



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Truro and Penwith College

May 2011

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

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

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

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

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 Truro and Penwith College carried out in May 2011

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

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- well-defined and effective processes and practices support the delivery of high quality provision
- the successful operation of an internal self-assessment process complements the College's close adherence to the University of Plymouth Colleges quality processes
- effective initiatives ensure that new and existing staff are fully briefed and updated about the Academic Infrastructure and about College quality processes
- comprehensive and effective arrangements support the provision of high quality staff development
- a student-centred learning environment is provided, facilitated by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff who pay close attention to individual learning needs
- effective student support is provided throughout the College's higher education programmes
- there is an effective student representative system and excellent arrangements for the provision of general feedback and updating information to students
- there is a commendable level of commitment to the encouragement and development of scholarly activity and to the dissemination of its outcomes among staff
- an excellent range of academic and administrative resources on the College virtual learning environment is valued by students and is regularly updated
- coherent and comprehensive information is provided to facilitate entry onto higher education programmes
- comprehensive and easily accessible student and module handbooks are regularly reviewed and updated.

Recommendations

The team has also identified one recommendation for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

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

- further encourage the moves already under way towards greater virtual learning environment engagement and capability among staff.

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 Truro and Penwith College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Plymouth and the University of Greenwich. The review was carried out by Dr Philip Bentley, Mr David Charlton and Mr David Knowles (reviewers) and Mr Ian Fleming (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies; meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions; and the report of a review by QAA. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 The College was formed by a merger in 2008 of Truro College and Penwith College. Truro College was originally established in 1993 and is located on a campus on the edge of the city, with a range of modern, purpose-built facilities. Higher education programmes are largely delivered in the newly-constructed Fal Building on the Truro Campus, with some provision also delivered at the Penwith campus in Penzance, where a range of newly-built facilities has now been opened, and also at Tregye, a few miles from Truro.

5 The stated purpose of the College is to provide the best possible learning experience, leading to the highest possible level of student achievement. Higher education provision has grown rapidly from 100 full-time equivalent students in 2003 to over 950 in 2010. The College aims to grow higher education student numbers substantially by 2012 by developing high-quality vocational courses which meet the needs of the local and regional economy. At the Penwith campus, a final total of 200 higher education students is planned. There is a stated College aim to embed enterprise skills across higher education provision.

6 HEFCE-funded higher education provision delivered by the College is as follows, with the full-time equivalent number of students in brackets:

Programmes validated by the University of Plymouth

- FdA Action Photography (17)
- FdA Applied Literary Studies (16)
- FdA History, Heritage and Archaeology (18)
- FdA Children and Young People's Workforce (14)
- FdA Counselling Studies (27)

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- FdA Commercial Fashion (6)
- FdA Commercial Music Performance and Production (10)
- FdA Dance (17)
- FdA Digital Visualisation (21)
- FdA Early Childhood Education (148)
- FdA Education and Training (Teaching Assistants) (3.5)
- FdA Media Advertising (15)
- FdA Performance (Educational and Community Theatre) (5)
- FdA Photography and Digital Imaging (39.5)
- FdA Popular Music (11)
- FdA Silversmithing and Jewellery (23)
- FdSc Archaeology (20)
- FdSc Biomedical Studies (9)
- FdSc Community Studies (Development and Youth Work) (40)
- FdSc Complementary Body Therapies (18)
- FdSc Environmental and Public Health (17)
- FdSc Law (24)
- FdSc Outdoor Education (49)
- FdSc Personal Trainer (20.5)
- FdSc Public Services (23)
- FdSc Salon and Spa Management (3)
- FdSc Sports Coaching and Therapy (50)
- FdSc Sports Performance Analysis and Management (33)
- FdSc Sports Science and Injury Management (22)
- FdSc Web Technology (17)
- Higher National Diploma (HND) Applied Psychology (27)
- HND Computer Technology (14)
- HND Media Moving Image (27)
- HND Sound Engineering and Multimedia Integration (24)
- BA (Hons) Contemporary World Jazz (25.5)
- BA (Hons) Education and Training (5.5)
- BA (Hons) Silversmithing and Jewellery (12.5)
- BSc (Hons) Archaeology (11)
- BSc Sports Performance and Coaching (32.5)
- Certificate in Education (40)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (24)

Programmes validated by the University of Greenwich

- FdA Education and Training (1)
- Professional Certificate in Education (11)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (7).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The College works largely with the University of Plymouth, with which there is a strong sense of partnership. A formal partnership agreement defines the University's relationships with all its partner colleges and sets out expectations and objectives. The University is closely involved in the provision of staff development activities which are accessed by College staff. Three programmes, delivered online, are validated by the University of Greenwich.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Higher education is regarded as being at the heart of the College's strategic development. It is intended to widen the curriculum offer over the coming years and to develop additional provision. Two degree programmes in the media and sound engineering fields are proposed for 2012, as well as Foundation Degrees in the bioscience, information technology, project management and sports, health and fitness areas. A significant recent building development at the Penwith campus in Penzance has included the provision of new state-of-the-art higher education facilities in the Lamorna building.

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 Summative review team. Fifteen students contributed to a focus group process which led to the production of a written submission and this provided useful evidence for the team. In addition, the team met two groups of students during the Summative review 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 Currently, most programmes in the College are accredited by the University of Plymouth, with only three programmes validated by the University of Greenwich. The University of Plymouth Academic Co-operation Agreement began in March 2002. The merger with Penwith College in 2008 meant that the joint College inherited three franchised education programmes with the University of Greenwich. This provision is delivered online, using University of Greenwich materials, with staff providing tutor support. Higher education work in the College is a development of existing strong further education provision and half of the current intake are progressing students. The development of higher education provision by building upon strong further education provision is confirmed from the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection report which states that the College provides outstanding education and training, fulfilling its mission in the community very well.

11 Quality assurance follows the University of Plymouth processes, including centralised annual programme monitoring, joint boards of studies and a rigorous external examiner process. The College acknowledges that the programmes are courses of the University and that academic responsibility for the programmes lies with the Academic Board of the University.

12 Programmes are monitored by the College within the normal programme team leader structure and this forms part of the annual programme monitoring process. The joint boards of studies model has been established within the University of Plymouth Colleges structure as formal sub-committees of the Faculty Board. The aim is to provide a locally-based vehicle for quality assurance and initiation of discussions about College developments. The College adheres to the University's quality assurance processes and

follows the annual programme monitoring procedures as laid down in the University quality manual. The annual programme monitoring process utilises student feedback and evidence from external examiner reports to enhance student learning opportunities. Programme action plans are an agenda item at autumn programme committee meetings and at the joint boards of studies. The higher education action plan and the programme action plans ensure that the planning, devising and reviewing of assessments occurs on an annual basis. There are College higher education administrative and academic management teams responsible for quality assurance. The Higher Education Team Leader is responsible for day-to-day operations and reports to the Director of Studies. There is a designated Higher Education Coordinator responsible for the coordination of programme paperwork and the organisation of programme committees, subject assessment panels and award assessment boards, as well as submitting nominations of external examiners. Programmes have a designated academic liaison link for support of programme design, assessment and progression for students to University programmes. This support is a strength in ensuring consistency with procedures and moderation of student work. Overall, the team considers that the College's quality assurance processes and practices support the delivery of high quality provision and constitute good practice.

13 Penwith College staff work directly with University of Greenwich quality assurance processes by contributing to annual programme monitoring. Standardisation and moderation meetings take place with the University twice each year. Standardisation is in clusters of colleges and is usually followed by a meeting to discuss a range of academic matters. Information from this is cascaded via the programme leader to other teaching staff, although all team members are welcome to attend. The College is also visited annually by the University's link tutor.

14 In addition to the University of Plymouth Colleges quality processes, the College also operates an internal higher education self-assessment process to review course-related statistical data, including the recruitment, retention, applications and achievement of students as well as their comments. The meetings take place in the autumn term and actions from these meetings are fed back to programme committee meetings. Although these meetings are not formally minuted they generate an action plan which feeds into the joint boards of studies. The team considers that successful operation of self-assessment arrangements complements the close adherence to the University of Plymouth Colleges processes and constitutes good practice.

15 There are clear processes and practices in place to support the delivery and development of a high-quality higher education provision. The team was able to confirm the outcomes of the Developmental engagement. This recognised as an area of good practice the 'well-developed and effective external examiner arrangements which ensure a consistent approach across the College's higher education programmes and impact positively upon the quality of provision' and 'prompt and effective responses to recommendations and issues arising from external examiner reports'.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

16 In developing its provision, the College engages with appropriate benchmark statements and programme specifications. These are revisited to ensure consistency of standards, as, for example, happened with the updating of the HND Applied Psychology which utilised new subject benchmarks. The College has embedded the Academic Infrastructure into the quality assurance systems and it is a standing item on the programme committee agenda. Programme leaders meet termly and this enables updates on quality assurance arrangements to be addressed.

17 The impact of the Academic Infrastructure on quality assurance processes is determined by the University of Plymouth according to the requirements of the academic cooperation agreement. This was identified as good practice during the QAA Collaborative provision audit (2006). Staff involvement in these processes also ensures familiarity with the Academic Infrastructure. The higher education team concentrates on those elements of the *Code of practice* where there are specific issues for the College, including mapping exercises on careers, and student support. Programme team meetings are also a forum for discussing and sharing key aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. There are also staff development workshops for new staff each autumn, which enable matters relating to the Academic Infrastructure and quality processes to be outlined and reviewed. The team considers that the College's effective initiatives to ensure that new and existing staff are fully briefed and updated about the Academic Infrastructure and about College quality processes represent 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?

18 The process of annual programme monitoring involves a tripartite relationship, in both approval and in monitoring the programmes. The College is responsible both to its own management and governance and also to the University to ensure that standards are maintained and monitored. In addition, the University cognate faculties have a responsibility to contribute to the development and monitoring of the programmes, to advise upon and, in some instances, to offer support with issues about the assessment and application of standards of achievement. Programme committee meetings for each subject area are held in the autumn and spring terms and there are corresponding joint boards of studies meetings. Action plans are determined by programme leaders in the autumn term in response to external examiner reports, student feedback, statistical data and programme reviews. Review of the programme action plans indicates a systematic review and response to issues raised, utilising appropriate University documentation. Higher education academic management team attendance at programme committee meetings enables feedback on issues and concerns to the central action plan arising from the annual programme monitoring process.

19 The permitted change flow chart indicates the mechanism for developments in response to continuous curriculum development. Changes are monitored by the Higher Education Coordinator to ensure consistency. The College's self evaluation indicated that the current system is cumbersome and possibly in need of amendment, but discussions with staff suggested that the time taken depended on the point in the approval cycle at which new initiatives were introduced. A meeting with employers indicated that, for short course provision, there is a quick potential development and turnaround, with a 60-credit course in palliative care being developed and approved within four months. The most significant changes since 2009 have involved the reduction of credits on Foundation Degrees from 280 to 240. Adjustments to programmes were completed by programme teams, and this process worked efficiently and effectively with a quick turnaround.

20 The validation process is determined by the University programme approval procedures, which include drafting specifications for the programme, including modules, learning outcomes, using University documentation, to proposal approval scrutinised by the University Academic Developments Committee. The design of programmes is monitored and supported through the use of University templates, guidance materials and processes, all of which are mediated and facilitated through the Higher Education Development Leader and overseen by the Higher Education Team Leader. There are clear stages in the formal approval process from the initial 'faculty scrutiny' event leading to the preparation of detailed

programme documentation in preparation for the stage two approval panel. The University process is well developed and articulated. The College higher education strategy acknowledges that the University has supported the development of new programmes and provided a range of staff development opportunities for staff. This has enabled the College to develop a quality-assured range of vocational higher education programmes geared to meet the needs of local employers and local students. Active involvement of College staff in the main development work ensures greater ownership of programmes.

21 The College has worked with Cornwall College to develop a Foundation Degree in Children and Young People's Workforce. This was supported by the Faculty of Education at the University. This collaborative working has led to the establishment of a joint protocol to facilitate the smooth running of joint higher education programmes between the two colleges and the formation of a joint delivery team. The protocol includes responsibilities for programme coordination, quality and module delivery, as well as representation at the joint boards of studies and the subject assessment panel and award board.

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

22 The College provides a range of staff development activities, with a particular current emphasis on improving teaching and learning and use of technology. The College staff development policy aligns with that of University of Plymouth Colleges and emphasises the centrality of developing an approach to staff development within the context of higher education in further education. The College has established a Scholarly Activity and Research Group which produces a journal as a forum to celebrate and share research and scholarly activity. Some members of staff also contribute to a cross-college Sport and Exercise Research Group. The team considers that the comprehensive and effective arrangements made by the College to support high-quality staff development represent good practice.

23 Workshops on a range of activities have been facilitated by the higher education academic management team and further staff development is facilitated through University of Plymouth Colleges. Staff are able to access a wide range of journals and databases through the University, and all higher education programme staff are encouraged to register for access to the facilities.

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?

24 The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 10 to 15 are also relevant in supporting the College's management of the quality of learning opportunities.

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

25 The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 18 to 21 are also relevant in this context.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 The arrangements noted in paragraphs 16 and 17 are also relevant in this context. The College has done some useful work mapping its processes and procedures against the Academic Infrastructure. The willingness to engage in this process has promoted a greater awareness and appreciation of higher education culture and ethos. Academic and administrative staff have also undertaken relevant courses run under the College's Success programme to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

27 The College adheres to the University of Plymouth's teaching and learning policy, which encompasses a commitment to supporting students and particularly their academic and personal development. The College describes its approach to teaching and learning as the 'development of a vibrant teaching and learning environment where students' learning is of central importance'. In meetings with the students it was stated that staff are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and always approachable. Academic and support staff get to know every student and take individual learning styles into account. Students feel that the staff are 'inspirational and highly approachable' and lecturers are always willing to give one-to-one support when needed.

28 To support and enhance the learning environment, College policy confirms the importance of developing and enhancing expertise in teaching and learning. Staff are provided with opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities to help improve teaching and learning, including workshops to develop virtual learning environment content. Such events are run both by the University of Plymouth, including the Colleges Faculty, and the College. Many different teaching and learning styles are used to ensure all students are engaged in their learning. Students state that staff have strong subject knowledge and the fact that many of the staff are practising professionals in their subject areas is especially beneficial. At the Penwith campus, facilities include a dedicated higher education building. A student-centred learning environment is provided, facilitated by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff who pay close attention to individual learning needs. The extent of this support, and the willingness of both the academic and support staff to meet student needs represents good practice.

29 The College has a clearly-defined teaching observation policy whereby all full-time staff and those on a substantial part-time contract are observed every year. Any new members of staff are observed a minimum of three times in their first year. This year, the Higher Education Team is observing a full Foundation Degree programme in a peer review process where feedback is both to the team and to the individual. This is intended to be developmental rather than inspectorial and should improve the teaching practice. Teaching observations follow the College's policy. They inform staff appraisals and contribute to the individual development plan.

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

30 The Higher Education Student Support Officer works closely with students with learning needs or financial worries. The College has a well-established team of staff supporting its provision. This includes a designated assistant for student support who provides advice and arranges assessment of learning needs for higher education students and ensures that they are supported correctly. This person also administers the hardship fund and advises on student loans and money issues. In addition there is a comprehensive range of support functions, including careers, admissions and study skills. Staff in the learning resource centre are always available to work with students when they have problems. Study skills sessions have been added to a number of programmes this year and have led to improvements in student performance. Effective student support is provided throughout the College's higher education programmes and is considered by the team to represent good practice.

31 There is an active student representative system that operates at programme committee meeting level and through College committees. Students have a voice and this can lead to adjustments to programmes. The system works well, not only at programme level, but also provides a link with the University. A student bulletin is published to provide information on a range of issues and this includes a 'you said, we did' section. Such information arises out of issues raised in meetings with student representatives. The bulletin also contains details of support staff and when and where they are available. Bulletins are usually made available every fortnight in the refectory and on notice boards. An effective student representative system and arrangements for updating students with information on general feedback are considered good practice.

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

32 The arrangements noted in paragraphs 22 and 23 are also relevant in this context.

33 The College provided a range of staff development activities during 2010-11 with a particular emphasis on improving teaching and learning; teaching and learning technologies; and a tutoring award. An assessment moderation day was held recently, attended by 24 members of academic staff. The College demonstrates a clear commitment to ongoing professional development which encompasses research and scholarly activity. This is evident in the production of Seeker, a journal of scholarly activity and research at the College. The journal aims to demonstrate the quality and diversity of the College's research and scholarly activities and includes contributions from students and academics, together with activities in collaboration with the University of Plymouth. There is a commendable level of commitment to the encouragement and development of scholarly activity and research and to the dissemination of its outcomes among staff. This is an area of good practice.

34 The Developmental engagement action plan recognised good practice in the provision of a broad and innovative range of opportunities for training, development and support. Higher education workshops have been facilitated on a range of activities aimed at enhancing teaching, learning, assessment and moderation, clearly aimed at promoting understanding of the theory and practice of learning and assessment. An annual review of the feedback from all workshops is scheduled in order to inform the planning of future development events. Further staff development is available through the University of Plymouth Colleges Faculty, which provides opportunities aimed at enhancement and promoting engagement with scholarship activity. Staff have access to a wide range of journals, databases and other electronic resources through the Colleges Faculty, all new members of staff being encouraged to register for access to the University's facilities.

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

35 The learning resource centres at both Truro and Penwith campuses provide workshops to support the use of resources. Their staff are also proactive in identifying new suitable texts for programmes. Resourcing is organised through the College's established processes, which include a clear capital bid process for requesting physical resources. This process was recently used to procure a new suite of Apple computers for use by the photography and media programmes. The process begins in May and each bid is considered separately in discussion with the Finance Director. Although essentially an annual system, it has the flexibility to be invoked at any time if there is a particular need that will affect student learning.

36 Students have access to the College's virtual learning environment, which contains details of the programme and module handbooks as well as copies of lecture notes and assignments. Students also have access to the University online portal, but this has proved more problematical, as it is not always found to be as user-friendly as the College's site. In an effort to overcome some of the problems, the University is working closely with the learning resource centre team at the College. As a result, the College librarian can now reset student passwords and is always willing to assist students with access problems. No record of the usage of the University site by College students is currently available, although it has been requested.

37 Staff and students are able to request new texts that are appropriate to their programme of study. Learning resource centre representatives attend joint boards of studies meetings and programme committee meetings in the spring term to be aware of possible needs for new resources. They are also proactive in identifying suitable texts to ensure continuous development of resources. Students recognise that the librarians and technicians at the College are knowledgeable and always willing to help. Students acknowledge that they provide useful training sessions on the use of electronic resources. The learning resource centres are considered by students to offer excellent working environments. Classrooms are well equipped with projectors and many have interactive white boards. There is access to a wide range of equipment and to the technical support necessary for its effective use. The development of student handbooks and the annual assessment schedule has led to a marked improvement in responses to the findings of the student perception questionnaire which shows that implementation of good practice is beneficial to them.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities as required by the awarding bodies to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Core theme 3: Public information

What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?

38 The College is responsible for publishing a wide range of information and materials relating to its higher education provision. Its 'University level' prospectus is produced on an annual basis and contains comprehensive information about all higher education programmes. It also includes student and staff profiles and very useful information on student facilities, student services, the students' union, tuition fees and the programme

application process. Separate, individual programme leaflets are also available in hard and electronic copy. Both students and employers find the prospectus very clear, informative and easy to follow. In addition, *Seeker*, a new journal covering scholarly activity and research at the College, was published for the first time this year and includes an interesting range of articles and papers written by staff and students from the College and the University.

39 The College website includes a separate area covering university level programmes. This is divided into four distinct sections providing information on degrees, teacher education and HNDs. Students and employers find the website easy to navigate and are able to access user-friendly information about individual programmes. This includes course and module information, course duration and attendance arrangements, entry requirements, the application process and progression opportunities.

40 The College's virtual learning environment contains an excellent range of academic and administrative resources, careers information and student support. These include electronic journals and books; podcasts; and module handbooks which contain all relevant assessment materials. Students find this a very useful resource, enabling them to catch up on missed lectures, find out general information about their courses and to provide links to wider reading. The virtual learning environment was also used effectively by the College to provide prompt, up-to-date information to students about closures during the adverse weather conditions in late 2010. There is an excellent range of academic and administrative resources on the College virtual learning environment which is valued by students and is regularly updated. The team considers this to constitute good practice.

41 Students following programmes validated by the University of Plymouth also have access to a wide range of useful information and resources through the University's student portal. These include an extensive range of academic journals, relevant learning materials and information and guidance on assessment.

42 Students joining programmes receive coherent and comprehensive information to facilitate their induction. A comprehensive information pack is provided, which includes an introductory letter, a student information booklet, a copy of the prospectus and much valuable information about the College. Students also receive a handbook relevant to their programme of study. Handbooks are available in both hard copy and electronically through the College's virtual learning environment, and can also be provided in large print and on coloured paper. The handbooks contain detailed information about the programme, including staffing, content and assessment, guidance on studying at university level and general College information. Students find these an invaluable resource at the start of their programme and the team considers this to represent good practice.

43 Students can access module handbooks in hard copy or electronically. These include the module aims and learning outcomes, assessment information and materials, reading lists and web links and programmes of work. Students find these useful in helping plan their learning and accessing vital resources during the Developmental engagement. The team considered the accessibility and content of the module handbooks to represent good practice.

44 All students receive a higher education student diary containing important information on College services, policies and procedures, student support, fees and loans, the partner universities, health and safety, and all aspects of College administration as it relates to higher education. It is presented in an easily accessible format that helps reinforce the other information students receive. Although some students make use of alternative diary arrangements, all agreed that it contains much useful information.

**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?**

45 The College's procedures for ensuring the accuracy, consistency and completeness of published information are robust and comprehensive. In the case of the university level prospectus, programme teams review their programme information annually. Any changes have to be approved by the partner university. Once approved, the prospectus entries are then checked for accuracy and consistency. Finally, the prospectus is signed off by the relevant university. A similar process is applied to the information on the College website, which is also reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

46 The individual programme leaders are also responsible for reviewing and updating their own teaching and learning materials on the College's virtual learning environment. A review is also carried out by the Higher Education Management Team to check for consistency and presentation. This is done on an annual basis in line with the policy of the relevant partner university. Staff from the learning resource centre provide relevant links to electronic books and journals. The College is planning to replicate the format of a very successful assessment moderation day by holding a similar event to support programme teams in the development of online materials and identify and share examples of good practice. The team considers it desirable for the College to further encourage the moves already under way towards greater virtual learning environment engagement and capability among staff.

47 Comprehensive and easily accessible student and module handbooks are regularly reviewed and updated. As with module handbooks, the information contained in the student handbook is developed initially at the approval stage of the programme. This helps ensure that the University of Plymouth has confidence in the information given to students. In the case of University of Plymouth programmes, the handbook is based on a template developed by the University. All handbooks are reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the all the information remains current and up to date. Handbooks are held centrally at the College and checked to ensure any recent changes to the programmes are included. When publication is complete, a copy is submitted to the universities for approval. During the Developmental engagement the effective central coordination of student handbooks was identified as good practice and this was still the case during the Summative review.

48 The College has well-established procedures to ensure that individual module handbooks are kept up to date in terms of the content and associated assessment requirements. The handbooks are based upon a template developed by the College. The responsibility for monitoring the content and quality of the module handbooks lies with the relevant programme leaders. In addition, an annual review of the handbooks is carried out through assessment moderation panels. The panels meet during the March and July staff development events and target specific courses to review assessment practices. The student diary is also updated annually.

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

49 The Developmental engagement in assessment at the College took place in May 2010. The review team included two institutional nominees. The lines of enquiry agreed with the College were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: How does the College demonstrate that the external examiner process works effectively and that internal quality processes ensure quality improvement and enhance student learning?

Line of enquiry 2: How does the College ensure that student learning opportunities are enhanced by the variety of assignments and the quality of feedback?

Line of enquiry 3: How clear is the information given to students about assessment and good practice in assessment?

50 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. External examiner arrangements are well developed and effective, and annual monitoring is well coordinated. There are innovative opportunities for staff development and scholarly activity is actively encouraged. Assessment methods are varied and related to employer needs. The College effectively coordinates and monitors student and module handbooks to ensure accurate information, and electronic access to assessment information is readily available.

51 The Developmental engagement team suggested that it would be desirable for the College to enable the sharing of good practice among higher education staff.

D Foundation Degrees

52 There are 29 Foundation Degrees currently running at the College. All but one are validated by the University of Plymouth. All the Foundation Degrees are offered over two years, some on a full-time basis and others on both a full and part-time basis. One Foundation Degree, in Education and Training, is validated by the University of Greenwich. Another two Foundation Degrees are currently under development and, if approved, will be introduced in 2012. These will be Foundation Degrees in Bioscience, and Information Technology and Project Management.

53 The first Foundation Degree to be approved by the University of Plymouth was the Foundation Degree in Law in 2002. This was followed by a further 11 in 2003, including Foundation Degrees in Dance and in Archaeology. Since then there has been considerable growth in Foundation Degree provision at the College. All the Foundation Degrees are offered from the College's Truro site, with the exception of the Foundation Degree in Salon and Spa Management which is offered at the recently refurbished Penwith campus.

54 The College works effectively with both the University of Plymouth and, in the case of the Foundation Degree in Education and Training, the University of Greenwich, to deliver, monitor and evaluate their Foundation Degrees. There are well-established systems in place for the development, approval and quality assurance of its provision. All conclusions of the report apply to Foundation Degree provision.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

55 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Truro and Penwith College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, the University of Plymouth and the University of Greenwich.

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

- well-defined and effective processes and practices support the delivery of high quality provision (paragraph 12)
- the successful operation of an internal self-assessment process complements the College's close adherence to the University of Plymouth Colleges quality processes (paragraph 14)
- effective initiatives ensure that new and existing staff are fully briefed and updated about the Academic Infrastructure and about College quality processes (paragraph 17)
- comprehensive and effective arrangements support the provision of high quality staff development (paragraph 22)
- a student-centred learning environment is provided, facilitated by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff who pay close attention to individual learning needs (paragraph 28)
- effective student support is provided throughout the College's higher education programmes (paragraph 30)
- there is an effective student representative system and excellent arrangements for the provision of general feedback and updating information to students (paragraph 31)
- there is a commendable level of commitment to the encouragement and development of scholarly activity and to the dissemination of its outcomes among staff (paragraph 33)
- an excellent range of academic and administrative resources on the College virtual learning environment is valued by students and is regularly updated (paragraph 40)
- coherent and comprehensive information is provided to facilitate entry onto higher education programmes (paragraph 42)
- comprehensive and easily accessible student and module handbooks are regularly reviewed and updated (paragraph 47).

57 The team also makes one recommendation for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

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

- further encourage the moves already under way towards greater virtual learning environment engagement and capability among staff (paragraph 46).

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

Integrated quality and enhancement review

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

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

Truro and Penwith College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2011						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Developmental engagement, the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> well-defined and effective processes and practices support the delivery of high quality provision (paragraph 12) 	Maintain currency by ensuring effective communication with validating body	January 2012	HE Coordinator	Responsibility for success is maintained - Truro and Penwith College	HE Team Leader and SMT	Institutional Review by University of Plymouth to identify continued good practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the successful operation of an internal self-assessment process complements the College's close adherence to the University of Plymouth Colleges quality processes (paragraph 14) 	Maintain effective internal self-assessment to enhance the University of Plymouth quality processes	January 2012	HE Management Team	Clear actions from the self-assessment process identified through programme level actions	HE Team Leader and SMT	Actions from annual programme monitoring to inform main college-wide action plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective initiatives ensure that new and existing staff are fully briefed and updated about the Academic Infrastructure and about College quality processes (paragraph 17) 	Continue to update all staff on any changes to the Academic Infrastructure and College quality processes through regular staff development	July 2012	HE Management Team	Number of staff attending staff development workshops	HE Team Leader	Evaluation of workshops via a feedback sheet, results reported to HE Team Leader and College Staff Development Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive and effective arrangements support the provision of high quality staff development (paragraph 22) 	Maintain the inclusion of targeted higher education workshops at the College staff development days	July 2011	HE Management Team	Number of staff attending staff development workshops	HE Team Leader	Evaluation of workshops via a feedback sheet, results reported to HE Team Leader and College Staff Development Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a student-centred learning environment is provided, facilitated by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff who pay close attention to individual learning needs 	Maintain student-centred learning as the focus for teaching and learning by encouraging new and innovative practices to be developed at programme level	July 2012	Programme leaders	New teaching and learning activities embedded in teaching practice	Programme leaders	Evaluation in the feedback from students on module reviews and SPQs

(paragraph 28)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective student support is provided throughout the College's higher education programmes (paragraph 30) 	Maintain student support services by providing opportunities for staff to attend appropriate external staff development to keep up to date	July 2012	HE student support staff	A clear understanding of new processes and policies that are needed to support students	HE Coordinator and HE Team Leader	Evaluation of student feedback at annual programme monitoring and through student rep meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is an effective student representative system and excellent arrangements for the provision of general feedback and updating information to students (paragraph 31) 	Maintain and enhance the current student rep system	July 2012	Student Support Officer	The implementation of new activities as requested by students	HE Deputy Team Leader	Through the minutes of the student rep meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a commendable level of commitment to the encouragement and development of scholarly activity and to the 	Maintain and enhance opportunities for staff to become involved in scholarly activity	July 2012	Deputy Team Leader Higher Education	Publication of a second edition of Seeker	HE Team Leader	Review of the dissemination of Seeker and its usefulness as an academic journal

<p>dissemination of its outcomes among staff (paragraph 33)</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an excellent range of academic and administrative resources on the College virtual learning environment is valued by students and is regularly updated (paragraph 40) 	<p>Maintain and enhance the amount of material available on Moodle to support students in their academic studies</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>All programme leaders</p>	<p>The development of more materials on the virtual learning environment</p>	<p>HE Development Leader</p>	<p>Review of new materials by the HE Development Leader</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coherent and comprehensive information is provided to facilitate entry onto higher education programmes (paragraph 42) 	<p>Maintain and enhance the current procedures for providing students with clear entry information</p>	<p>July 2012</p>	<p>HE Marketing Assistant</p>	<p>The development of information for new students</p>	<p>HE Coordinator</p>	<p>Review of an induction questionnaire to make sure students are happy with level of information provided</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive and easily accessible student and module handbooks are 	<p>Maintain and enhance the process for regularly checking and updating student and module handbooks by continually identifying</p>	<p>July 2012</p>	<p>HE Administrator</p>	<p>Regularly update centrally held documents</p>	<p>HE Coordinator and HE Team Leader</p>	<p>Review of the centrally held student handbooks and module handbooks</p>

regularly reviewed and updated (paragraph 47).	and sharing good practice					
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"> further encourage the moves already under way towards greater virtual learning environment engagement and capability among staff (paragraph 46). 	<p>Develop a peer review process to enable the moderation and review of virtual learning sites</p> <p>This process can help feedback information to staff to help improve own sites and share good practice</p>	July 2012	All programme leaders	Identification of good practice virtual learning sites	HE Team Leader and Director of Quality and Director of Studies	The evaluation will be the individual reviews of virtual learning sites

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