



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

South Leicestershire College

June 2010

SR 98/2009

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2010

ISBN 978 1 84979 190 8

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

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

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

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

Integrated quality and enhancement review

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 South Leicestershire College carried out in June 2010

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

Good practice

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

- the College's close and effective relationships with the University and partnership colleges provide excellent opportunities for staff development related to higher education
- the helpful and timely feedback provided to students following assessment is supported by the accessibility and availability of staff
- the siting of the HND Media within a working environment provides students with day-to-day exposure to current working practice, industry standard equipment and local, national and international media companies.

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:

- develop the Cross College Higher Education Group to ensure it has oversight of the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- clarify how the quality and standards of higher education provision, and the related reporting, will be given a focus within the new college structure
- assist staff to increase their awareness of, and engagement with, the Academic Infrastructure to ensure it has a positive impact on the delivery and development of the College's higher education provision
- identify and plan for the specific, appropriate staff development requirements of those engaged in the delivery and assessment of higher education programmes
- put in place structures and systems to ensure that information provided to students on programmes, particularly relating to programme specifications and academic regulations, is consistent and clearly signposted.

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

- revise and update its higher education strategy to provide a more up-to-date view of the provision
- ensure that all marketing and recruitment literature is accurate and complete and reflects the precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*.

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 South Leicestershire College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Northampton and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mrs Catherine Hill and Mr John Skinner (reviewers) and Mr Peter Clarke (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 from 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 for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 South Leicestershire College, formerly Wigston College, is a general further education college which opened in 1970. Situated on the southern outskirts of Leicester, the College draws students from throughout Leicestershire. The College particularly serves the south of Leicester City and South Leicestershire, including the Harborough district. In 2008-09 the College enrolled over 9,700 students, with 81 per cent of these being adults over the age of 19. The HEFCE-funded provision at the College is small, with 161 students at the start of 2009-10. From 2009-10, all of the provision is funded indirectly through the University of Northampton (the University).

5 The College operates predominantly from five sites, with most of the higher education provision based at the main site in Wigston, which also houses the main Learning Resource Centre. In 2010, the College will relocate from the Wigston campus to a new £43m building situated in South Wigston, a large suburb of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.

6 The following outlines the programmes offered by South Leicestershire College together with their awarding bodies. Full-time equivalent student numbers are shown in parentheses.

The University of Northampton (all part-time)

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education/Certificate in Education (51)
- FdA Leadership and Management (6)
- FdA Accounting (0)

Edexcel

Part-time:

- HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families (4)

Full-time:

- HND Media (Moving Image) (21)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The Professional Graduate Certificate in Education/Certificate in Education and the Foundation Degree in Leadership and Management are franchised from the University of Northampton as part of a consortium of colleges. These programmes are subject to the University's quality assurance processes, which include cross-moderation between centres. The curriculum, assessment and programme specifications are all the responsibility of the University. The College is responsible for recruitment and enrolment of students, for the provision of appropriate resources and support and the maintenance of student records.

8 The College has approval from Edexcel to deliver the two Higher National programmes. The College determines the nature of these through its choice of standard Edexcel modules according to Edexcel rules. The College is responsible for the delivery and assessment of the programmes. Edexcel appoints external examiners for each programme.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9 As stated above, the College is shortly to move into a new campus in South Wigston, where most higher education provision will be housed. The HND Media programme will continue to be based in the College's Media Centre located in the Belgrave area of Leicester.

10 The College will no longer be offering its Higher National programmes. The HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families has recruited small numbers of students, and will not recruit new first-year students in 2010-11. The College will also not be recruiting to the HND Media, as it is planning to replace it with a Foundation Degree. This has yet to be developed and validated, so there will be no recruitment of new students in 2010-11. The second year of both Higher National programmes will run to ensure that current students can complete.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

11 Students studying higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A range of information was presented. For the University programmes, a focus group was organised with an external consultant who produced a written summary of responses. The views of HND Media students were obtained through the Board of Study, and summary responses to set questions were provided for students on the HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families. During the visit, a meeting was held with a group of students representing all of the higher education programmes. Outcomes from this and the written contributions were helpful in informing agendas for the visit.

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?

12 The College's responsibilities for ensuring the standards of the University of Northampton programmes are clearly specified in the partnership agreement between the two institutions and are expanded through detailed information provided by the University. There is a close and effective relationship with the University, which provides significant support to the College.

13 The responsibility for quality and standards in higher education in the College rests with the Director of Curriculum, supported by the Deputy Director, Adult and Further Learning. The Director of Curriculum maintains a strategic overview of the higher education programmes. The Deputy Director, Adult and Further Learning, takes an operational role and line manages the Curriculum Manager for Strategic Management and Professional Development in whose area the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education/Certificate in Education and the Foundation Degree in Leadership and Management reside. The HND Media Studies and the HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families reside in the areas of Creative Industries and Health and Social Care respectively. The curriculum managers for these areas report to the Director of Curriculum through the Deputy Director, 14-19 Academy.

14 Curriculum managers are responsible for overseeing academic standards in their areas. These responsibilities cover further and higher education, where relevant, and have been recently revised following the introduction of a new management structure. Staff have responded very positively to these changes and reported that they have reduced bureaucracy and have more clearly defined and enhanced their responsibility for higher education.

15 There are two cross-college groups which have a focus on higher education; the Cross College Higher Education Group and the Higher Education Vocational Advisory Group. The recent management changes have resulted in a hiatus in the operation of the former group, which has no formal terms of reference. This situation means that there is no group overseeing higher education at the College. The team considers it advisable for the College to develop the Cross College Higher Education Group to have oversight of the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and learning opportunities. The Higher Education Vocational Advisory Group has a defined remit focused on development work for higher education. This group has contributed to the current Higher Education Strategy document. The College accepts, however, that this strategy is now out of date and does not reflect the College's position regarding new partnership or course developments. It is desirable for the College to revise its Higher Education Strategy document to provide a more current strategic view of higher education partnership arrangements and provision.

16 Reporting arrangements for academic standards are conducted through curriculum areas using the self-assessment process. This process provides formal reports to the senior managers of the College and to the sub-committee of the governing body with responsibility for quality and standards. The small amount of HEFCE-funded higher education means that the College uses the further education model for its quality assurance processes. This sometimes mitigates against raising higher education-specific matters in an appropriate and formal forum. The team considers it advisable for the College to clarify how the quality and

standards of the higher education provision, and the related reporting, will be given a focus within the new college structure.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

17 The University undertakes detailed mapping of its programmes to the Academic Infrastructure. Its procedures and regulations are all aligned to the relevant aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. University staff control much of the assessment process for programmes not awarded by Edexcel, including assessment criteria, intended learning outcomes, and programme specifications. These are produced by the University and are in line with the FHEQ.

18 College staff have limited knowledge and appreciation of the nature and role of the Academic Infrastructure. They rely on the University to ensure its programmes take due account of the different aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. As a result, although programmes achieve the required academic standards, it is not clear how staff ensure that full account is taken of the *Code of practice* in areas such as assessment, work placement and recruitment. The team considers it advisable that staff increase their awareness of, and engagement with, the Academic Infrastructure, to ensure it has a positive impact on the delivery and development of the College's higher education provision.

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

19 The University is ultimately responsible for the quality assurance of any programmes leading to its awards and credits. External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies. The College has an effective system for considering the comments of external examiners. Their reports are received by the Director of Curriculum and the relevant curriculum managers and programme leaders. The Director's office monitors required actions and timescales. External examiners' reports confirm that programmes achieve the appropriate academic standards. The reports for the University provision indicate that College staff are aware of the required level of assessment and fully meet the standards of the programme. The Edexcel programmes meet the standards expected. However, external examiners have suggested that there needs to be a greater awareness of higher-level assessment protocols, specifically with regard to grading criteria and the level of language used.

20 The consortium arrangements for the University programmes provide a productive and proactive environment for staff delivering and assessing on these programmes, including engagement in regular moderation and cross-college marking opportunities. This supports staff new to higher education delivery and engages more experienced staff in continuous professional development. Staff delivering and assessing on other provision would benefit from a similar approach.

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

21 The College's continuing professional development scheme provides objectives relating to entitlement for all staff. There is no identification of how staff development with specific relevance to higher education is planned and delivered. There are, however, a number of staff undertaking postgraduate qualifications supported by the College. Staff make good use of the University's consortium partnership arrangements, including, for example, activities for staff new to teaching higher education, standardisation and moderation events, and practical sessions on systems and procedures. These types of activity are well received and attended by College staff and are seen as good practice. The College recognises in its self-evaluation document that many staff are unfamiliar with some of the terminology of the

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Academic Infrastructure and have committed to periodic staff development events to address this need.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

22 The College's responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities mirror those for academic standards set out in paragraphs 12 to 16. The Cross College Higher Education Group, chaired by the Deputy Director, Adult and Further Learning, is intended to focus on the sharing of good practice across the College, the higher education experience for students, the marketing and recruitment on to higher education programmes and staff development opportunities. Before the recent management changes, meetings were held three times each year, however, the meetings of the group now occur in an unplanned fashion and without minutes.

23 Within each area the curriculum managers are responsible for ensuring that programme managers hold regular team meetings which consider and inform issues affecting learning opportunities. The students do not attend team meetings, although they are represented on the boards of studies in each of the curriculum areas. The minutes of team meetings are used to inform reports from curriculum managers to the Director of Curriculum. In addition to these internal reports, the Director of Curriculum receives external examiners' reports which comment upon the quality of learning opportunities. These are annotated for response and action by the appropriate curriculum manager and to highlight good practice for wider dissemination.

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

24 The College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies through its reporting procedures and by subjecting itself to validation, external examination, internal moderation and verification of student work. The external examiners' reports are received for all higher education programmes. They confirm that the College is meeting its obligations and providing appropriate learning opportunities for students.

25 As with academic standards, the successful operation of the cooperative and collaborative arrangements on University programmes are beneficial and help ensure that the College is meeting its obligations for providing appropriate learning opportunities. Examples of benefits arising from these arrangements include the provision of verified and approved assessment instruments, useful feedback on draft submissions and access to online resources at the University.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 The impact of the Academic Infrastructure on the quality of learning opportunities reflects that for academic standards outlined in paragraphs 17 and 18. The College's own engagement with the Academic Infrastructure is neither complete nor comprehensive. The

College recognises this and plans that periodic staff development programmes will be used to update staff in knowledge and understanding. The internal Staff Development Programme for 2009-10 contains several topics of potential relevance. These include higher education in further education colleges, peer observation for learning, plagiarism and referencing, and professional updating.

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

27 The College operates a formal teacher observation system in which all full-time staff are observed at least once each year and part-time members of staff are observed on a rolling basis. Observations are generally carried out by a dedicated team of advanced practitioners who support teachers in their curriculum areas and carry out observations in curriculum areas other than their own to ensure greater objectivity and cross moderation of grading. Many of the advanced practitioners have higher education teaching experience. Teachers can request a non-graded observation to get advice and use peer observation to extend skills. This aspect is particularly valuable to higher education lecturers. The College has a system in place to support those whose observation grades are below satisfactory, and has a strong commitment to support through a variety of mechanisms, including providing mentoring and coaching, repeat observations and training.

28 The College uses a range of approaches to obtain the views of students on the quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of the provision. Student comment, particularly at module level, provides staff with helpful feedback. This is generally very supportive of the quality of teaching and learning.

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

29 The students are supported at the start of the programmes by induction sessions and materials which they generally find clear and straightforward. Students on the Postgraduate Certificate/Certificate in Education programmes, in addition to receiving student handbooks, receive an electronic 'toolkit' to support their studies, which they find useful.

30 The College provides effective tutorial support to its higher education students. Each student is assigned a personal tutor at the start of the academic year and often this is the programme manager for the course they are studying. The arrangements for tutorials are tailored to meet the specific needs of each student. The full-time HND and part-time HNC students all receive a timetabled tutorial session, while the part-time students on the University programmes have more flexible arrangements, including one-to-one sessions with tutors and mentors.

31 The students commented favourably on the availability of staff via email, telephone and by appointment, the willingness of staff to receive and comment upon draft submissions, and the timeliness of the feedback that they receive from their tutors. The College's policy on the turnaround of marked work is two weeks. This is applied across all programmes and it exceeds the expectations of the University, which has a four-week turnaround requirement for its courses. The helpfulness and timeliness of feedback, which the students welcome, is considered good practice.

32 The College ensures that the support that it provides meets the needs of its students and enhances the quality of their learning by ascertaining student views through a variety of means. These include module/unit survey reports, group forums on the virtual learning environment, student representation at boards of study meetings and student focus groups. In their meeting with reviewers, students provided several examples of changes which had been made to programmes in response to student comment. These included a refocusing of

assessment on the Foundation Degree and the provision of some key textbooks at the Media Centre.

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

33 All staff at the College participate in continuous professional development to meet the requirements of the Institute for Learning. Individual needs are identified via the teacher observations and through specific requests. The College provides an annual programme of internal training, most of which is of a generic nature designed to enhance the quality of learning across both further and higher education. There are some, but rather few, specialised events for higher education staff. The team considers it advisable for the College to identify and plan for the specific, appropriate staff development requirements of those engaged in the delivery and assessment of higher education programmes.

34 For staff teaching on higher education programmes there is the opportunity to undertake scholarly activity, including upgrading qualifications, personal research, subject updating and time to attend conferences. More than 20 staff are currently engaged in studying for master's degrees part-time. As stated in paragraph 21, staff also benefit from development opportunities offered by the University, and take-up of these has generally been good.

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?

35 Regular team meetings and boards of study within each curriculum area monitor the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources for each programme. Students are represented at these meetings and their views inform the course teams on issues affecting their ability to meet programme learning outcomes. The course teams are responsive to the students' needs. For example, they have negotiated extended opening hours for the College's Learning Resources Centre to meet the needs of part-time students. The higher education programme teams also liaise closely with staff in the Learning Resources Centre to ensure the purchase of relevant books and other media within the allocated budget. Students on the University courses also have access to library and learning resources, including remote access to the virtual learning environment, at the University.

36 All students have access to the College's virtual learning environment. The College is investing in developing this resource beyond its present use, which is predominantly as a repository for course materials and as a notice board. The College is hoping to develop more interactive facilities. Students on the Foundation Degree in Leadership and Management are utilising the forum facilities within the learning environment to good effect. They enhance communication and collaboration on group exercises among geographically remote part-time students. The College is mindful of the need to ensure that all students can access this facility and, where students do not have home or work computing facilities, they can apply to borrow a laptop.

37 The HND Media Studies students benefit from the provision of specialist resources to meet the needs of their vocationally-focused programme. A suite of industry standard equipment is provided at the Media Centre of Excellence in Television and Film, located in the Belgrave area of Leicester. This facility meets specific community needs in the area and is shared with professional companies involved in local radio and local and national television broadcasting, and international programme production. The students on the HND programme benefit from this through day-to-day exposure to current working practice, the use of industry-standard equipment, and work experience with local, national and international companies, along with direct employer input into the course. This represents good practice. The

excellence of these facilities provides good support for the proposed development of a replacement Foundation Degree.

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?

38 The memorandum of cooperation between the University and the College outlines that the responsibility for publishing information lies with the College following approval by the University. The College is responsible for the information published about the Edexcel provision. The College is currently redeveloping its website to enable improved branding for the higher education provision. This should allow much improved access, accuracy and consistency to information related to the recruitment process.

39 Programme leaders are responsible for the content and production of handbooks for individual programmes. The content of handbooks for the University's programmes makes full use of links to the university regulations and procedures, including academic impropriety, mitigating circumstances and appeals. Any use of these procedures by students is administered by the University. The handbooks for the Edexcel programmes do not have consistent information about these procedures for the Higher National students. There is a link on the virtual learning environment to the Edexcel website for students to access the full regulations for the Edexcel programmes. Students are advised of the correct use of referencing and how to prevent plagiarism as part of their induction process.

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 Generic College information is the responsibility of the Marketing team. UCAS information is managed by the Information, Advice and Guidance team who work closely with the Marketing team to ensure its accuracy. Programme handbooks are produced within the relevant programme teams and are signed off by the Curriculum Manager. Information published in relation to individual programmes of study covers the range, content, structure, organisation and the main learning and teaching methods which are employed on each programme.

41 The College's Student Handbook, which is not specific to higher education students, is produced annually by the Marketing team. Information for the Handbook is drawn predominantly from the college policies and procedures, the college calendar including key dates and organisation information. Generic college services information is provided by the Marketing team. Information is signed off as correct by the Director of Human Resources. The handbooks for University-franchised programmes are validated documents, and therefore only minor changes, such as contact details and room numbers are permitted without University approval.

42 The programme handbooks for HND and HNC provision are produced by the College. The format, style and content of handbooks is different for each of these programmes and there is a need for greater uniformity of content. Some information is difficult to find. For example, in relation to the Edexcel courses, the details on rules of assessment and student appeals are brief and sketchy. While further information is provided

via induction and available via links from the virtual learning environment, the rather piecemeal provision of information partly explained the confusion of some HND students about who was the awarding body and their rights of access to the University's resources. The team considers it advisable for the College to put in place structures and systems to ensure that information provided to students on programmes, particularly that relating to programme specifications and academic regulations, is consistent and clearly signposted.

43 The College is aware of the need to provide clearer information on its higher education programmes. Currently, marketing and recruitment information, particularly for higher national programmes, is of variable quality. The team considers it desirable that the College ensures that all marketing and recruitment literature is accurate and complete and reflects the precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. The College website is currently undergoing redesign and rebranding, which includes the provision of a new brand specifically for higher education and the introduction of a distinct section for relevant information. The College also plans to present part of the induction programmes in audio/video form to ensure that the information is given in the same way to all students to ensure its accuracy. It is the College's intention that all programmes will in future be validated by the University.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

44 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in March 2009. The following lines of enquiry were agreed with the College.

- How different forms of feedback, particularly formative feedback, meet published policies and are used across programmes to promote student learning.
- The extent to which support for higher education students in academic assignment and report writing reinforces the assessment process and ensures fairness of students' assessment.
- How the college ensures academic rigour in the application of assessment grading criteria across different assessment methods (practical and work-based projects) to ensure intended learning outcomes are met.

45 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. Students value highly the supportive and developmental feedback provided to them following assessment on the HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families and following teaching observation within the PGCE programme. Valuable individualised support is provided to students in all programmes in preparation for and following assessment, and student work experience contributes to and enhances the assessment experience.

46 The Developmental engagement team also made several recommendations. They considered it advisable that feedback on written work within the PGCE and HND Media programmes be constructive, developmental, more detailed, and specifically referenced to intended learning outcomes. It was also considered advisable that presentation of assessment-related content within programme handbooks be more consistent, and that close consideration be given to ensuring that assessment of work-based learning within the HND Media programme is equitable and consistent. The team considered it desirable that the College provides staff development focused on assessment feedback and grading, and that consideration be given to reducing the assessment workload on the HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families.

D Foundation Degrees

47 The College offers part-time Foundation Degrees awarded by the University of Northampton in Leadership and Management and in Accounting. The latter has yet to recruit students, while the former has 12 enrolled (six full-time equivalents).

48 The College is a member of a consortium for the Foundation Degree in Leadership and Management. All major responsibilities lie with the University and the College follows the University's arrangements for delivery and assessment of the programme. The University has designed its programmes and procedures to ensure that practices take full cognisance of the Academic Infrastructure. Should the College become more involved in the future design and development of Foundation Degree programmes, it will need to ensure better awareness of the Academic Infrastructure among its staff.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

49 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in South Leicestershire 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, the University of Northampton and Edexcel.

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

- the College's close and effective relationships with the University and partnership colleges provide excellent opportunities for staff development related to higher education (paragraphs 12, 20, 26)
- the helpful and timely feedback provided to students following assessment is supported by the accessibility and availability of staff (paragraph 31)
- the siting of the HND Media within a working environment provides students with day-to-day exposure to current working practice, industry standard equipment and local, national and international media companies (paragraph 37).

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

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

- develop the Cross College Higher Education Group to ensure it has oversight of the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 15, 22)
- clarify how the quality and standards of higher education provision, and the related reporting, will be given a focus within the new college structure (paragraph 16)
- assist staff to increase their awareness of, and engagement with, the Academic Infrastructure to ensure it has a positive impact on the delivery and development of the College's higher education provision (paragraphs 18, 21, 26)
- identify and plan for the specific, appropriate staff development requirements of those engaged in the delivery and assessment of higher education programmes (paragraph 33)
- put in place structures and systems to ensure that information provided to students on programmes, particularly relating to programme specifications and academic regulations, is consistent and clearly signposted (paragraphs 39, 42).

Integrated quality and enhancement review

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

- revise and update its higher education strategy to provide a more up-to-date view of the provision (paragraph 15)
- ensure that all marketing and recruitment literature is accurate and complete and reflects the precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 43).

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

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

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

South Leicestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target Date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the college's close and effective relationships with the University and partnership colleges provide excellent opportunities for staff development related to higher education (paragraphs 12, 20, 26) 	Further develop opportunities for higher education staff development on a more systematic basis	5/11/2010	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning Partnership and off-site learning advisor University of Northampton	Evidence of increased higher education staff development in connection with the University of Northampton	Director of Curriculum Deputy Director of Quality and Effectiveness	Report to Higher Education Vocational Advisory Group and Cross College Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the helpful and timely feedback provided to students following assessment is supported by the accessibility and availability of staff (paragraph 31) 	<p>Ensure timetables continue to provide accessibility of staff with appropriate tutorial time</p> <p>Continue to develop use of Moodle, Nice and electronic communications</p>	<p>10/09/2010</p> <p>15/12/2010 and termly thereafter</p>	<p>Generic managers</p> <p>Deputy Director of Quality and Effectiveness</p>	<p>Timetables show suitable gaps to liaise with students outside of class</p> <p>Evidence of staff development taking place and increased usage of electronic formats</p>	<p>Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning</p> <p>Deputy Director of Quality and Effectiveness</p>	<p>Higher education self assessment and student feedback</p> <p>Higher education self assessment and student feedback</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the siting of the HND Media within a working environment provides students with day-to-day exposure to current working practice, industry standard equipment and local, national and international media companies (paragraph 37). 	<p>Year 2 HND Media students to remain based in Belgrave and continue to work with commercial organisations based on-site</p>	10/09/2010	Centre Manager Creative Industries	Timetable shows rooming in Belgrave. Continued placement links	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning	HND Media self assessment report and student feedback
	<p>Foundation Degree to be timetabled in Belgrave once approved by University of Northampton</p>	10/09/2011	Centre Manager Creative Industries	Timetable shows rooming in Belgrave. Continued placement links	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning	Foundation Degree Media self assessment report student feedback
<p>The team agreed a number of areas where the college should be advised to take action:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the Cross College Higher Education Group to ensure it has oversight of the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 15, 22) 	<p>Reinstate Cross College Group with higher education learning programme managers, centre managers, Deputy Director of Curriculum and representatives from IAG, Resources and Managers. Annual schedule to be agreed at first meeting</p>	<p>First meeting before 6/9/2010 to consider Terms of Reference and IQER</p> <p>Summative Review and action plan termly thereafter</p>	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning	Meeting in place attended and minuted with proactive actions being implemented	Curriculum Operations and Business Management Team	Review of performance in final meeting of each academic year by the Cross College Higher Education Group

	Produce Cross College Higher Education Group Terms of Reference to include quality improvement roles	Draft Terms of Reference prior to 6/09/2010 first meeting	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning	Terms of Reference approved by Cross College Higher Education Group	Curriculum Operations and Business Management Team	Reviewed the final meeting of each academic year by the Cross College Higher Education Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify how the quality and standards of higher education provision, and the related reporting, will be given a focus within the new college structure (paragraph 16) 	Ensure all Link lecturers (learning programme managers) participate in University of Northampton self assessment reporting and revise through Cross College Higher Education Group and that this feeds into the official college review system	31/10/2010	Learning programme managers for higher education courses	Clear specific higher education reporting	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning	Report to Higher Education Cross College Group
		31/01/2011	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning	Consistency of higher education reporting	Curriculum Operations and Business Management Team	Report to Higher Education Vocational Advisory Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist staff to increase their awareness of, and engagement with, the Academic Infrastructure to ensure it has a positive impact on the delivery and development of the College's higher education provision (paragraphs 18, 21, 26) 	Undertake further training on the Academic Infrastructure on a termly basis for teaching and support staff. The agreed annual programme to be circulated to all appropriate staff following the first Vocational Advisory Group meeting	15/12/2010 and termly thereafter	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning Deputy Director of Quality and Effectiveness	Records of termly staff development sessions attended by appropriate staff recorded on college staff development database	Director of Curriculum	Annual report on staff development within self assessment reporting system

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and plan for the specific, appropriate staff development requirements of those engaged in the delivery and assessment of higher education programmes (paragraph 33) 	All staff teaching on higher education provision to have specific targets for higher education staff development within Section 98 of their performance development reviews	3/12/2010	Centre managers with staff delivering on higher education programmes	All staff delivering on higher education courses undertake specific higher education staff development	Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning Partnership and off-site learning advisors. University of Northampton Deputy Director of Quality and Effectiveness	Staff development specific to higher education embedded in system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> put in place structures and systems to ensure that information provided to students on programmes, particularly relating to programme specifications and academic regulations, is consistent and clearly signposted (paragraphs 39, 42). 	Use re-instated Cross College Higher Education Group to validate course handbooks ensuring consistent approach and meeting the group practice of courses linked to the University of Northampton	Reviewed at first meeting prior to 6/09/2010 Revision before 30/09/2010	Centre managers Centre managers	Consistent higher education course handbooks meeting best practice standards	Cross College Higher Education Group	Student feedback minutes/ comments from Cross College Higher Education Group
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action:						

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revise and update its higher education strategy to provide a more up-to-date view of the provision (paragraph 15) 	<p>Re-write higher education strategic plan 2009-2012 to incorporate subsequent changes linking this to the new college strategic plan and college improvement plan</p>	<p>30/09/2010</p>	<p>Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning</p>	<p>New document approved by Higher Education Cross College Group and Curriculum Operations and Business Management Team</p>	<p>College Executive HE Vocational Advisory Group</p>	<p>Comments and amendments from Vocational Advisory Group and College Executive</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all marketing and recruitment literature is accurate and complete and reflects the precepts of the relevant sections of the <i>Code of practice</i> (paragraph 43). 	<p>Review literature at Cross College Higher Education Group to ensure consistency and meeting <i>Code of practice</i></p>	<p>6/09/2010</p>	<p>Marketing and Promotions Manager</p>	<p>Consistent material approved by Cross College Higher Education Group</p>	<p>Deputy Director Adult and Foundation Learning</p>	<p>Marketing self assessment report</p>

RG 655 09/10

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk