



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Stockton Riverside College**

**January 2012**

**SR 030/12**

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ISBN 978 1 84979 513 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 Stockton Riverside 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 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 appointment of a link governor demonstrates the commitment to ensure that higher education is considered at the highest level in the College's governance and management
- the College's successful efforts to engage staff in the well organised management of its higher education provision and the efficient reporting process
- the overall strategy for staff development, in particular the sharing of good practice and the strengthening of learning opportunities for students
- the comprehensive process for gathering student evaluations, and especially the use of focus groups to follow up matters raised by students and encouraging students to participate in the quality process
- the extensive links with employers strengthens the learning opportunities for students and enables employers to contribute to programme development
- the Newsletter in Performing Arts provides staff and students with regular updates on learning opportunities, assessments and events.

### 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 **desirable** for the College to:

- monitor the progression and completion rates for the FdA Performing Arts and FdA Performance and Events Production programmes
- ensure that staff development takes place so that the programme approved by the Association of Accounting Technicians is compliant with the awarding body's regulations.

## 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 Stockton Riverside 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 Teesside University, the University of Huddersfield, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Chartered Management Institute, the Association of Accounting Technicians, and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Ms Claire Blanchard, Ms Hayley Randle, Mr Brian Whitehead (reviewers) and Mr Philip Markey (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated quality and enhancement review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and its awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, and reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the first Developmental engagement in assessment and a second Developmental engagement in learning and teaching. A summary of findings from these Developmental engagements is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4 Stockton Riverside College is a general further education college which serves a population of around 193,000 residents across Stockton, Billingham and the wider Tees Valley area. The College (formerly Stockton and Billingham College) relocated from two separate premises in Stockton and Billingham to its present site in Thornaby in 2003. Phase two works were completed in 2009 to create an additional building which houses more classrooms and the Hair, Beauty and Complementary Therapies suite. A merger with Bede Sixth Form College in Billingham was completed during 2008-09. Phase three works, which was a £30 million development programme, included the creation of a Higher Education Centre and a relocation of the construction, engineering and manufacturing provision onto the main site. It also included a rebuild of the sixth form campus on the Billingham site (including the development of a new sports centre) which was completed in 2009. Facilities at the College offer current students high quality learning accommodation, equipment and social space.

5 The College has over 500 teaching and support staff, enabling it to offer a wide variety of full and part-time academic, pre-vocational, vocational, work-based, and higher education programmes. Higher education programmes are offered in three of the College's four teaching faculties, offering progression routes from further to higher education. There are 356 higher education students, making a total of 230 full-time equivalent students (FTEs).

6 The following programmes are offered by the College (with FTEs in brackets).

### **Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) - linked with Teesside University**

- Diploma in Accounting: due to complete December 2012 (12)
- Diploma in Accounting: started January 2012 (18)

### **Chartered Management Institute (CMI) - linked with Teesside University**

- Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (6.5)
- Diploma in Management and Leadership (4)

### **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) - linked with Teesside University**

- Advanced Level Certificate in Human Resources (4)
- Intermediate Certificate in Human Resource Management (7)

### **University of Huddersfield**

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning)/Certificate in Education (Lifelong Learning) (21.5)

### **Teesside University**

- BA (Hons) Education Studies (10)
- BA (Hons) Performing Arts (8)
- FdA Early Years (Sector Endorsed) (35)
- FdA Performing Arts (1)
- FdA Performance and Events Production (25)
- FdA Travel and Tourism (13)
- FdA Tourism and Aviation (11)
- FdSc Complementary Therapies (Bodywork) (2)
- FdSc Computing (Networking) (20.1)
- FdSc Web Design (7.37)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector)/Certificate in Education (Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector) (9)

### **Teesside University/Edexcel**

- HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families (Management) (15.5)

### **Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies**

7 Stockton Riverside College, with four neighbouring colleges, is part of Teesside University's Higher Education Business Partnership. For the University of Huddersfield, the College is part of the Consortium for Post-Compulsory Education and Training Network. The College also has agreements with professional awarding organisations including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Chartered Management Institute, and the Association for Accounting Technicians. With Edexcel, the College offers one indirectly funded HNC programme. The licence for this 'transferred in' award is held by Teesside University. The College follows the quality processes of the awarding bodies for its higher education provision, including professional programmes.



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

8 Recently, the College introduced some significant changes in line with its focus on continuous quality improvement. Feedback from the two IQER Developmental engagements informed these changes, and the College worked with Teesside University and the other four colleges in the Higher Education Business Partnership to share good practice. For example, the College's learning and teaching manager led a session on learning squares, a method of sharing good practice, at the recent conference at Teesside University. The Teesside University SharePoint site has also facilitated the accessibility of examples of good practice which have been shared across the College.

9 There have been changes in the College's management structure for higher education including a smaller Senior Leadership Team, the rationalisation of the College Management Team, and the introduction of a new post, Head of Higher Education: (Safeguarding and Professional Development). The Higher Education Quality and Development Group meets monthly and has representation from staff responsible for curriculum, student services and learning resources. A Learning and Teaching Strategy is now in place. There is improved management of the separate Higher Education Centre. Resources for students have been further enhanced by the introduction of a dedicated Study and Resource Room at the rear of the main College Learning Resource Centre. The appointment of a link governor for higher education strengthens the College governance and management's oversight of the provision.

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

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. They were invited by staff to take part in an event to produce a submission, which 20 students attended from eight programmes. Students were given a set of questions to discuss in allocated groups. Completed questionnaires were analysed. The results were circulated through programme representatives and the College's virtual learning environment. Student responses were largely positive on all aspects of the provision. The team discussed the submission in their meeting with students during 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?**

11 Since the Development engagement the College's management of its higher education provision has undergone a restructuring. It has also appointed a Head of Higher Education who works closely with Heads of Faculties and the Head of Quality. The key groups in the management of higher education are the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Quality Improvement Group. There are clear terms of reference and connections with links to the College's senior management. The College has a governor with special interests in higher education. The team considers this to be good practice as it demonstrates that the provision is considered at the highest level in the College.

12 Reporting arrangements are well-managed, thorough and coordinated. Key reports, such as course and programme reviews, show that issues are clearly identified and fully considered in higher level reports, such as in the detailed minutes of the Quality Improvement Group and at the higher level in the Faculty Performance Reviews. The College works effectively with Teesside University in particular to ensure that issues are identified and acted on in the Quality Monitoring Visit Reports. All reports are detailed and evaluative and all meetings are well attended. There is a reports tracking form which is used to ensure that reports are considered in a timely manner by the appropriate committees. The reports and minutes of meetings clearly indicate the College's commitment to managing its provision of higher education effectively.

13 The College's assessment process is rigorous and secure. Procedures are in line with the awarding bodies' requirements, and external examiner reports are carefully considered in partnership with the awarding bodies. The reports are used effectively to enhance the provision and recommendations are fully considered at programme level.

14 Through the College's 'Higher Education Flag' process, the level of concern about a programme is clearly indicated. The process enables the College to track the development of actions, including where to provide support. The process includes the analysis of progression and completion data which is thoroughly monitored. The majority of programmes have satisfactory progression and completion rates, with some achieving 100 per cent success rates. The College carefully monitors the data for all programmes and produces a detailed analysis, and the rates are compared to benchmarks where these are available. In the FdA Performing Arts and FdA Performance and Events Production, the average success rate for the last three years is 46 per cent, due mainly to the poor success rate in the first years of the programme. While there is significant improvement in the rate for the 2010 intake, due to the action taken by the College to manage the entry to the programme, the team considers that it is desirable for the College to continue to monitor the progression rate in this programme.

15 A notable feature of the College's management of higher education is the successful efforts to involve staff at all levels in the process. There are monthly open team meetings to provide opportunities for staff to offer suggestions and share good practice. These meetings are well attended by staff. The Higher Education Quality and Development Group acts as a focal point for the exchange of ideas. The recently introduced 'learning lunches', where staff meet informally to discuss issues, is a highly effective way of involving staff in the process. The College's efforts to develop the commitment of staff to manage and deliver standards in higher education were noticeable in their positive and articulate discussions in the meetings with the team. The team considers that the College's successful strategy to involve staff at all levels in the management of higher education is good practice.

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

16 Following the Development engagement, the College has been successful in ensuring that staff are more familiar with the Academic Infrastructure. This has been achieved through staff development programmes and high levels of staff involvement in approval processes for new programmes with the awarding bodies. For example, in the development of Foundation Degrees, consideration was given to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The College Quality Code and the Quality Code for Faculty Performance Reviews are clearly aligned to the four components of the Academic Infrastructure. In their meetings with the team, staff demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

17 The relationship between the College and Teesside University is based on the Higher Education Business Partnership involving four other colleges. It is defined in the Memorandum of Agreement and in the comprehensive and highly useful Operations Manual, which clearly sets out each organisation's responsibilities. The University of Huddersfield also has a Memorandum of Cooperation and the relationship is supported by the Consortium for Post-Compulsory Education and Training. The Consortium's Network and Consortium Handbook provides clear guidelines for the College's quality assurance processes. All the professional awarding organisations and Edexcel provide guidelines for the programme teams.

18 Teesside University and the University of Huddersfield monitor the provision through the Teesside Quality Assurance Monitoring Visits and the Huddersfield Annual Evaluation of Courses. Both reports are carefully checked by the College and recommendations are implemented. The shared responses to external examiner reports are prompt and thorough. Reports from the professional bodies and Edexcel are also considered by both partners. Extensive staff development activities form a key part of the partnerships.

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

19 The College has developed a systematic strategy for staff development. This includes funding and allocation of time arrangements. There are clearly identified criteria for staff to apply for developmental activities. There is a policy for supporting staff engaged in scholarly activity and a staff timesheet for recording activities and allocation of hours. An example of a well attended staff development activity is the Continuing Professional Development Day, with the theme 'Just suppose teaching and learning became the first priority' on enhancing learning and teaching, assessment, and dealing with academic misconduct. The College is meticulous in maintaining its record of staff development. The team considers that the overall strategy for staff development, in particular the sharing of good practice and the strengthening of learning opportunities for students, is good practice.

20 The well attended 'HE in FE' conference with Teesside University provides a series of workshops on such matters as groupwork assessment and developments with industry. The staff development strategy includes processes for encouraging scholarly activities, with staff being able to apply for an allocation of hours. Staff are increasingly taking the opportunity to undertake postgraduate study.

21 The external verifier's report for the Diploma in Accounting notes that the lack of staff development is an ongoing issue and that the programme is not compliant with the requirements of the awarding organisation. The College is aware of this matter and intends to ensure that staff attend the next Association conference to ensure that they are up to date with development in the profession. The conference places are now booked. The team considers that it is desirable that the College ensures that staff development takes place so that the programme Diploma in Accounting, approved by the Association of Accounting Technicians, is compliant with the awarding body's regulations.

**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 management of learning opportunities is the same as that identified in paragraphs 11 and 12. All the key management groups and reports include consideration of the learning opportunities for students.

23 Since the Developmental engagements, there has been a refocusing of mechanisms for obtaining students' feedback to key issues in students' learning opportunities. The College has a well managed process for gathering and using student evaluations and for encouraging student participation in the College's quality processes. The information is used effectively to manage and enhance learning opportunities for students. A variety of methods is used to ensure that feedback is as representative as possible. A series of 'you said, we did' posters provide feedback to students. The College completes a detailed analysis of the National Student Survey and notes any shifts in the levels of satisfaction. There are plans to make greater use of electronic responses. Students are involved at meetings during awarding body visits. Student feedback informs faculty reviews and improvement plans. The team considers as good practice the College's emphasis on providing responses to student evaluations, using focus groups to follow up matters, and encouraging students to participate in the College's quality processes.

### **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 Awarding body agreements make it clear that the College is responsible for ensuring that students receive appropriate learning opportunities with reference to student support, learning resources, staff development, and learning and teaching. These are managed through the same process as identified in paragraphs 17 and 18.

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

25 The College's processes for taking account of the Academic Infrastructure are identified in paragraph 16. With reference to the management of learning opportunities, the College's processes for admissions, dealing with disabled students, work-based and placement learning, and career education are aligned with the *Code of practice*.

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

26 The College has a Learning and Teaching Strategy which places student-centred learning at the heart of the student experience. This especially relates to providing strategies appropriate for students from backgrounds with low participation in higher education. The first Developmental engagement recommended that the College develops

a strategy aligned with Teesside University's 'priorities of strategy'. While not referring to these priorities especially, the College's strategy includes an emphasis on the development of skills, work-related learning, and technology-enhanced learning. There is also emphasis on the development of independent learning.

27 Programme handbooks and discussions with students confirm that the main themes of the strategy are embedded in students' learning experiences. In particular, students said they regarded learning and teaching as challenging and interesting. Staff encourage them to become increasingly independent learners, and sessions are supported by stimulating learning materials.

28 Links with employers form a key element in the strategy. The first Developmental engagement noted the good practice involved in the learning opportunities and input to programme development arising from employer engagement, especially in Foundation Degrees. The College has continued to enhance these links. Course reviews pay particular attention to links with employers, where there is a section for analysis and evaluation. This works particularly well in providing programme teams with monitoring information. Employer needs are carefully assessed through, for example, organisational needs analysis in health and social care. In the FdA Tourism and Aviation, links have been developed with local employers which have enhanced the work placement opportunities for students. The team considers as good practice the College's extensive links with employers, which provide students with work-related experiences and employer support in the development of programmes.

29 The peer observation of teaching and learning is a key element in the College's Higher Education Strategy. This has been developed as a specifically higher education process. There are clear guidelines for observers and those observed, a code of practice, and detailed recording of observations. There is a checklist for use during observation, and areas of strengths and improvement are noted. The College has moved away from a grading system for peer observation towards an emphasis on a qualitative process with dialogue between observers and observed. Staff regard this method as particularly helpful in the development of their teaching.

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

30 Effective support for students is a high priority and is a key feature in the College's Higher Education Strategy. Academic support through group and individual tutorials is well organised. The College provides well-organised and well-resourced support in the Learning Resource Centre and for counselling and careers. Support for learning and resources are particularly effective through the virtual learning environment which includes handbooks, lecture notes and handouts.

31 Students express a high level of satisfaction with the support they receive from the College and from the awarding bodies. The College has a comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating student support. All the information is monitored by the Faculty Performance Reviews with clear action plans noting areas for enhancement. Of particular note for supporting students is the Newsletter in Performing Arts, which provides students and staff with regular updates on learning opportunities, assessments and events. The team considers this to be good practice. Students said that the Newsletter is a valuable way of staying informed and creates a sense of identity for them.

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

32 Arrangements for staff development are identified in paragraphs 19 and 20. The College's arrangements for staff development are thorough and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

33 A more specific staff development strategy in relation to the quality of higher education learning opportunities includes the use and development of 'learning squares'. This was regarded as good practice in the Developmental engagements. These involve a group of staff meeting to share their ideas on learning and teaching, and assessment. The process is particularly effective for the sharing of good practice.

### **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?**

34 Higher education is well resourced in all aspects including information technology, books and journals, specialist resources, and specialist study facilities. Learning resources contribute to students achieving the learning outcomes of their awards. Resources for all higher education programmes are decided at the Budget Establishment meetings and are a standing item on the fortnightly agenda of the College Management Team. Students are able to access resources at both universities. The quality of learning resources features as an item in all student evaluations. In their meeting with the team, students said that they were highly satisfied with resources. This is supported by the high level of satisfaction noted in the 2011 National Student Survey and by the student written submission.

35 The College provides a high quality learning environment for students. There is a dedicated Higher Education Centre and a Study and Resource Room. Since the Developmental engagements, the College has improved the management of these facilities. The Learning Resource Centre is equipped with a wide range of books and journals. The College has taken steps to resolve the problems of disruption caused by non-higher education students, as noted in the student submission. Computer facilities are extensive, with regular updating of machines and software.

36 Students also benefit from the resources available in workplaces. Work-based learning is embedded in Foundation Degrees. Most students are part-time and are able to use the resources to enhance their learning and complete assignments. Opening hours for the Learning Resource Centre and the Higher Education Centre are managed to suit the needs of part-time students. Students also have access to the virtual learning environment from their homes.

**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?**

37 There are clear lines of responsibilities between the College and its awarding bodies for the published information about higher education programmes. There is joint responsibility for student handbooks, programme specifications, and module guides for all except for professional programmes. The College is responsible for the accuracy of its website, programme fact sheets, internally developed professional handbooks, and programme-specific marketing and advertising.

38 The College publishes a separate higher education prospectus, which is reproduced on the College's website. This contains general information on the College and a list of higher education programmes. Guidance on the application process and programme factsheets is also available. An awarding body approved template is used which ensures that key information is covered in the programme handbooks. The College is responsible for adding college-specific information. This information is complete and accurate with regard to assessment, resources, progression, and support.

39 The College makes use of supplementary modes of publicising its provision, including social media and radio campaigns, the content of which is closely regulated by marketing staff at the College. Applicants and current students are able to follow the activities of the College through this social media.

### **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 There is a robust process for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of public information. The College liaises with its awarding bodies and organisations to provide accurate and complete information on publicity material before it enters the public domain. Awarding bodies provide details on the arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information. The College adheres to these guidelines.

41 The College's internal procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information are thorough. The checking of information involves programme leaders, a member of a faculty management team, the marketing team, and the Higher Education Coordinator. The Head of Faculty signs off general sections, provides a final check, and signs off the final document. From 2012, the Head of Higher Education will provide a final check.

**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 engagements**

### **Developmental engagement in assessment**

42 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in March 2010. It covered all the five colleges in the Teesside Higher Education Business Partnership. It addressed the following lines of enquiry agreed with the colleges.

**Line of enquiry 1:** How do the Colleges in the Partnership assure themselves that they are fulfilling the requirements of the awarding body in relation to assessment?

**Line of enquiry 2:** Are the requirements for feedback on assessed work being understood by all to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How does each College in the Partnership ensure the accuracy and consistency of information it publishes on assessment?

43 The Developmental engagement in assessment identified a number of areas of good practice. These included the collaborative arrangements between the College and its awarding body for the assessment process and for the internal approval processes for new programmes prior to consideration by the University. The assessment exercises used in the induction period help students to understand plagiarism. Where similar programmes are delivered across the colleges, the robust and secure assessment processes ensure consistency and comparability. Staff development in assessment is strengthened by the use of 'learning squares'. There is high quality written feedback on assignments in Foundation Degrees in Complementary Therapies and in Early Years, and in the HNC Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families. The efficient system for returning assignments supports student learning. The assessment details in the programme specifications and information sheets are especially clear and demonstrate the close collaboration between the College and university. The work-based learning handbooks for students and employers are particularly detailed and comprehensive, especially the information on assessment.

44 The team made eight desirable recommendations, all of which have now been implemented by the College. Students, employers and work-based mentors now have access to external examiner reports. There are details in handbooks on the agreed policy for the reading of drafts of summative assessments. Written feedback now refers more to intended learning outcomes. These are also now checked to ensure that they are consistent across all documents. Word-processed feedback is provided on the feedback sheets as it was recommended that there should be more annotations on student assignments. Information on assessment and progression routes for Foundation Degrees is provided. Programme handbooks and module guides provide the information identified in the University's Threshold Quality Standards document.

### **Developmental engagement in learning and teaching**

45 The second Developmental engagement took place in March 2011. It covered all the five colleges in the Teesside Higher Education Business Partnership. It addressed the following lines of enquiry agreed by the colleges.

**Line of enquiry 1:** How do the colleges ensure that the standards of teaching and learning on the higher education programmes meet the requirements of the awarding body?



**Line of enquiry 2:** How do the colleges ensure that higher education learners have access to a wide range of learning opportunities?

**Line of enquiry 3:** Do the colleges publish informative and accurate information about teaching and learning on their programmes?

46 This Development engagement identified four areas of good practice relating to the College. The Partnership's continuing professional development strategy and its provision of opportunities for higher education staff to gain postgraduate qualifications and/or industrial experience strengthens learning and teaching. The Partnership demonstrates the sharing of good practice in learning and teaching across many programmes, especially in the FdA Early Years programme. Academic support for learning is well organised and is particularly appropriate for part-time students. The College has extensive links with local industry and services which serve to enhance students' learning through the opportunity for work placements, and enables the College to identify and develop skills for its students.

47 The five desirable recommendations included producing an explicit and documented learning and teaching strategy aligned with the awarding body's 'Priorities of the Strategy' in its Threshold Quality and Standards. The College should ensure that all staff are more familiar with the application of the Academic Infrastructure, especially regarding any updates. It should also ensure that all programmes build on existing practices and make fuller use of the virtual learning environment. Learning and teaching strategies should include reference to making the best use of the Higher Education Centre to enhance the learning opportunities for students. More general information should be provided on learning and teaching in pre-enrolment documentation, and programme documentation should make more reference to the range and types of learning and teaching in the College. All the recommendations have now been achieved.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

48 There are 114.5 FTEs on eight Foundation Degrees validated by Teesside University. They cover a range of areas including an Early Years (Sector Endorsed) programme, degrees in travel, tourism and aviation, in performing arts and events production, in computing (networking) and web design and in complementary therapies. The majority of the Foundation Degrees recruit well, especially in Early Years, Performance and Events Production, and Computing. The College maintains close scrutiny of recruitment which has led to the closure or the rationalisation of programmes. There are plans to develop Foundation Degrees in Counselling and in Supporting Teaching and Learning from for 2012-13 and in Sport in the Community and Business Applications for 2013-14.

50 The College works effectively with Teesside University and its partner colleges to develop Foundation Degrees. Links with employers in the private and public sectors are well established. Work-based learning and placement opportunities are available for students. These are well managed and enhance students' learning experience.

51 The areas of good practice and recommendations identified during the Summative review are common to the whole provision. They are listed in the main conclusions, in paragraphs 53 to 55.

## **E Conclusions and summary of judgements**

52 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 bodies. This was

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, Teesside University, the University of Huddersfield, Edexcel, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Chartered Management Institute, and the Association of Accounting Technicians.

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

- the appointment of a link governor demonstrates the commitment to ensure that higher education is considered at the highest level in the College's governance and management (paragraph 11)
- the College's successful efforts to engage staff in the well-organised management of its higher education provision and the efficient reporting process (paragraph 15)
- the overall strategy for staff development, in particular the sharing of good practice and the strengthening of learning opportunities for students (paragraph 19)
- the comprehensive process for gathering student evaluations and especially the use of focus groups to follow up matters raised by students and encouraging students to participate in the quality process (paragraph 23)
- the extensive links with employers strengthens the learning opportunities for students and enables employers to contribute to programme development (paragraph 28)
- the Newsletter in Performing Arts provides staff and students with regular updates on learning opportunities, assessments and events (paragraph 31).

54 The team also makes two recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies:

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

- monitor the progression and completion rates for the FdA Performing Arts and FdA Performance and Events Production programme (paragraph 14)
- ensure that staff development takes place so that the programme approved by the Association of Accounting Technicians is compliant with the awarding body's regulations (paragraph 21).

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

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

58 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the 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.

**Stockton Riverside 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
<p>In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the appointment of a link governor demonstrates the commitment to ensure that higher education is considered at the highest level in the College's management (paragraph 11)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop the link governor for higher education role to include membership and attendance at the Higher Education Quality &amp; Development Group</p>	<p>31 October 2012</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education, Safeguarding &amp; Professional Development</p>	<p>Input of governor and dissemination of information maintains a high profile for higher education within the college and supports timely actioning of issues</p>	<p>Learning, Skills &amp; Standards Committee  College Management Team</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's successful efforts to engage staff in the well-organised management of its higher education provision and the efficient reporting process (paragraph 15)</li> </ul>	<p>Implement further improvements:  Introduce an electronic quality tracking database  Review and refine 2011-12 Higher Education programme &amp; faculty review and improvement plan templates</p>	<p>30 October 2012  30 June 2012</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education, Safeguarding &amp; Professional Development</p>	<p>Quality tracking database introduced and centralised on higher education gateway  Involvement and input of the wider higher education team in review</p>	<p>Higher Education Quality &amp; Development Group  Quality Improvement Group</p>	<p>Higher Education Quality Database  Minutes of meetings  Programme &amp; faculty reviews and improvement plans</p>

	Half day continuing professional development activity on higher education quality processes completed	15 September 2012		Consistent standard of reviews and improvement plans that meet revised requirements	Faculty Performance Reviews	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the overall strategy for staff development, in particular the sharing of good practice and the strengthening of learning opportunities for students (paragraph 19)</li> </ul>	Review and update the staff development strategy to:  Track good practice via a quality database	30 October 2012	Head of Higher Education, Safeguarding & Professional Development	Quality Tracking database accurate and complete	Higher Education Quality & Development Group  College Management Team	Minutes of meetings  Higher Education Quality Database
	Continue sharing of good practice via higher education team meetings and other higher education specific scholarly activity	30 April 2013		Increased staff engagement in higher education scholarly activity  Measurable improvement in student satisfaction levels	Quality Improvement Group	Higher Education continuing professional development records  Student feedback records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the comprehensive process for gathering student evaluations and especially the use of focus groups to follow up matters raised</li> </ul>	Enhance systems:  Site additional student suggestion box in higher education Study & Resource Room	1 March 2012	Head of Higher Education, Safeguarding & Professional Development	Suggestion box utilised and actions addressed in a timely way	Quality Improvement Group	Records of issues and actions
	Annual higher education student	30 November		Annual Survey conducted		Annual Survey records

<p>by students and encouraging students to participate in the quality process (paragraph 23)</p>	<p>survey maintained</p> <p>Learner survey questions reviewed and further aligned to National Student Survey</p> <p>Programme review template supports analysis of all student opinion</p> <p>Student representation at Higher Education Quality &amp; Development Group</p>	<p>2012</p> <p>30 April 2012</p> <p>30 June 2012</p> <p>31 December 2012</p>		<p>Learner survey questions complement National Student Survey</p> <p>Improved quality of analysis of student opinion</p> <p>Enhanced student voice</p>		<p>Learner survey questions</p> <p>Programme &amp; faculty higher education reviews</p> <p>Minutes of meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extensive links with employers strengthens the learning opportunities for students and enables employers to contribute to programme development (paragraph 28)</li> </ul>	<p>Implement further improvements:</p> <p>Establish an Employability Group</p> <p>Engage employers in new programme internal critical read process</p>	<p>30 November 2012</p> <p>31 December 2012</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education, Safeguarding &amp; Professional Development</p>	<p>Enhanced links with employers</p> <p>Enhanced intelligence and communication within the College community</p> <p>New programmes meet sector needs</p>	<p>College Management Team</p> <p>Higher Education Quality &amp; Development Group</p>	<p>Meeting membership and remit</p> <p>Minutes of meetings</p> <p>Critical read records</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Newsletter in Performing Arts provides students and staff with regular updates</li> </ul>	<p>Share this initiative and student views of the benefits of the newsletter across the wider higher education</p>	<p>30 September 2012</p>	<p>Programme Leader: Higher Education Performing Arts</p>	<p>Good practice shared and replicated in other programmes</p>	<p>Higher Education Team meeting</p>	<p>Minutes of meetings</p> <p>Newsletters</p>

on learning opportunities, assessments and events (paragraph 31)	team					
<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>monitor the progression and completion rates for the FdA Performing Arts and FdA Performance and Events Production programmes (paragraph 14)</li> </ul>	<p>Review success of actions taken regarding raising entry criteria</p> <p>Monitor via Faculty Performance Reviews, student feedback and other quality monitoring activity and action any issues in a timely manner</p>	<p>1 February 2012</p> <p>30 June 2012</p>	Head of Faculty: Creative & Leisure Industries	Retention, achievement and progression rates meet or exceed benchmarks	Faculty Performance Review	College and HEBP retention, achievement and progression data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that staff development takes place so that the programme approved by the Association of Accounting Technicians is compliant with the awarding body's regulations</li> </ul>	<p>Book both members of the delivery team on the next available relevant Association of Accounting Technicians conference</p> <p>Facilitate release of staff to attend the conference</p>	<p>1 March 2012</p> <p>1 April 2012</p>	Head of Faculty: Technical & Professional Services	<p>Development activity has taken place</p> <p>Association of Accounting Technicians provision compliant with awarding body regulations</p>	Faculty Performance Review	<p>Association of Accounting Technicians invoice</p> <p>Continuing professional development records</p> <p>2011-12 Association of Accounting</p>

(paragraph 21).						Technicians external verifier report
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**RG 871 04/12**

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