, to be used by all courses, has not yet been implemented.

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 The College has recently introduced an updated internal quality assurance system for its higher education provision in recognition of the growth in the provision and the need to move from a light touch to a more proactive quality and management oversight. A higher education steering group, chaired by the Vice Principal for Employment and Skills, has been constituted with responsibilities which include monitoring action plans and sharing of experience. Any recommendations arising from meetings of this group are passed to the executive leadership team for approval. The curriculum management committees and the steering group, which meet twice a year, are the main institutional committees where resources and good practice are discussed. The steering group has met once since its inception in September 2011 and has already identified a number of issues to be addressed.

23 The College higher education strategy outlines the College's aims to enhance the human and physical resources supporting the higher education provision by investing in the teaching and learning environment and separate higher education space. Currently, identifying resourcing issues is within the remit of the relevant curriculum management committee, whose terms of reference include a requirement to make recommendations to the relevant academy director within the College. Overall, the students are very positive in their view of the support they receive and the learning opportunities provided. Some students have complained that there is no dedicated higher education space or adult learner environment, and that there are limited book and journal stocks, but the College is seeking to identify suitable accommodation.

24 College staff attend twice-yearly national and regional network meetings for sector-endorsed Foundation Degrees in Early Years to discuss a range of strategic issues such as financing, bridging courses, and experiences in mentoring. The Association of Colleges Eastern Region also holds twice-yearly higher education in further education network meetings which provide updates on the sector as well as support for teaching and learning. It is unclear who from the College attends these meetings and how information is disseminated across the provision.

25 The College's teaching and learning developments are based upon its teaching and learning strategy: all teaching staff, including those delivering higher education, participate in these activities. The relevant line manager monitors and reviews the outcomes of these activities. Where specialist higher education development is required, the academy director for the subject area is responsible for ensuring the needs are met.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 The self-evaluation documentation did not make any reference to the Academic Infrastructure except to refer to the College's compliance with the requirements of the awarding partners. The team concludes that this demonstrated the College's over-reliance on its partner institutions for interpretation and implementation of relevant elements of the Academic Infrastructure. The team recommends that the College develops its processes for ensuring that its higher education provision and its staff, including part-time and student support staff, are aware of the Academic Infrastructure and its relevance beyond the approval and validation processes of its awarding partners.

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

27 Within the College, the lesson observation is the primary method for monitoring and improving learning and teaching. Any actions arising from these activities are monitored and reviewed by the member of staff's line manager. The annual lesson observation grades are reported in the annual self-assessment report and contribute to the development plans for continuous improvement in learning and teaching. These are reviewed twice per term, in order to monitor progress against the overall plan. Each course leader produces an end-of-semester report, which includes student feedback, and this is forwarded to the appropriate academy director for endorsement and identification of any actions which need to be taken.

28 A copy of the report is also sent to the Vice Principal for Employment and Skills and will be discussed at the February meeting of the higher education steering group. Similarly, at the end of the academic session, an annual monitoring report will be produced by the course leader and team, again incorporating student feedback. This formulates an overall report that is considered by the College senior leadership team at its meeting in October and also by the curriculum management committee. The team was unable to identify the relative responsibilities of the academy director and the steering group in reviewing and monitoring College end-of-semester reports.

29 The students submitted a written submission but were unaware of the IQER process enabling them to give their views on their learning opportunities at the student meeting with the review coordinator. The student experience varied between partnerships but all students agreed that they had received a course handbook, either hard copy or electronically, during induction. At the same time they were provided with information on how to access the virtual learning environment. The Anglia Ruskin University students also received copies of the University's academic regulations but the University of Hertfordshire students did not receive any equivalent documentation. All students considered the small group size and direct contact with their tutors to be very positive features of the provision.

30 Students confirmed that they receive feedback on their coursework. The Anglia Ruskin University students agreed that they received feedback in line with the 20-day turn-around requirement. Feedback is provided on a cover sheet and by annotation of the work itself, and is considered to be very useful. However, the feedback and work for two Foundation Degree Early Years modules, from University of Hertfordshire, had not been returned from the previous academic year, and this was being addressed for this academic year.

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

31 The admissions procedures for the awards are aligned with the requirements of the awarding partners. All applicants for the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector are interviewed and any support requirements identified. This is particularly important in terms of literacy and numeracy as there are requirements for students to achieve or hold level 2 qualifications in these areas. Admission on to the BSc Sport Coaching and Physical Education is dealt with by the University, but prospective students are invited for interview at the College. These students are also tested for numeracy and literacy levels and support requirements are identified if necessary. At the same time, perspective students who identify any additional learning needs on their UCAS forms have their needs discussed and arrangements made for any special support requirements.

32 Both the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector and the Foundation Degree Early Years programmes are predominantly delivered in the workplace and each has work-based mentors who are provided with mentor handbooks. For the Diploma this is very detailed and produced by the University, while the latter is a simpler document produced by the College. The Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector course mentors are offered training which is acknowledged and appreciated, and the Early Years mentors attend two meetings each academic year with course tutors who provide support for them in their role.

33 The College has a universal personal tutor system with timetabled slots for individual and group tutorials logged on the College system for future reference. Each course has a timetabled slot for both individual and group tutorials. The tutorials are logged on the College system for future reference and guidance of the candidate. Discussions with students, however, showed that the programmes had their own individual tutorial arrangements. For example BSc Coaching and Physical Education students have individual and group tutorials each week, whereas Early Years students can book tutorials but do not normally have individual tutorials except around hand-in dates.

34 The agreement between the College and Anglia Ruskin University requires the appointment of a student adviser to be available for all students. This gives the student an independent person to deal with if they are experiencing problems that affect their academic progress. However, it would appear that this practice ensures that students feel comfortable in seeking advice and guidance in areas where a small teaching team might be an issue, but that this has not been shared with the University of Hertfordshire students. This is another example of where the sharing of good practice does not take place.

35 The College gathers student feedback through pathway committees which meet once a semester, and through an internal student survey. This committee of staff and students discuss a range of academic and pastoral issues. The minutes of these meetings feed into the curriculum management committee meetings, although this information flow does not appear in either of the higher education flowcharts. The membership which encompasses students, staff and university representatives ensures that detailed discussions occur. Copies of the minutes are circulated to the relevant academy director and the Vice Principal for Employment and Skills, and resulting actions fed back to both committees. The team noted that the students at the meeting were unaware of any changes resulting from their feedback. The College has recently introduced new semester and annual monitoring reports which include retention figures and their interpretation. However, it is too early to judge the efficacy of these developments.

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

36 The College's higher education strategy refers to staff development opportunities but no programme of activities was presented by the College. However, the self-evaluation document makes clear that when higher education teaching staff have identified staff development needs, the relevant academy director will find the necessary resources.

37 The self-evaluation document also provides details of the range of staff development activities that staff undertake in collaboration with the awarding partner. These are related to the specific requirements of the partnership and to the subject specialism of the programmes. In the case of Anglia Ruskin University, teaching staff have a remitted timetable and it is clear that this remittance is carried forward to allow time for research and scholarly activity. However, there is no equivalent arrangement for staff teaching on the University of Hertfordshire programmes. This demonstrates a further

occasion when good practice in one area does not appear to be discussed and applied to another area.

38 The new College annual monitoring report form includes a section on staff development and this will be presented to the newly formed higher education steering group, and will form part of the self-assessment procedures. This will also form an overall staff development strategy for those staff undertaking teaching on higher education programmes and will be subsequently reported to the curriculum management meeting at the end of each academic year.

39 Overall the College is too reliant upon the arrangements for staff development required or provided by the individual awarding partners. In order to ensure that it is discharging its responsibilities for staff development, the team considers it to be advisable that the College introduces a more formal process for evaluating staff development activities across the higher education provision, and develops an overall staff development plan for higher education that includes activities covering all relevant aspects, including the Academic Infrastructure.

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?

40 The responsibility for ensuring that students have sufficient resources resides with the relevant academy director. This responsibility, which includes staffing and equipment, is supported by bids produced by course leaders. The students confirmed that they also had access to resources on the appropriate partner institution virtual learning environment as well as that of the College itself.

41 The book and journal stock are reviewed during the validation or review of the courses, and recommendations for additional resources identified. The shortfall is addressed using the curriculum development fund. Having sourced the original library requirements, the curriculum area budget is used to update and enhance the book stock. All students have access to the partner institution's virtual learning environment as well as that of the College, although they make more use of the latter. The book stock provided for the University of Hertfordshire students includes access to the University's e-book system, which includes books and journals. In addition, the books for these courses are tagged to ensure that only staff and students engaged on the courses can borrow them from the library.

42 The College collects feedback from its students on a range of issues including resources throughout the semester and annual feedback questionnaires, and also through student representation on the curriculum management committee. In addition, students also provide feedback directly to the University through the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector pathway committee, or through private meetings with the University of Hertfordshire link tutor. In addition all students have the opportunity to complete an online module evaluation for all Anglia Ruskin University programmes. The discussion with students reveals that students were often unaware of any changes or other outcomes arising from this feedback.

43 The College has no specific provision for part-time students, although many courses include students with significant work placement commitments and the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector programme is part-time in nature (however all of the students are College staff undertaking the course). The students stated that they had no problems with accessing resources either physically or electronically.

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?

44 The College is responsible for updating the student handbooks for both the Anglia Ruskin University's Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector and the University of Hertfordshire, and also for adding relevant additional College information such as the course team, staff contact details, and programme location. The Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector staff handbook is similarly edited. All students and Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector staff receive a printed copy of these documents and electronic copies are also available on the College's virtual learning environment. The module guides are provided by the relevant university partner and these are also available electronically. In addition, the College is able to provide large print and audio copies of these materials if required. The agreement with the University of Hertfordshire makes clear that the College must provide copies of all marketing materials to the University for review prior to publication, whereas that with Anglia Ruskin merely refers to the University's right to monitor the content.

45 The introduction of the new steering group will result in a change of responsibilities in that it will be responsible for agreeing and signing off all public information related to higher education. Heads of faculty and curriculum area leaders are responsible for ensuring that any information that the College publishes, including promotional material, is accurate and up to date. All public information is signed off by both the Vice Principal for Employment and Skills and the Principal, and bears, where appropriate, the relevant partner logos as agreed with the individual University partners under their formal agreements.

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?

46 The College refers to a robust information collection and proofing process but provides little in the way of an evidence trail of any meetings at which publicity materials are discussed or signed off. The College follows each awarding partner's requirements for checking published materials, but only the University of Hertfordshire is referred to as checking partner websites. However, the College works closely with other institutions at the partner universities' college consortium to ensure completeness and appropriateness of the information provided.

47 Currently the provision is small, and the College has plans to expand its higher education provision, although with recent Government announcements this may not be feasible. Therefore the College should take steps to ensure that it is able to demonstrate formally the means by which it assures itself and its awarding partners of the accuracy and completeness of its public information.

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

48 As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

D Foundation Degrees

49 The College currently operates one Foundation Degree in Early Years and all the conclusions reached by the team apply to this programme.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- take steps to establish a system that describes and guarantees oversight of the entirety of its higher education provision, regardless of awarding partner, that would allow the evaluation and recording of the effectiveness of mechanisms used for sharing experiences and addressing issues (paragraph 10)
- implement practices, procedures and policies to provide mechanisms by which its higher education provision is managed at all levels within the College. These should include guidance documents and should also refer to where systems for higher education are encompassed by general College policies (paragraph 11)
- engage with its awarding partners to develop and ensure a meaningful use of the external examiner system in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* and *Section 4: External examining* (paragraph 17)
- develop its processes for ensuring that its higher education provision and its staff, including part-time and student support staff, are aware of the Academic Infrastructure and its relevance beyond the approval and validation processes of its awarding partners (paragraph 26)
- introduce a more formal process for evaluating staff development activities across the higher education provision and develop an overall staff development plan that includes activities that cover all relevant aspects, including the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 39)
- take steps to ensure that it is able to demonstrate formally the means by which it assures itself and its awarding partners of the accuracy and completeness of its public information (paragraph 47).

52 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

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responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

53 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.

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

Seevic College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 2011						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take steps establish a system that describes and guarantees oversight of the entirety of its higher education provision, regardless of awarding partner, that would allow the evaluation and recording of the effectiveness of mechanisms used for sharing experiences and addressing issues (paragraph 10) 	Embed newly revised higher education quality assurance processes as described within the higher education quality assurance documentation	October 2012	Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education and Academy Directors	<p>Revised documentation on quality assurance and quality improvement processes for higher education</p> <p>Meeting schedules for quality assurance and quality improvement in the College calendar</p>	Vice Principal Employment and Skills	<p>Student feedback Annual monitoring report</p> <p>End of semester 1 report</p> <p>Higher education steering group reviews action plans from quality assurance/quality improvement processes that drive forward positive responses from student end of module questionnaires</p>
	Ensure current cross-college processes for sharing of good practice include reference to higher education activities, for example; Learning & Assessment development activities, College Development Day activities and	September 2012	Director of Teaching and Learning and Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development	<p>Understanding and engagement in; Academic Infrastructure, Codes of Practice, Quality Assurance And benchmark qualitative aspects of degree</p>	<p>Higher education steering group</p> <p>Vice Principal Employment and Skills</p> <p>Senior Leadership Quality meetings</p>	<p>Staff evaluation and feedback of personal development activities</p> <p>Successful outcomes from external examiners reports and feedback</p>

	team meetings					
	Introduce an annual Higher Education Development conference	Booked 5 July 2012	Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development	Scheduled and delivered annually Activities support curriculum development and improvement needs	Executive Leadership team	Positive feedback from staff and partner evaluation forms to include evaluation
	Establish an higher education academic standards committee to review feedback from external examiner reports, feedback from end of module questionnaire and other student feedback mechanisms - develop clear terms of reference for the above group	April 2012	Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education and Academy Directors	Higher Education Partners attend Meeting established, planned for taking place Positive outcomes for module success and examiner feedback	Higher education steering group	Higher education academic standards committee minutes reflect quality of discussions at the meeting Student feedback - surveys and curriculum management committee meetings
	Revise current Quality Assurance reporting documentation to include the above group that clearly shows information flows and follow up on action arising from the group, for example improvements to assessment methods or individual	April 2012	Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education	Revised documentation on quality assurance/quality improvement processes for higher education (as above)	Vice Principal Employment and Skills	Content of professional development activities Student surveys, feedback from meetings and end of module questionnaires

	professional development activity and training					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement practices, procedures and policies to provide mechanisms by which its higher education provision is managed at all levels within the College. These should include guidance documents and should also refer to where systems for higher education are encompassed by general College policies (paragraph 11) 	Define structure within academies including clarity of roles and responsibilities for key staff	Current Picture Feb 2012 Future Picture July 2012	Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development and Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education and Academy Directors	Structures reviewed and analysed for appropriate operation/level of higher education delivery Agreed generic and delivery specific requirements Supporting evidence and documentation Structure communication, procedures and processes are working successfully	Executive Leadership Team Higher education steering group Senior Leadership Team meeting	Successful programme outcomes measured through annual monitoring reports Student feedback/surveys and meetings
	Revise quality assurance documentation and processes including flowchart of information and activities to include integration to quality Senior Leadership Team	March 2012	Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education	Reporting of higher education courses at appropriate Senior Leadership Team Quality meetings	Senior Leadership Team Quality meetings	Improved higher education programme outcomes and improved quality - annual monitoring report

	Develop higher education staff guide to include key processes, expectations, support functions for students and linkage to College policies - update annually	September 2012	Vice Principal Employment and Skills, Head of Student Services with other key Senior Leadership Team staff	Higher education staff guide produced Guide distributed to all higher education staff and follow up training provided Access to policies and procedures clearly referenced	Senior Leadership Team meeting	Staff training through evaluation forms Student questionnaire feedback about quality of provision including cross college processes and support
	Develop an Higher Education Quality Manual	September 2012	Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education	An agreed Quality Manual that includes all documentation and processes required by the College and Higher Education Partners Staff confidence, skills and knowledge improves Student and staff experiences and expectations across the College are consistent	Vice Principal Employment and Skills Higher education steering group Senior Leadership Team	Improvement in the quality of higher education delivery programme management - annual monitoring report and student survey
	Carry out a higher education impact assessment on policies and procedures to ensure integration with higher education processes and identify	September 2012	Vice Principal Employment and Skills plus higher education working groups	Cross-college policies and procedures have appropriate and relevant reference to higher education	Higher education steering group	Student and staff surveys and feedback and focus groups Minutes from team meetings

	where separate policies and procedures are required or amends of current					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engages with its awarding partners to develop and ensure a meaningful use of the external examiner system in accordance with the <i>Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)</i> and <i>Section 4: External examining</i> (paragraph 17) 	Centralise the administration and coordination of higher education quality processes including the receiving or examiner reports	April 2012	Vice Principal Employment	Centralised control and administration of higher education processes leading to clarity of processes and successful monitoring at all levels	Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality	Minutes of higher education steering group
	All external examiner reports to be received at Higher education steering groups meeting	October 2012	Vice Principal Employment and Skills		Higher education steering group	Agenda and minutes from Academic Standards committee
	Introduction of cross-college Higher Education Academic Standards committee (as above)	April 2012	Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education and Academy Directors		Vice Principal Employment and Skills	Annual monitoring reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develops its processes for ensuring that its higher education provision and its staff, including part-time and student support 	Introduce higher education induction and training activities for all staff involved with higher education which will cover handbook (as per section 2), Higher Education Institutions'	September 2012	Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development, Vice Principal Employment and Skills and Programme	Development meetings scheduled Planned learning & development events Higher education induction developed	Higher education steering group Senior Leadership Team	Staff evaluation forms - professional development feedback, induction feedback Positive feedback from staff

<p>staff, are aware of the Academic Infrastructure and its relevance beyond the approval and validation processes of its awarding partners (paragraph 26)</p>	<p>requirements and standards including principles of Academic Infrastructure and impact upon quality of programmes</p>		<p>Manager Post 19 Higher Education</p>	<p>and working successfully</p>		<p>evaluation forms</p>
	<p>Include updates at Higher Education annual conference including inviting Higher Education Partner representation to advise on amendments to Academic Infrastructure</p>	<p>July 2012</p>	<p>Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development</p>	<p>Scheduled and delivered annually</p> <p>Activities support curriculum development and improvement needs</p> <p>Higher Education Partners attend</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team meetings</p>	<p>Professional development evaluation forms</p> <p>Human Resource Development report demonstrates improvement in skills levels of staff</p>
	<p>To attend ACER networking groups and feedback to team meetings and higher education steering group</p>	<p>July 2012</p>	<p>Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education</p>	<p>Attending ACER meetings</p> <p>Evidence of subject benchmarks being used</p>	<p>Higher education steering group</p>	<p>Minutes from higher education steering group meetings and course team meetings</p> <p>Annual monitoring reports</p>
	<p>Higher education course teams to use subject benchmarks to review relevance and rigour of higher education programmes</p>	<p>July 2013</p>	<p>Academy Directors</p>	<p>Feedback is shared systematically with Higher Education Partners to support improvements to the programmes</p>	<p>Higher education steering group and Senior Leadership Team Quality meetings</p>	<p>Minutes from course team meetings</p> <p>Minutes from Higher Education Academic Standards committee and steering group</p>
<p>To introduce a process with Higher Education Partners to review and</p>	<p>October 2012</p>	<p>Vice Principal Employment and Skills and</p>	<p>The allocation of one person to receive updated module</p>	<p>Higher Education Academic Standards</p>		

	feedback on module content and outcomes		Programme Manager Post 19 Higher Education	guides for approval by relevant Higher Education Partners	committee Higher education steering group	Feedback from students - module questionnaires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduces a more formal process for evaluating staff development activities across the higher education provision and develop an overall staff development plan that includes activities that cover all relevant aspects, including the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 39) 	Staff development programme to be devised working with partner Higher Education development teams to support relevance and share practice.	Current picture Feb 2012 Completion June 2012	Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development and Academy directors	Meetings with Academy Directors/Head of Faculty/key higher education staff Meetings with partner development teams Development supports continuous improvement	Higher education steering group Senior Leadership Team	Staff evaluation forms Minutes from Higher Education Partner meetings Feedback from students. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is high - lesson observations and student feedback
	Independent learning plans for staff to include specific higher education development needs and associated training arising from attendance at training events, external examiner feedback, module outcomes and higher education developments	July 2012	Assistant Principal Human Resources & Professional Development and higher education staff line managers	Development meetings scheduled Plans developed and up to date/part of annual monitoring processes and performance review appraisals Accurately recorded via Resource Development team	Senior Leadership Team	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take steps to ensure that it is 	Ensure all amends and sign off of public	September 2012	Vice Principal Employment and	Public materials are up to date, accurate	Higher education steering group	Minutes from higher education

<p>able to demonstrate formally the means by which it assures itself and its awarding partners of the accuracy and completeness of its public information (paragraph 47).</p>	<p>information is evidenced through minutes of relevant meetings and formal documentation sign off materials</p>		<p>Skills, Marketing, Academy Directors</p>	<p>and of a high quality</p>	<p>Executive Leadership Team</p>	<p>steering group meeting Sign off documentation evidence</p>
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