



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Stanmore College**

**January 2012**

**SR 026/12**

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ISBN 978 1 84979 500 5

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

## Preface

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

## Purpose of IQER

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

## The IQER process

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

## Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

## Summative review

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

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

## Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

## Outcomes of IQER

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

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

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

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

## Executive summary

### The Summative review of Stanmore College carried out in January 2012

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, 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 extent to which higher education programmes are mapped against subject benchmark statements and other external reference points ensures that academic standards are appropriate and that programmes meet the requirements of stakeholders
- the comprehensive involvement of employers in the development and implementation of programmes ensures that they are fit for purpose
- the exceptionally thorough and transparent moderation process ensures that student work is consistently and appropriately marked and academic standards are maintained
- the range of staff development opportunities offered by the College, University and external bodies contributes both to the maintenance and the enhancement of academic standards
- the range and accessibility of information and resources provided by the virtual learning environment supports students, staff and workplace mentors effectively.

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

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

- keep the student enrolment process under careful review in order to facilitate student progression and access to learning resources
- carefully review the organisation and focus of student induction to ensure its effectiveness
- include in the higher education prospectus, where appropriate, a statement informing prospective students that new courses are 'subject to validation'.

## 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 Stanmore 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 the University of West London (the University). The review was carried out by Dr Hayley Randle, Dr Robert Wilkinson (reviewers), and Dr John Barkham (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. The review was conducted by a desk-based study. Evidence in support of the review included documents supplied by the College and awarding bodies and a meeting with students. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

3 In order to help HEFCE 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 The College's single campus is located in a residential area of the London Borough of Harrow. Unemployment in the borough is at the national average. Well over 50 per cent of the Borough's population are from black and minority ethnic groups. The Asian community make up 30 per cent of the population. The College was established in 1987. In the current academic year there are 1,600 16-18 year old full-time students, three-quarters of whom are studying at level 3, and some 2,100 adult part-time and full-time enrolments on professional, vocational, higher education, and adult and community learning programmes.

5 In September 2007 the College was restructured, merging Stanmore Sixth Form College and Stanmore Adult College into a unified management structure based on faculties and departments, with sixth form and student services directorates. The College mission is to inspire and support learners to achieve success. The College Strategic Plan identifies the further development of higher education programmes through HNC/D provision to be developed for 2013 in the areas of Creative Arts, Media, Computing, and Business Studies. The College works in partnership with the University of West London for the provision of higher education and is a member of the West London Lifelong Learning Network. The higher education programmes are based in the Department of Health and Social Care and commenced in the 2007-08 academic year. They have been developed in response to employer needs and government initiatives within the child and healthcare professions. The programmes are as follows, listed under the name of the awarding body and with full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets.

### University of West London

- FdA Working with Children and Young People (26)
- FdA Healthcare Play Specialism (23.5)
- BA (Hons) Working in Integrated Services for Children and Young People (6)

## **Partnership agreements with the awarding body**

6 Currently, there are similar contractual agreements for each of the three programmes with the University of West London. Within the partnership, the College works collaboratively with East Berkshire College and Bolton College. The agreements detail the aims and management of the programmes, institutional obligations, responsibilities, and financial arrangements.

## **Recent developments in higher education at the College**

7 There have been no recent changes to the provision. The College's strategic planning includes the development of HNC/D programmes in other areas of the curriculum over the next two years, in addition to the Foundation Degrees and BA top-up in the Department of Health and Social Care. These include computing, performing art, media, and business. A Higher Education Development Group is in place to develop these programmes and will eventually take responsibility for the coordination of all higher education provision.

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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The report was produced by a student who recently completed the FdA Working with Children and Young People and the BA (Hons) top-up degree. This student gathered a wide range of evidence from written documents and visited each current group of students in September 2011 to canvas their views. The report produced was valuable for the team and enabled the coordinator and review support officer to prepare a range of questions for the four students at the preparatory meeting.

# **B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education**

## **Core theme 1: Academic standards**

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

9 The College is a Centre of Vocational Excellence in early years education. The provision (see list of programmes in paragraph 5) has been developed to build on this expertise and to service local needs. It is managed by the College's Department of Health and Social Care, which is one of three departments within the Faculty of Care, Creativity and Sport, in partnership with and validated by the University of West London.

10 The University appoints an Academic Link Manager who liaises with the College and ensures that staff and students are aware of the University's regulations, policies and quality assurance procedures, and that routine processes to meet the partnership agreement are effective. At senior management level, academic standards are monitored through annual collaborative review meetings attended by senior managers from both the University and the College. The relationship between the University and the College is supportive and effective, and the College feels that regular communication ensures that issues are dealt with efficiently. The minutes of annual collaborative review meetings confirm this.



11 Within the College, overall responsibility for coordination of higher education rests with the Vice Principal responsible for Curriculum and Quality. However, programmes are managed on a day-to-day basis by programme teams led by a programme area manager who, together with the Academic Link Manager, is responsible for overall coordination of the programme. The chain of reporting is efficient, moving from the programme area managers to the Head of the Department of Health and Social Care, then to the Director of the Faculty of Care, Creativity and Sport, and finally directly to the Principal.

12 There is a robust framework within the College for annual course monitoring. Annual programme reports are produced by the Programme Area Manager and informed by reports from the Academic Link Manager, the external examiner, module leaders, and student evaluations. The Programme Area Manager is fundamental to the quality assurance of programmes at an operational level, and is instrumental in the production of the annual Higher Education Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan. Module leader reports are particularly thorough and informative, and result in an action plan to improve module content and delivery. Similarly, there are effective systems in place for gathering student views. Annual monitoring reports and action plans are presented to and monitored by the University's Faculty Board via the Faculty Academic Standards Committee. The annual monitoring process is closely monitored by the College's faculty directors. Quality Improvement Plans are reviewed twice a year at performance review meetings. Within the College, annual monitoring reports are reviewed by the Curriculum Planning and Monitoring Team and the Senior Management Team, and reported to governors through the Quality Information and Planning Committee. The College also undertakes its own self-assessment review of its entire provision which provides a more holistic review of higher education programmes within the College's portfolio.

13 Within the Department of Health and Social Care, the College has appointed a Higher Education Coordinator who is responsible for the overall management and quality of the higher education provision and liaison with the University. Over the next year, the College intends to further develop its higher education provision through the provision of HNC/D programmes in Creative Arts, Media, Computing, and Business Studies. In this context the College has established a Higher Education Development Group, chaired by the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality, to coordinate development across the College. It is intended that the Higher Education Development Group will eventually take responsibility for all the College's higher education provision.

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

14 The Academic Infrastructure is thoroughly integrated into all aspects of development, delivery and assessments of the College's higher education provision. The academic level of awards is determined by reference to the FHEQ and the *Southern England Consortium for Credit Descriptors*, and both Foundation Degree programmes have been designed in accordance with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and include a significant element of work-based study which equates to 40 credits in each year. In addition, both FdA programmes articulate with the BA (Hons) degree programme which is offered within the College. Alternatively, learners can top-up to other level 6 healthcare qualifications at the University of West London or the Open University.

15 Both the FdA Working with Children and Young People and the BA (Hons) Working in Integrated Services for Children and Young People have been mapped against external reference points, including the National Occupational Standards at level 4 and the *Subject benchmark statement: Early childhood studies*. As there are no occupational standards for the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism the programme has been clearly mapped against the level 4 BTEC Diploma in Specialised Play for Sick Children and Young People. In addition, it has been mapped against competences devised by *Skills for Health*

(2008) and the *Employability Skills Matrix for the Health Sector* (2008) at levels 4 and 5. Learners on the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism can also apply for registration with the Hospital Play Staff Educational Trust. The extent to which all three programmes are clearly mapped against subject benchmark statements and other external reference points is an example of good practice, ensuring that academic standards are appropriate and that programmes meet the requirements of stakeholders.

16 The College has established processes to ensure that all aspects of design, delivery and assessment of its programmes are appropriate, and is guided by the University's Quality Handbook. All of these policies and procedures clearly reflect QAA's *Code of practice* and ensure that academic standards are maintained. The learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategy, and assessment strategy of all programmes are clearly articulated through comprehensive programme specifications. External examiners confirm adherence of programme-level assessment to the appropriate subject benchmark.

### **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 its awarding body?**

17 The College's higher education programmes have been subjected to a rigorous two-stage validation process, involving both University and College staff and external expertise. Similarly, modules and assessment arrangements are approved at validation. Processes associated with student performance are conducted according to the University's procedures. Module study guides and written assignments include learning outcomes and both generic and contextualised marking criteria. Learning outcomes are appropriate to the level of delivery. Students stated that 'higher level courses' were more academic and that they were more able to work without direction. To ensure the consistency of module delivery and assessment between partners, cross-site moderation meetings are held twice each year after submitted assignments have been marked and internally moderated. This provides an opportunity for standardisation of marking and discussion of module delivery between institutions. The University's Academic Link Manager oversees these meetings and also meets with programme teams from other colleges delivering the programmes to provide moderation support and guidance.

18 All three programmes have been developed in association with employers and the local authority, and there is an effective Health and Social Care Steering Group which meets twice each year. The group provides a forum for employers to provide feedback on the College's higher education provision and contributes to the review and development of the curriculum. It also ensures that students have the experience required to meet the professional standards of the award. In addition, the College has a strong relationship with the Harrow and Brent Early Years Partnership, which actively markets the programmes to employers in the area as the preferred progression route for them. The comprehensive involvement of employers in the development and implementation of programmes results in qualifications that employers consider are fit for purpose. This was identified as an area of good practice in the Developmental engagement and continues to develop.

19 The College operates a thorough and robust system for internal moderation and verification of student work. All assignments are blind marked in line with the University's assessment policy. The marks awarded are defined by the University's 'theoretical marking guide', with written feedback provided on the University's feedback sheet. Once marks have been agreed, 'provisional marks' and the full feedback is released to students, who are told that marks are provisional until ratified by the University's Assessment Board. The use of a generic marking grid provides a standardised, consistent and coherent approach to assessment. The internal moderation process, which is exceptionally thorough and

transparent, has been praised by external examiners and ensures that student work is consistently and appropriately marked and academic standards are maintained.

20 The University forwards the annual external examiner's report to the Programme Leader and Academic Link Manager at the College. It is considered, along with other information, as part of the annual monitoring process. External examiner reports indicate that standards of student work are comparable with similar programmes in other institutions with a spread of achievement, but that higher grade work is particularly sound and confidently graded at the correct level. The Developmental engagement made a desirable recommendation for the College to 'ensure that external examiners' reports differentiate between programmes and are sufficiently evaluative and comprehensive, so that they can be used by the College to enhance its higher education provision'. This area has been addressed by the College and a new external examiner appointed. The response by the University to the need to change the external examiner was swift and effective, and provides evidence for the strength of the collaboration.

21 The College has clear and effective policies on mitigating circumstances, academic misconduct, plagiarism, and appeals. These are communicated to students during induction and included in programme handbooks. All student summative assignments across the College are submitted through 'Turnitin' plagiarism software.

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

22 As part of their involvement in the West London Lifelong Learning Network, the College participates in the University of West London Higher Education in Further Education Group. This has been effective in developing and maintaining both the quality of assessment and scholarly activity. In particular, participation has helped to develop a wider understanding of the requirements and criteria for assessment at levels 4 and 5 and the requirements of research and scholarly activity in higher education. In addition, the College is a member of the Harrow Early Years Training Group, which identifies and responds to the training needs of staff. All higher education staff were required to attend the West London Lifelong Learning Network Seminar on Research in Higher Education/Scholarly Activity in February 2012.

23 New staff are appointed in accordance with the College's recruitment policy. Staff teaching higher education programmes must be approved by the University. Within the College there is an active programme of staff development. All new staff undertake a module leader induction programme run by the Higher Education Coordinator that covers all aspects of assignment marking, standardisation, and moderation. This ensures that they are effective in their roles and are aware of the requirements of teaching at different levels.

24 The College holds two dedicated staff development days with activities being designed around feedback from lesson observations and feedback from staff, and provides an opportunity to address changes in the curriculum. In addition, the College actively supports higher education staff wishing to develop their subject expertise through higher level training, attendance at a conference, or peer review. All staff are allocated 15 hours each year for scholarly activity, including working in industry to ensure that their teaching remains up to date. Higher education staff are supported by the College to undertake higher qualifications in order to ensure an appropriate level of training and subject knowledge. Subject specialist training for individual staff members is identified during performance management review.

25 College higher education staff also participate alongside University staff in staff development events offered by the University. In particular, the University has developed training for staff new to higher education to gain an understanding of the requirements of assessment. This has been effectively used and, as a result, staff are confident in their delivery. The University also runs an annual Collaborative Partners Conference for all colleagues who support collaborative provision.

26 Overall, the College is fully committed to staff development which is a priority area in strategic planning. The range of opportunities available to staff offered by the College, University and external bodies have clearly contributed to both the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards across the provision and is an example good practice.

**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 body.**

## **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?**

27 The management of the quality of learning opportunities is as described for academic standards in paragraphs 9 to 12. The provision satisfies the quality assurance standards of the awarding body, achieved in part through the support provided by the University's Academic Link Manager. All external monitoring meetings are attended by senior representatives of the College and the University.

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

28 The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 17 to 21 also apply to the quality of learning opportunities. The College ensures that the awarding body's requirements for the provision of appropriate resources for delivery are met through the programme approval process and adherence to the University's assessment policy.

29 Student feedback is obtained in a number of ways including tutorials and the National Student Survey. Student representatives attend the College's Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, and College Watch committees, helping to assure the quality of learning opportunities.

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

30 The Academic Infrastructure is thoroughly integrated into all aspects of development, delivery and assessment of the College's higher education provision (see paragraphs 14 to 16). Programme staff have a sound knowledge of the sections of the *Code of practice* that relate to the quality of learning opportunities, particularly *Section 3: Disabled students*, *Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*, and *Section 10: Admissions to higher education*. The programmes are approved in accordance with the University's Design Framework while taking account of the Academic Infrastructure, particularly programme alignment with the relevant subject benchmark.

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

31 The University expects staff delivering the programmes to be suitably qualified and proficient in the delivery of key and employability skills. The Academic Link Manager ensures that the teaching and learning is of an appropriate standard. External examiner reports confirm that these standards are being achieved and students view the teaching and learning favourably. In addition, teaching staff at the College make effective use of the feedback provided during the internal marking and moderation process to further develop their teaching and learning skills. Staff also participate in higher education standardisation activities, College self-assessment processes, collaborative partnership meetings, and module feedback to ensure that areas of concern are identified and promptly rectified. The College is confident that the delivery within the Department of Health and Social Care is of a high standard, given its achievement of grade 1 Ofsted status.

32 The College also operates a lesson observation system which, until recently, has been graded. Those staff receiving a 'satisfactory' grade receive targeted support by a team of advanced practitioners, led by the Director of Quality Improvement in Learning and Teaching. This year the College is moving to a developmental model of observation with the main theme being 'stretch and challenge', which is more appropriate to higher education. Student achievement and annual observations of teaching confirm that teaching and learning is of a high standard.

33 Student feedback on teaching and learning is gathered and collated at the end of each module. Any areas of concern are analysed and used to support changes to teaching or programmes as appropriate. This feedback is considered at the College's self-assessment reviews and collaborative partnership meetings to ensure action is taken as and when necessary.

34 The FdA Healthcare Play Specialist programme successfully integrates study and employment, with students required to work for 11-12 hours each week. This fosters the ethos of experimental learning required by the University and Foundation Degrees in general. This programme is enhanced by an interactive Practice Assessment Handbook which incorporates assessment opportunities by employers while in the workplace and is carefully monitored by the Hospital Play Specialist Education Trust. FdA Healthcare Play Specialism students are also able to gain the Health Care Play Specialist competency qualification alongside their academic programme.

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

35 All students have access to a pastoral tutor. In addition, FdA Healthcare Play Specialism level 4 students have access to a work-based mentor as an additional source of academic and personal support that they value. Mentors are professionals from inside and outside the College, allocated only to first-year students to provide six hours of personal support during the year through face-to-face meetings and email. Following the Developmental engagement report, the College has successfully addressed issues about mentoring through the provision of mentor and mentee training and enhanced communications between mentors and mentees.

36 Students are able to obtain the support they need from the College and University. Students are fully informed about support opportunities during induction and through programme handbooks. Additional academic support is available on a drop-in basis. The effectiveness of the support provided is monitored by teaching staff who now provide students with detailed formative feedback partway through modules. This feedback is more

detailed than before as it is supplemented with annotations on the script. The positive impact is evident from high and improving retention levels.

37 Students raised issues of enrolment on their programmes. The College reports that there have been some difficulties with information that should pass directly from the University to students at this stage. This particularly relates to providing the logins needed for enrolment with the University and, thereafter, the actual online enrolment process. This caused delay for students wanting to access the University's online resources and had some impact on teaching and learning in 2010-11. To mitigate these problems last year, one module was moved into the College's virtual learning environment to ensure students were not disadvantaged. Although the University addressed this problem, it has arisen again this year and remains under review. A further problem of enrolment is the time taken to give final grades to students. In 2011, this delayed the enrolment of students intending to progress. However, this has now been rectified and new arrangements are in place for the current academic year, with two programme assessment boards set within a more suitable time frame. This should enable the results to pass through the University system in good time for students to progress next year. The enrolment process needs to be kept under careful review by the College.

38 The induction programme gives detailed information of what support is available to the students and where and how to access it. This includes use of the Learning Resource Centre, online journals and resources, booking computers, and access to online learning programmes. However, some students feel that induction lacks organisation and focus. This is something that key staff are aware of in the current academic year, but needs to be carefully reviewed to ensure it is more effective in 2012-13.

39 The Student Charter emphasises inclusion and in particular the provision of specialist support which aligns with the awarding body's requirements of higher education provision. Learning support needs are identified at enrolment through self-disclosure, resulting in relevant assessments and identification of further action required. The students' tutors and teaching teams are informed and are able to undertake appropriate training delivered by the Inclusion Team.

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

40 Staff development arrangements are discussed in paragraphs 22 to 26. The College achieves the University's requirement for the provision of appropriate training opportunities for all programme teaching staff. As a member of the West London Higher Education for Further Education Group, the College is expected to develop a programme of staff development training which supports skills development for higher education staff in the University's partner colleges. The majority of staff development undertaken to date is of a management or pedagogic nature. Mentors in the workplace receive dedicated training enabling them to support students. Workplace mentors also have access to the College's virtual learning environment which assists and enhances their provision of student support.

### **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?**

41 An initial assessment of resources is conducted during the programme approval process. The University's academic link managers, external examiners and students confirm

the adequacy of resources in partner colleges on an annual basis through the annual monitoring process.

42 Students have remote access to all teaching resources through both the College's and the University's virtual learning environments. The College's virtual learning environment is heavily used and enables the prompt return of assessment grades and feedback. The College takes responsibility for ensuring that students' access to the University's e-resources is equal to that of the University's own students. While hard copies of assessment briefs and guidance are provided, the distribution of other materials is discouraged due to costs and sustainability concerns. The College facilitated a change in the University's academic regulations to allow the marking and return of student work through the virtual learning environment. This in turn allowed the Developmental engagement recommendation - that the College improve the timeliness of return of student work - to be addressed. Students confirm that this has led to a substantial improvement in timeliness.

43 Substantial funding was allocated for learning centre resources at the start of the programmes, and is complemented by further funding reviewed on an annual basis. Funding for higher education-specific resources is allocated from the budget for which the Director of Faculty is responsible. Other teaching resources are funded from the Head of Department's resource budget. There is effective liaison between the Learning Resource Centre Manager, the Head of Department, and the Programme Area Manager. The resolution of access issues to key texts is an example of this.

**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 body 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 There is no mention of responsibility for public information in the contracts between the University and the College. The College publishes all marketing and public information through its marketing department to ensure consistency of information and presentation. Details of all the College's policies and procedures, including those associated with assessment and plagiarism, are published in hard copy and online. They are readily available to students through the College's virtual learning environment. The College publishes course details and content for prospective students. These are further explained at the interview with each prospective student and again at induction. The Annual Collaborative Review for 2009-10 raised questions about the lack of course information available through the College's website. This has now been addressed as a cross-college action with the result that a Higher Education Prospectus is now available online. This provides an extension to the course information that is already given to students.

45 The University of West London produces the module guides for the programmes, while the programme handbooks are the joint responsibility of the College and the awarding body. Programme information is provided to students through the virtual learning environment. This includes all programme handbooks, module guides, timetables, assessment details, and learning and teaching resources. Course handbooks and module study guides are also provided in hard copy at the start of each module or induction as appropriate. These are all produced to a standard format and are clear and accessible.

In addition, the virtual learning environment provides students with access to information provided by the awarding body, a range of generic learning resources such as the University's guide to Harvard referencing, guides to academic writing, and an online tutorial on 'searching for valid and reliable evidence'. The virtual learning environment provides an up to date and effective learning resource that has also been instrumental in communicating assessment outcomes to students.

46 As well as providing a resource for students, the virtual learning environment also provides an excellent source of information for programme leaders and work-based mentors. The 'Programme Leader Zone' provides access to University resources, minutes of meetings, and the results of student evaluations. Similarly, the 'Mentor Zone' in the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism provides access to mentor training courses and course documentation essential for effectively supporting students in the workplace. The range of information and resources provided by the virtual learning environment to support students, staff and workplace mentors is an example of good practice.

47 In preparing their written submission, students were asked whether or not they thought that information about the course obtained through the College is well publicised. The students had mixed views. Level 5 groups considered that their programme was well publicised and that they were well informed about the course and the information they received was accurate and sufficient. They also receive sufficient information about their course electronically as well as through word of mouth. However the level 4 groups, in particular the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism group, were less positive and suggested that the website does not contain sufficient information. However, it is unclear whether the students were referring to the College website or the information available through professional organisations that represent the profession as a whole. Students the team met during the preparatory meeting were satisfied with the information.

48 The newly established higher education section of the College's website is clearly signposted and leads directly to the Higher Education Prospectus. This is an attractive document that informs prospective students effectively and succinctly about each programme on offer for 2012-13. It summarises what students will learn on each programme, how they are assessed, and the progression routes and job opportunities available. Similarly, student support services are succinctly summarised. In addition to existing courses, both the hard copy and the online versions of the Higher Education Prospectus provide details of new courses that have not yet been validated. Although this is essential for student recruitment, the inclusion of a statement informing prospective students that the new courses are available 'subject to validation' would be appropriate.

**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?**

49 The information used for publication, including entry requirements and learning outcomes, is taken directly from the programme validation documents to ensure accuracy and consistency. The University samples public information from the College's website and informs the College of any shortfall, inconsistency or inaccuracy through the Annual Collaborative Review. The College's Marketing Department also checks the accuracy of public information. The Higher Education Development Group within the College has been instrumental in producing the Higher Education Prospectus and will take over responsibility for generating and reviewing public information, to ensure its accuracy and completeness, as the higher education provision develops over the next two years.

50 Students are actively involved in their education and provide robust feedback on their experience which results in effective and timely action. Students are satisfied that



issues, once identified, get resolved efficiently. They have not highlighted any significant inaccuracies in the published information available to them. Students the team met at the preparatory meeting confirmed this view. This supports the view that systems for monitoring the accuracy of public information are effective.

**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**

51 Although 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 to take part in a Developmental engagement. The lines of enquiry were:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How does the College ensure that assessment in the workplace is conducted and managed to assure standards, including the contribution that mentors make to supporting students in meeting the professional standards of the award?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How does the College ensure that assessment regulations are communicated and understood by both staff and students and applied in a consistent manner with particular attention to feedback to students?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How does the College collect and respond to the comments from external examiners, both in terms of recommendations for improvement and dissemination of good practice?

52 The team identified a number of areas of good practice. The Practice Assessment Handbook for the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism programme clearly identifies the expectations of both students and mentors and provides an excellent framework for monitoring and recording student performance in the workplace. The College and employers have worked effectively together to produce a well thought out assessment strategy for the programmes which is highly appropriate for the professional needs of adult, part-time and working students on a Foundation Degree. Mentor training is thorough, well attended and appreciated by participants. The moderation of the marking process is exceptionally thorough and transparent, and is strengthened by the comprehensive written reports on the process.

53 There were three desirable recommendations. It was recommended that the College should: continue to enhance the monitoring of mentors and develop further communication channels between the College and mentors; continue to monitor the timeliness of the return of student work and the quality of the annotation on student scripts; and ensure that external examiner reports differentiate between programmes and are sufficiently evaluative and comprehensive so that they can be used by the College to enhance its higher education provision.

54 The College has assiduously addressed these recommendations. It has maintained and enhanced the good practice areas, in particular in its engagement with employers and in the continuing accessibility of staff to students. Its management structures and reporting procedures are highly effective and have encouraged the identification of good practice. Feedback to students, including marked assignments, has become more timely because of

steps taken to feed back through the virtual learning environment. Students confirmed their satisfaction with the feedback, its timely return, and its general helpfulness.

## D Foundation Degrees

55 The College offers two Foundation Degrees, the FdA Working with Children and Young People and the FdA Healthcare Play Specialism. In addition, there is a top-up BA (Hons) Working in Integrated Services for Children and Young People that applies to both these Foundation Degrees. From 2012-13, rather than expanding the Foundation Degree provision, the College is choosing to offer an HND in Business (Management) and HNC/Ds in Computing and Systems Development, Interactive Media, and Performing Arts. This is consistent with the College's Strategic Plan for higher education.

56 The College's Foundation Degrees are very well managed, well supported by the awarding body, and effectively provide students with the education they seek. Student achievement is consistently sound.

57 All the conclusions given in paragraphs 59 to 61 apply to the Foundation Degrees.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

58 The team has identified a number of features of good practice in the 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 body. This was based upon discussions with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, the University of West London.

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

- the extent to which higher education programmes are mapped against subject benchmark statements and other external reference points ensures that academic standards are appropriate and that programmes meet the requirements of stakeholders (paragraph 15)
- the comprehensive involvement of employers in the development and implementation of programmes ensures that they are fit for purpose (paragraph 18)
- the exceptionally thorough and transparent moderation process ensures that student work is consistently and appropriately marked and academic standards are maintained (paragraph 19)
- the range of staff development opportunities offered by the College, University and external bodies contributes both to the maintenance and the enhancement of academic standards (paragraph 26)
- the range and accessibility of information and resources provided by the virtual learning environment supports students, staff and workplace mentors effectively (paragraphs 40 and 46).

60 The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding body.

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

- keep the student enrolment process under careful review in order to facilitate student progression and access to learning resources (paragraph 37)

- carefully review the organisation and focus of student induction to ensure its effectiveness (paragraph 38)
- include in the higher education prospectus, where appropriate, a statement informing prospective students that new courses are 'subject to validation' (paragraph 48).

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

63 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.

64 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.

Stanmore College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extent to which higher education programmes are mapped against subject benchmark statements and other external reference points ensures that academic standards are appropriate and that programmes meet the requirements of stakeholders (paragraph 15)</li> </ul>	<p>No direct action to be taken in regard to benchmark statements but ensure this standard is applied to any new provision that may be developed in the future</p> <p>Maintain close links with employers to ensure programmes remain current and in line with sector requirements</p>	Ongoing	Programme Area Manager; Head of Health and Social Care	Supply of suitably qualified staff within the sectors	Stanmore College Early Years Steering Group and Senior Management Team, Hospital Play Staff Education Trust, National Association of Health Physics Society	<p>Validation documents for any new provision</p> <p>Steering group minutes; Hospital Play Staff Educational Trust minutes</p> <p>Annual programme and departmental self-assessment documents</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive</li> </ul>	As above					

involvement of employers in the development and implementation of programmes ensures that they are fit for purpose (paragraph 18)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the exceptionally thorough and transparent moderation process ensures that student work is consistently and appropriately marked and academic standards are maintained (paragraph 19)</li> </ul>	<p>Maintain induction of new staff</p> <p>Continue to respond to internal and external feedback on moderation and use cross-site moderation</p>		<p>Programme Area Manager; Head of Health and Social Care</p> <p>Academic Link Manager; Quality monitoring groups for both Stanmore College and University of West London</p>	<p>Student outcomes remain good or better</p> <p>Positive student feedback</p>	<p>Annual Collaborative Review; Stanmore College Programme Area Reviews; Departmental Self-Assessment</p>	<p>Annual Collaborative Review minutes</p> <p>Departmental self-assessment documents</p> <p>Human resources records</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range of staff development opportunities offered by the College, University and external bodies contributes both to the maintenance and the enhancement of</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to fund opportunities for staff development internally and externally, including upgrading of qualifications and West London Higher Education in Further Education group, attendance and presentation at</p>	Ongoing	<p>Programme Area Manager; Head of Health and Social Care</p> <p>Academic Link Manager</p>	<p>Student outcomes remain good or better</p> <p>Positive student feedback</p>	<p>Strategic Management Team, Stanmore College</p> <p>Annual Collaborative Review</p>	<p>Human resources records</p> <p>Minutes of meetings from strategic management team and Annual Collaborative Review</p>

academic standards (paragraph 26)	conferences					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range and accessibility of information and resources provided by the virtual learning environment supports students, staff and workplace mentors effectively (paragraphs 40 and 46)</li> </ul>	This area is currently being further developed into a newer more expansive facility	Ongoing	Assistant Principal Enterprise, Innovation and Standards  Programme Area Manager	Continue to provide a fit for purpose virtual learning environment	Strategic Management Team, Stanmore College  Annual Collaborative Review	StudySpace version 2 operating  Updated resources in place in the new virtual learning environment
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>keep the student enrolment process under careful review in order to facilitate student progression and access to learning resources (paragraph 37)</li> </ul>	Change of senior management within this area will lead to review for 2012-13 enrolment processes at Stanmore College  Change to induction process so now at University of West London in dedicated session for Stanmore	September 2013	Assistant Principal Employer, Community and Overseas; Academic Link Manager; Programme Areas Manager	Students correctly enrolled with student identification numbers from start of programme allowing access to all resources as identified in action below	Strategic Management Team, Stanmore College  Annual Collaborative Review; Strategic Management Team, Stanmore College	Student feedback and evaluations; Annual link tutor meeting minutes and Annual Collaborative Review minutes

	College students				Annual Collaborative Review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carefully review the organisation and focus of student induction to ensure its effectiveness (paragraph 38)</li> </ul>	As above					Student feedback and evaluations; Annual link tutor meeting minutes and Annual Collaborative Review minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include in the higher education prospectus, where appropriate, a statement informing prospective students that new courses are 'subject to validation' (paragraph 48)</li> </ul>	Noted and validations currently underway		Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality	Full HNC/D programme in place for September 2012	Senior Management Team	Higher Education validation documents/approvals

**RG 858 04/12**

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