



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Trafford College

June 2012

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Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

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

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

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding 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 Trafford College carried out in June 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 development of the *Code of practice* reflective documents, which promotes consideration of the Academic Infrastructure and enables programme teams to reflect on academic standards, identify good practice and develop strategies for future quality enhancement
- the College's formal observation scheme and the peer review process, which recognise the distinctiveness of higher education teaching and learning and the benefit of collaborative dialogue
- the development and use of digital technologies, which engage students and effectively support their learning
- the virtual learning environment content audit and related documentation, designed specifically for higher education programmes, which highlight strengths and areas for improvement with actions and completion dates.

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:

- review its committee arrangements to encourage more formal reporting and monitoring at programme level
- develop an internal validation process with clear criteria to ensure transparency and objectivity in the approval of Edexcel programmes
- enable support staff to understand the need to take due account of the Academic Infrastructure in the further development of student support services
- continue to develop a strategic and consistent approach to employer engagement
- record and monitor more explicitly the impact of staff development on teaching and learning
- review the terms of reference of committees to identify responsibility for the oversight of the accuracy and completeness of public information.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Trafford 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 Edexcel, Manchester Metropolitan University, Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Bolton. The review was carried out by Ms Maggie Carroll, Mr Gary Hargreaves, Miss Elizabeth Shackels (reviewers) and Mrs Monica Owen (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, 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 Trafford College is a medium-sized general further education college which was formed in September 2007 following the merger of North and South Trafford colleges. The College operates on three main campuses in South Manchester, one in Altrincham, two in Stretford (Talbot and Moss Road) and a smaller site, in the centre of Manchester, offering music technology. Trafford is the College's main catchment area. Although relatively prosperous as a whole, there are pockets of deprivation and low educational achievement. The College's mission statement is 'through its exceptional engagement with modern business and innovative approach to learning, Trafford College prepares learners for a successful and rewarding life'.

5 The College provides learning opportunities to approximately 3,000 young people and over 5,000 adults. There are 163 part-time and 61 full-time students (150.9 full-time equivalent students) in higher education, who are taught by 21 full-time and eight part-time members of staff. The higher education provision is taught across all sites in five of its 12 departments: Creative Arts; Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapy; Music; Professional Studies and Computing; and Science and Engineering. The majority of the programmes are taught at the Stretford campuses, with the HND in Music delivered at the Manchester City Centre site and the Foundation Degrees in Creative Technologies and Spa Management delivered at the Altrincham campus.

6 The College enrolls students on the following programmes, with full-time equivalent student numbers shown in parentheses.

University of Bolton

- FdSc Creative Technologies (7)

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- FdA Early Years Childhood Studies (20.4)

Edexcel

- HNC Building Services (17)
- HNC Electrical/Electronic Engineering (26)
- HNC Operations Engineering (10)
- HND Top Up Electrical/Electronic Engineering (1.5)
- HND Music (26)

Manchester Metropolitan University

- FdA Spa Management (15)
- FdA Supporting Teaching and Learning (10.5)

Sheffield Hallam University

- FdSc Forensic and Security Technologies (13)
- BSc (Hons) Applied Computing (e-top up) (4.5)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The College is in partnership with three universities, the University of Bolton, Manchester Metropolitan University and Sheffield Hallam University, and offers Edexcel programmes. The College's responsibilities are defined by these awarding bodies and are outlined in the university collaborative agreements. While the partnership agreements differ in detail, the universities retain ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. This responsibility is met through validations, moderation, appointment of external examiners, examination boards, awarding qualifications and their own annual monitoring. The College has operational responsibility for the delivery of the programmes, including the marking of assessment, and the welfare and support of students. Sheffield Hallam University provides all the materials and undertakes all the assessment for the BSc (Hons) Applied Computing (e-top up). The College holds its own assessment boards for the Edexcel programmes.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Since 2011, the College's partnerships with Edge Hill University and the University of Salford have ended. This reflects the College's Higher Education Strategy to reduce the number of university partners and to extend the Edexcel provision to facilitate progression from its BTEC National Diplomas. It is intended to run new HNC/HND programmes in several disciplines, including business, vehicle operations, journalism, art and design, hospitality and mechanical engineering by September 2012. At that date it is also planned to replace the FdSc Forensic and Security Technologies with an Applied Computing Foundation Degree. A new building was completed at Altrincham in 2012 and a major development of the Talbot Road campus is due for completion in 2013.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team and a submission was made. A student conference and student groups addressed issues relating to the three core themes. A student representative

collated the feedback from these sessions, recent student surveys and comments from student consultative meetings. The submission was approved by student representatives from each programme. The team considered the submission helpful in highlighting issues and good practice for further enquiry. The team also met 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?

10 The College has an effective management structure in place for the development and oversight of higher education. The Deputy Principal, supported by two Assistant Principals, who manage the academic departments, has overall responsibility for the quality of learning opportunities and academic standards. The heads of departments provide operational management support and manage the programme quality leaders, who are responsible for a number of related programmes, and course coordinators who lead programme teams. The Quality Improvement Manager has a pivotal role in the programmes' quality assurance and enhancement. She leads the Quality Department and is effectively supported by the Higher Education Coordinator to support and coordinate heads of department and teams. They ensure the appropriate quality assurance arrangements are in place to monitor the delivery of the programmes and identify good practice and staff development needs.

11 There are strong working relationships between the College and awarding bodies. The universities appoint a link tutor for each programme, who oversees the operation of the programme by liaising closely with the Programme Quality Leader or Course Coordinator. College staff attend the universities' steering groups and consortia meetings, programme committees, moderation meetings and examination boards to discuss assessment, curriculum changes, programme validations and actions from external examiner reports. Edexcel programme teams have close relationships with their external examiners and programme and assessment issues are discussed at the Higher Education Assessment Board - BTEC Programmes. Collaboration between the College and the university awarding bodies enables programme teams to share good practice with other colleges and to attend conferences and other staff development events. The Developmental engagement in assessment concluded that the College works effectively with its awarding bodies to ensure appropriate academic standards are met and the team agrees with this view.

12 The Higher Education Strategy Group, led by the Deputy Principal, has overall responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, and provides strategic objectives and oversight of the management, standards and quality of the programmes. It reports through the Executive Leadership Team to the Curriculum and Quality Committee and Corporation Board, and has two subcommittees, the Higher Education Assessment Board - BTEC Programmes and the Higher Education Practitioners Group. It is a well-established committee for sharing and disseminating good practice and supporting staff development. The Higher Education Strategy Group undertakes close monitoring and reporting of action plans from the departments, and also receives the outcomes from student-staff consultative meetings and the annual student conference. Programme teams meet informally to discuss the delivery and assessment of their programmes. There are no terms of reference, formal agenda or reporting of outcomes from

these through the committee structure to help ensure a clear overview of operational issues. It is desirable that the College reviews its committee arrangements to encourage more formal reporting and monitoring at programme level.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13 The College demonstrates a clear understanding and strong commitment to the Academic Infrastructure. Programme specifications and programme handbooks identify that programme aims are aligned with the FHEQ and the students are very clear in differentiating the levels of learning. There is clear alignment with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and all programmes are informed by subject benchmark statements where appropriate. College staff are involved in the development of new programmes and the universities' approval and validation processes. In the case of Edexcel programmes, the programme team develops the programme and its documentation, subject to approval by the Quality Improvement Manager. There are Awarding Organisation New Submissions Procedures, although there are no clear criteria for the consistent use of external stakeholders, academic peers or students in the approvals process. It is desirable that the College develops an internal validation process with clear criteria to ensure transparency and objectivity in the approval of Edexcel programmes.

14 The Developmental engagement in assessment identified the audit and use of the *Code of practice*, including *Section 6: Assessment of students* and *Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*, as good practice. Since then, programme teams and the Higher Education Practitioners Group have undertaken its further review. They have produced reflective documents, at College and programme level, to demonstrate alignment with the *Code of practice* as a means of enhancement to promote rigour and consistency. The development of the *Code of practice* reflective documents promotes consideration of the Academic Infrastructure and enables programme teams to reflect on academic standards, identify good practice and develop strategies for future quality enhancement. This is good practice.

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

15 There are comprehensively documented College and higher education-specific policies and procedures and the College complies with the relevant regulations, policies and procedures of the universities. The annual monitoring of programmes meets the requirements of the awarding bodies and provides evidence from a range of sources, such as external examiner reports and student feedback, that academic standards and the quality of the student experience are appropriate. Since 2011, each department produces a Programme Higher Education Self Evaluation Document and these inform the College Higher Education Self Evaluation Document. This summarises the key aspects of all the higher education programmes and identifies key strengths and actions for improvement. Planning and Review meetings are held each year to consider the delivery of the programmes and to analyse retention, progression and achievement data. The College is continuing to develop more effective higher education data analysis and, in 2012, it has implemented higher education-specific reviews for the first time. Heads of department at the College report outcomes and actions from programme monitoring to the Higher Education Strategy Group, which ensures the requirements or recommendations from the awarding and professional bodies are implemented.

16 External examiners are appointed by the universities or Edexcel. All assessment processes are monitored, verified or moderated by the awarding bodies, through their

external examiners and link tutors. The Developmental engagement concluded that the College's rigorous and well-documented moderation and internal verification procedures were good practice. The Edexcel Quality Nominee and College Lead on Assessment liaises closely with Edexcel external examiners and undertakes an annual audit of assessment across all programmes. This process now includes a specific higher education audit, which identifies areas for improvement. The College's Quality Department considers annual monitoring and external examiner reports and monitors action and improvement plans to ensure that academic standards meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. External examiners' reports have highlighted consistently that internal quality assurance processes are effective in ensuring the requirements of the awarding bodies are met, and the team confirms this view.

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

17 The College staff development policy is stated in the Staff Training and Development Procedure. The document, which is updated annually by the Quality Improvement Manager, details the staff training and development goals, the types of training and development available and their evaluation. The policy states that staff teaching on higher education programmes will be given priority in the provision of support for obtaining higher level qualifications. Staff development needs are identified through the review of the Strategic Plan, staff appraisal, teaching observations and annual monitoring.

18 Staff development issues are collated into an annual College Training and Development Plan. Professional development requests are considered, prioritised and funded as part of this plan. Staff are engaged in appropriate scholarly and professional activity, for example by undertaking master's programmes: one member of staff a doctorate and engineering staff short industrial secondments. Staff development within the Higher Education Practitioners Group has included the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), the Higher Education Assessment Audit, and the development of Foundation Degree Marking Guidelines identified as good practice by the Developmental engagement in assessment. Staff confirmed that there are extensive opportunities to undertake staff development activities to support academic standards.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

19 Line management responsibilities and reporting arrangements through the College committee structure for the quality of learning opportunities are detailed in paragraphs 10 to 12. The Director of Student Support, who reports to the Deputy Principal, is responsible for the following teams: Student Welfare and Tutorial Support; Additional Learning Support; Admissions; Customer Services and Curriculum Support; and Information Learning Technology and Learning Resources. The higher education programme quality leaders and course coordinators are responsible for the teaching teams and for ensuring the effective delivery of the programmes. The Quality Improvement Manager has operational

responsibility for assuring the quality of teaching and learning across all the programmes. The remit of the Higher Education Strategy Group is to plan and review the quality of teaching and learning and the resources required.

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

20 The College is responsible for the recruitment of students, the general welfare and discipline of the students and the delivery and support of the curriculum. This includes the appointment of suitably qualified staff, provision of library services, computing facilities, welfare services and staff development. The process by which the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to the awarding bodies is detailed in paragraphs 15 to 16. All staff take part in the programme self-evaluation process which highlights the key areas relating to the quality of learning opportunities. These are also the focus of staff and student discussions at termly student staff consultative committees and at programme team meetings.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

21 The College's engagement with the Academic Infrastructure is described in paragraphs 13 to 14. The College has a Higher Education Admissions procedure and a range of supportive and helpful documents relating to careers and learning support for higher education students. However, student support services have not given appropriate consideration to the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students; Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance* or *Section 10: Admissions to higher education* in drawing up its policies. It is desirable that the College enables support staff to understand the need to take due account of the Academic Infrastructure in the further development of student support services.

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

22 The College's Teaching, Training and Learning Policy articulates its commitment to excellence in teaching and learning through continuous improvement. The policy is generic for both further and higher education with reference to higher education-specific teaching and learning, and the FHEQ. There is a comprehensive range of processes, including the observation of teaching, appraisal and feedback from stakeholders, to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

23 The Quality Department effectively manages the implementation of the College's formal framework for the observation of teaching and learning, which is undertaken by the Cross College Observation Team. There are guidelines for higher education tutors and observers. The College has undertaken a review of higher education observations to identify alignment with the FHEQ, industry relevance, use of the virtual learning environment, and depth and quality of learning. In addition, a separate higher education peer review observation process pairs staff from different programmes to review teaching and assessment. The College's formal observation scheme and the peer review process, which recognise the distinctiveness of higher education teaching and learning and the benefit of collaborative dialogue, are good practice. Observation outcomes contribute to annual monitoring and review and staff annual appraisal. There is an appraisal policy and procedure, which is under review by the Human Resources Department to improve support for the needs of the College, including higher education teaching and learning.

24 There is a wide variety of teaching, learning and assessment practice across all programmes. Foundation Degree external examiners have noted the students' ability to make relevant links between theory and work-based practice and the College is committed to the enhancement of work-based learning activities and assessment. The Higher Education Work-Based Learning Procedure sets out expectations for engagement with employers to enhance the learning experience. There are examples of effective employer engagement on a number of programmes, including master classes with practitioners on the HND Music and links with employers for work-based learning on the Foundation Degree programmes. There remain some inconsistencies in employer engagement practices across programmes, including variations in methods of communication, information provided to employers and levels of employer feedback. It is desirable that the College continues to develop a strategic and consistent approach to employer engagement.

25 The College has effective systems for obtaining student feedback. These include module evaluations, representation on College committees, a range of College surveys, and higher education discrete surveys. The College's Learner Involvement and Learner Voice Strategy highlights that higher education students have their own dedicated focus groups and annual conference. At the 2011 Higher Education Student Conference, students commented on the high quality of their teaching and this is verified by other feedback, including the National Student Survey (NSS). Students confirmed that most issues are resolved by talking to their tutors and gave examples of where their feedback had resulted in changes, such as the provision of appropriate work space.

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

26 The College offers advice and guidance for prospective students through its promotional materials, visit days and other activities. There is a clear higher education admissions procedure and students spoke positively about the associated interview process enabling them to understand fully their chosen programme. All students receive a College and programme induction, which is monitored and evaluated.

27 All students are allocated a personal tutor, who supports their progress through the programme. On the Foundation Degree programmes, academic tutorial hours are allocated to the modules. On the Edexcel provision, study support is provided to reflect the individual needs of the students. All students are encouraged to reflect purposefully on their learning through personal development planning. Students reported that they are well supported, receive effective feedback for improvement, and have good access to tutors.

28 The virtual learning environment holds programme materials to support teaching and learning. The Developmental engagement noted the good practice in the FdSc Forensic and Security Technologies programme, of using the virtual learning environment effectively for feedback, by providing ongoing dialogue between students and tutors. This is in place on the HND Music and is being developed by some programme teams to include audio and video feedback. Other programmes use a range of software to facilitate group work and, for example, to create designs on the Foundation Degree in Creative Technologies programme. Staff attend Peer Review and Development Group meetings as part of a funded project with two other colleges. The project enables the sharing of best practice and the development of the virtual environment for electronic feedback on student work, reflective logs and podcasts. These practices are shared across the programme teams and students reported much satisfaction with these developments. The development and use of digital technologies, which engage students and effectively support their learning, is good practice.

29 The Student Support Department offers a wide range of advice and guidance to students, for example on finance, counselling, careers, disability and additional learning support. The Careers service holds Matrix Accreditation. The Director of Student Support is

a member of the College Executive Leadership Team, and it has been recognised that her attendance at the Higher Education Strategy Group would be beneficial. This would provide a forum for further focus on higher education student support. Student support is effective and students are satisfied with the support they receive.

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

30 Arrangements for staff development are detailed in paragraphs 17 and 18. Staff development is effective in supporting the quality of learning opportunities. The Quality Department has overall responsibility for staff development and departmental heads identify staff development requirements annually. Staff new to the College attend an induction, and all staff new to teaching are allocated a mentor who supports them to develop high quality teaching and learning. Mentors are also available for existing staff where they request support or where the need is identified through the College appraisal and observation processes. The College provides higher education specific training such as observation training, as well as higher education focused days. Staff also attend collaborative staff development days at the awarding bodies.

31 Staff have extensive industrial links through, for example, national representation on professional bodies and their own professional practice. Programme representatives attend the Higher Education Practitioner Group to share good practice to support teaching and learning. The Quality Department collates the records of staff development activities from individual members of staff. Programme teams have the opportunity to comment on staff development and highlight any issues which may impact on teaching and learning in the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Documents. Both the staff development records and the annual monitoring reports provide little detail of the impact of staff development on teaching and learning. It is desirable that the College record and monitor more explicitly the impact of staff development on teaching and learning.

How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programmes?

32 The College has robust processes to ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of learning resources. Heads of department are responsible for resourcing the programmes through the College budgetary process and programme teams are required to show the resources are adequate at the time of programme approval. Ongoing resource needs are identified through programme team meetings, annual monitoring and direct feedback from link tutors, external examiners and employers. The departmental bids are reviewed by the Deputy Principal and Finance Director, with judgements made as to the impact of the bid on the maintenance of high quality teaching and learning.

33 The College's commitment to providing the best possible teaching and learning environment for students and staff is reflected in extensive capital investment. This has included significant expenditure on library facilities and items to enhance learning, such as Green Technology software for HNC Building Services. There is a range of specialist higher education resources including a purpose built spa area, engineering workshops, specialist software, specialist computing suites and base rooms. A comprehensive information technology strategy provides for computer replacement, developing a wireless system and remote access to the College intranet and the virtual learning environment. In response to student feedback, there has been considerable investment in music technology. A designated adult study room and quiet areas in the learning resource centres

have also been established. Students confirmed that they make effective use of these improved resources.

34 Learning resource centres hold e-books and specialist journals and a sufficient range of materials to support learning. Students have an effective induction into the College library services and they find learning resource centre staff very helpful. The learning resource centres have their own websites which provide learning support. Manchester Metropolitan University students have access to the university resources.

35 All the teaching staff are appointed by the College and are also approved by the respective universities for the Foundation Degrees. They are well qualified with appropriate academic and professional qualifications. Students confirmed the subject expertise and professional experience of staff enhanced their learning. Staff, students and external examiners report the appropriateness and accessibility of resources to support learning.

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?

36 The agreements with the universities clearly set out College's responsibilities for published information, including information for potential students, enrolled students, employers and the wider public. The universities, through link tutors or appropriate managers, approve all promotional and programme material. Edexcel programme materials are monitored by the external examiner. The College is responsible for marketing and publicity for the programmes. It produces the Access and Higher Education Course Guide, website information, course fact sheets, and promotional posters and flyers. The College's Marketing Department has responsibility for producing the marketing and promotional materials, including the Course Guide in hard copy and on the website. Electronic materials are accessible through digital devices such as smart phones and social media. Students commented that the website information is helpful, accurate and informative.

37 The College produces a range of information to support students on the programmes, including programme handbooks, module handbooks, College policies and procedures, and diaries. Guidance for students and employers for work-based learning is also provided on some programmes. Where possible this information is provided on the virtual learning environment and, at the tutor's discretion, in hard copy. The students confirmed that they received useful and comprehensive information about their programmes.

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?

38 Heads of department coordinate the process of checking programme information. Programme quality leaders and course coordinators produce draft versions of the student handbooks, based on an appropriate university or College template. These are then sent to the Higher Education Coordinator, who checks for accuracy before publication on the virtual learning environment or in hard copy. Programme quality leaders check against awarding

body information to produce course fact sheets, which inform the prospectus. They are approved by the Head of Department of Professional Studies. Any amendments are updated through the Customer Services Team on to the central system, which is then fed through to the website on a daily system update. Customer Services will check all amendments with the relevant head of department. Heads of department also check programme information for employers.

39 There is a production plan for the Access and Higher Education Course Guide and other printed materials to ensure the accuracy of the information published. The prospectus proofing and signing process includes consideration by heads of department, the Assistant Principal Adult Learning and the Director of Student Support and the awarding bodies before publication. The College's Marketing Department is responsible for ensuring that information is accurate and up to date. A dedicated member of staff is responsible for the website content and a website audit takes place on a weekly basis to ensure accuracy.

40 There is a comprehensive audit trail for the checking of content on the virtual learning environment. This content audit and related documentation are designed specifically for higher education programmes and highlight strengths and areas for improvement with actions and completion dates. This represents good practice. The Marketing Department monitor all social media content and staff are developing a policy as part of the College's safeguarding policies and procedures.

41 The Higher Education Strategy Group has marketing in its terms of reference and the Deputy Principal takes overall responsibility for this area. It has been agreed recently that the Head of Marketing will become a Strategy Group member. No College committee or group has responsibility for public information in its terms of reference. It is desirable that the College reviews the terms of reference of committees to identify responsibility for the oversight of the accuracy and completeness of public information. Overall, the College has clear processes and procedures to ensure the accuracy and completeness of public information.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

42 The Developmental engagement in assessment was undertaken in June 2011. The lines of enquiry covered all core themes and were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: How does the College ensure that the management of assessment meets the academic standards as defined by the awarding bodies and the Academic Infrastructure?

Line of enquiry 2: How does feedback on assessment encourage student learning?

Line of enquiry 3: How does the College ensure that information on assessment is accurate, complete and communicated to students, staff, employers and partner higher education institutions?

43 The Developmental engagement identified a number of areas of good practice. These included the Higher Education Practitioners Group audit of the use of the Academic Infrastructure and rigorous and well-documented moderation and internal verification processes. Further areas of good practice included the Foundation Degree Marking Guide developed by the Professional Studies Department and the FdSc Forensic and Security Technologies effective use of the virtual learning environment for feedback.

44 The team recommended that it would be desirable to provide programme specifications for all Edexcel programmes and provide clear guidelines for work-based and placement learning and assessment in its higher education assessment strategy. It would also be desirable to provide all students with in-text annotation and word processed feedback and ensure that the annual audit of assessment is more higher education-focused.

D Foundation Degrees

45 The College offers five Foundation Degrees. These are the FdSc Creative Technologies and the FdA Early Years Childhood Studies validated by the University of Bolton; the FdA Spa Management and FdA Supporting Teaching and Learning validated by Manchester Metropolitan University, and the FdSc Forensic and Security Technologies validated by Sheffield Hallam University. The latter programme is being replaced in September 2012 with the FdSc in Applied Computing.

46 The review confirms that the programmes are aligned to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and to the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. Overall, the College has in place effective management of the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities of its Foundation Degrees.

47 All the conclusions in Section E below, except for that arising from paragraph 13, relate to the Foundation Degree provision.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

48 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in the College management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, the University of Bolton, Edexcel, Manchester Metropolitan University and Sheffield Hallam University.

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

- the development of the *Code of practice* reflective documents, which promotes consideration of the Academic Infrastructure and enables programme teams to reflect on academic standards, identify good practice and develop strategies for future quality enhancement (paragraph 14)
- the College's formal observation scheme and the peer review process, which recognise the distinctiveness of higher education teaching and learning and the benefit of collaborative dialogue (paragraph 23)
- the development and use of digital technologies, which engage students and effectively support their learning (paragraph 28)
- the virtual learning environment content audit and related documentation, designed specifically for higher education programmes, which highlight strengths and areas for improvement with actions and completion dates (paragraph 40).

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

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

- review its committee arrangements to encourage more formal reporting and monitoring at programme level (paragraph 12)
- develop an internal validation process with clear criteria to ensure transparency and objectivity in the approval of Edexcel programmes (paragraph 13)
- enable support staff to understand the need to take due account of the Academic Infrastructure in the further development of student support services (paragraph 21)
- continue to develop a strategic and consistent approach to employer engagement (paragraph 24)
- record and monitor more explicitly the impact of staff development on teaching and learning (paragraph 31)
- review the terms of reference of committees to identify responsibility for the oversight of the accuracy and completeness of public information (paragraph 41).

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

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

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

	<p>cross referenced to the new Quality Code</p> <p>Complete reflective documents for the <i>Code of practice, Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance</i> and <i>Section 10: Admissions to higher education</i> cross referenced to the new Quality Code</p>	June 2013				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's formal observation scheme and the peer review process, which recognise the distinctiveness of higher education teaching and learning and the benefit of collaborative dialogue (paragraph 23) 	Maintain internal Higher Education Observations process; further develop Peer Review/Collaborative Dialogue	March 2013	Quality Improvement Manager	Increased satisfaction via Higher Education Student Surveys; improved grade profile of higher education teaching and learning sessions; improved quality of assessment evidenced in the Higher Education Assessment Audit; closer adherence to FHEQ levels	Higher Education Strategy Group	College Higher Education Self Evaluation Document; Response to actions by Higher Education Strategy Group; Higher Education Planning and Review Meeting minutes; Curriculum and Quality Committee minutes of meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development and use of digital technologies, which engage students and 	Further develop use of digital technologies across all higher education programmes	May 2013	Higher Education Practitioners' Group	Increased satisfaction via Higher Education Student Surveys; improved grade	Higher Education Strategy Group	College Higher Education Self Evaluation Document; Student Feedback

effectively support their learning (paragraph 28)				profile of higher education teaching and learning sessions; improved retention rates; increased student participation response to surveys		Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the virtual learning environment content audit and related documentation, designed specifically for higher education programmes, which highlight strengths and areas for improvement with actions and completion dates (paragraph 40) 	Audit the virtual learning environment for content, application and usage	November 2012	Information and Learning Technology Coach	Increased satisfaction via Higher Education Student Surveys; Virtual Learning Environment Audit Report	Quality Improvement Manager and Higher Education Coordinator	College Higher Education Self Evaluation Document; Action Plan monitoring
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its committee arrangements to 	Update committee reporting structures to incorporate	September 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	Improved communication links between	Higher Education Strategy Group	College Higher Education Self Evaluation

encourage more formal reporting and monitoring at programme level (paragraph 12)	programme level; create a common core agenda at programme level; generate schedule of meetings			Higher Education Strategy Group, Higher Education Practitioners' Group and Programme Teams		Document; Response to actions by Higher Education Strategy Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop an internal validation process with clear criteria to ensure transparency and objectivity in the approval of Edexcel programmes (paragraph 13) 	Amend (include stakeholder representation), then effectively implement the Awarding Organisation New Submissions Procedures for all new Higher National programmes	September 2012	Higher Education Coordinator and Quality Improvement Manager	Awarding Organisation approval of new programme	Higher Education Strategy Group	Recruitment Reports; Response to actions by Higher Education Strategy Group; Minutes from Curriculum & Quality Committee meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable support staff to understand the need to take due account of the Academic Infrastructure in the further development of student support services (paragraph 21) 	Meeting between Higher Education Coordinator and Director of Student Support with reference to Academic Infrastructure and specific reference to <i>Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students, Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance</i> and <i>Section 10: Work-based and placement learning</i> , then roll out	September 2012	Higher Education Coordinator and Director of Student Support	Increased satisfaction via Higher Education Student Surveys; increased take up of Additional Learning Support; improved retention data	Higher Education Strategy Group	College Higher Education Self Evaluation Document; Response to actions by Higher Education Strategy Group

	to support staff Update Higher Education Student Support Procedures to cross reference to <i>Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students, Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance</i> and <i>Section 10: Work-based and placement learning</i> . Future review against Quality Code	March 2013				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop a strategic and consistent approach to employer engagement (paragraph 24) 	Each department to produce customised pro-forma documents for employer communication; review Work Based Learning Procedure; ensure appropriate actions from Work Based Learning Procedure are included in Department Self Evaluation Document Action Plan	October 2012 November 2012	Programme Quality Leaders and Higher Education Coordinator	Improved employer engagement and satisfaction; Increased satisfaction via Higher Education Student Surveys	Higher Education Strategy Group	College Higher Education Self Evaluation Document; Employer Survey Feedback Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> record and monitor more explicitly the 	Incorporate section in Programme Self-Evaluation	September 2012	Quality Improvement Manager	Increased satisfaction via Higher Education	Higher Education Coordinator; Higher Education	College Higher Education Self Evaluation

<p>impact of staff development on teaching and learning (paragraph 31)</p>	<p>Documents to evaluate staff development on teaching and learning; develop method of explicitly capturing scholarly activity and its impact on Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>November 2012</p>		<p>Student Surveys; improved grade profile of higher education teaching and learning sessions; improved quality of assessment evidenced in the Higher Education Assessment Audit; improved comments in External examiners' reports</p>	<p>Practitioners' Group and Quality Improvement Manager</p>	<p>Document; Student Feedback Reports; Staff Development Training Report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the terms of reference of committees to identify responsibility for the oversight of the accuracy and completeness of public information (paragraph 41) 	<p>Review terms of reference of Higher Education Strategy Group to incorporate representation from Marketing Department</p>	<p>October 2012</p>	<p>Deputy Principal</p>	<p>Formal assurance and accuracy of public information (website, factsheets, handbooks etc); clear identification of responsibility for higher education public information</p>	<p>Higher Education Strategy Group</p>	<p>Response to actions by Higher Education Strategy Group; Post Induction Survey responses</p>

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