

## **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

### **Summative review**

April 2010

Westminster Kingsway College

SR82/2009

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2010

ISBN 978 1 84979 161 8

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

## **Preface**

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

## **Purpose of IQER**

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

## **The IQER process**

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

## **Developmental engagement**

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

## Summative review

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

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

## Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

## Outcomes of IQER

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

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

Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

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 Westminster Kingsway College carried out in April 2010

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

### Good practice

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

- the structure for the management of higher education academic standards and the strategic nature of the Higher Education Board
- the clear articulation of and focus on the whole quality improvement process and the robust systems of self-assessment and validation by strong and effective leadership underpinned by an evaluative and evidence-based approach
- the direct link between the allocation of staff development resources and the annual self-assessment process
- the development of personal development planning and the extent of student and staff engagement with this
- the range and quality of learning resources and the extent to which the College has deployed innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in the continued engagement and development of the virtual learning environment in the hospitality programmes and the use of cutting edge food technology products in culinary arts.

### 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:

- publish formal written terms of reference for the Higher Education Board
- continue to develop and implement its Learner Involvement Strategy
- discuss with awarding bodies a method for recording formally that external examiners have been given an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of actions taken as a result of previous reports
- review the quality and usefulness of pre-course information that potential students receive through UCAS access routes
- develop a procedure for checking and monitoring the accuracy of published materials.

## 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 Westminster Kingsway 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 Birkbeck College, City University, Leeds Metropolitan University, London South Bank University, and the University of Westminster. The review was carried out by Mr David Fallows, Mr Gary Hargreaves and Dr Haley Randle (reviewers), and Mr Grant Horsburgh (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*, published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, current students, former students and employers, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagements in assessment and personal development planning. A summary of findings from both Developmental engagements is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice 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 Westminster Kingsway College is a further education college and the largest provider of post-16 education in central London. The College's mission is summarised as 'Equipping employers; Enabling communities; Empowering individuals; Educating for life'. The College operates in an extremely competitive environment with over 41 higher education institutions and 34 further education colleges offering higher education provision in London. Following competitor analysis and building on core competences, the College has focused its higher education provision in the hospitality and tourism; business; public administration and health sectors. The College works closely with its higher education partners to validate and deliver higher education programmes with support from the Central London Aimhigher partnership and the Linking London Lifelong Learning Network.

5 At the time of the review the College has 355 higher education students, of which 335 are studying higher education programmes on a full-time basis. The College offers the following programmes in partnership with the awarding bodies listed:

### Birkbeck College

- FD Pharmacy Practice, Science and Management (students are registered at Birkbeck, University of London who award the degree)

### **City University**

- City Engineering (foundation year, full-time): 38 students (delivered under a franchise arrangement, therefore no full-time equivalent student number)
- City Maths (foundation year, full-time): 18 students (delivered under a franchise arrangement, therefore no full-time equivalent student number)

### **Leeds Metropolitan University**

- BA (Hons) Hospitality with Business (full-time): 16 students (15 full-time equivalent plus 1 overseas student)
- BA (Hons) Hospitality with Business (part-time): 7 students (3.5 full-time equivalent)
- BA (Hons) Tourism with Business (full-time): 8 students (8 full-time equivalent)

### **London South Bank University**

- FD Accountancy (part-time): 18 students (delivered under a franchise arrangement therefore no full-time equivalent student number)
- FD Business (full-time): 35 students (34 full-time equivalent plus 1 overseas student)
- FD Business (part-time): 26 students (13 full-time equivalent)
- FD Public Administration (day release): 19 students (19 full-time equivalent)
- FD Culinary Arts (full-time) (day release): 18 students (18 full-time equivalent)

### **University of Westminster**

- FD Hospitality Management (Army and Royal Air Force) (full-time) (day release): 7 students (7 full-time equivalent)
- FD Hospitality Management (full-time) (day release): 60 students (60 full-time equivalent)
- FD Hospitality Management (full-time): 40 students (39 full-time equivalent plus 1 overseas student)
- FD Travel and Tourism (full-time): 41 students (40 full-time equivalent plus 1 overseas student)
- FD Travel and Tourism (part-time): 4 students (2 full-time equivalent).

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

6 The partnership agreements in place for City University, Leeds Metropolitan University, London South Bank University and the University of Westminster all confirm that the awarding institution takes responsibility for the academic standard of their awards, including programme approval and monitoring. The College has devolved responsibility for course delivery, student support and administration, student information and teaching staff appointments. It works closely with link tutors from all its awarding bodies in the operational management of the programmes. Appropriate articulation agreements are in place for the progression of Foundation Degree students to relevant bachelor's degrees



with honours at each awarding partner. The partnership agreements in place with Birkbeck indicate that College staff provide teaching on the Foundation Degree and provide access to students for recruitment purposes to the University of London. Birkbeck retains full responsibility for all aspects of the student learning experience and receive all of the funding. The College aims to develop its partnerships so as to secure support for quality assurance, student progression and students' access to learning resources and to welfare and guidance support. Four awarding partners participated fully in the development of the self-evaluation and during the review visit and provided evidence to indicate that they value their partnerships with the College.

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

7 The College is currently exploring a number of developments within the context of its Higher Education Strategy 2009-2012. These include: working with awarding partners in order to offer accredited units or modules within programmes of workforce development commissioned by employers; increasing the number of students recruited to higher education programmes by applying to HEFCE for further funding and additional student numbers or working with employers to recruit co-funded higher education students; and, designing or re-designing higher education programmes within modular credit frameworks to provide choice and flexibility for students.

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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team and a written submission was included as part of the self-evaluation package. The College Head of Quality invited higher education student class representatives to a meeting on 19 January 2010 to discuss the development of the student written submission. Twelve student representatives attended. During the meeting the summaries of the National Student Survey 2009, and feedback from higher education students in the College surveys conducted in March and October 2009 were reviewed. The outcome of this review and the input from student representatives in attendance at the meeting were written to form the students' written submission. The summary produced proved helpful to reviewers who found that the views expressed were consistent with those obtained in their meeting with current and former students.

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

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

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

9 The College has made effective use of the outcomes of the two Development engagements to inform the updating of its higher education strategy. This includes addressing the action plan recommendation identified during the first Developmental engagement to ensure consistent application of quality procedures across higher education provision. The College has recently revised management responsibilities for the assurance of higher education academic standards. A Higher Education Board has been formed to ensure college-wide representation and to facilitate the operational and strategic development of

higher education. More informally, the higher education management system actively encourages discussion of processes relating to the management of standards. Outputs from the Higher Education Board are approved by the College Executive Team which is led by the Principal and ratified by the College governors' Quality and Standards Committee.

10 While the team found the structure for the management of higher education academic standards and the strategic nature of the Higher Education Board in particular to be a feature of good practice, at the time of the visit the terms of reference for the Board had not been formally published. However, staff were fully aware of its terms of reference which have been derived from the former Higher Education Forum. As a means of further securing the academic standards of its higher education provision it is desirable that formal written terms of reference for the Higher Education Board are published.

11 The College operates a rigorous self-assessment process, resulting in the development of quality improvement plans. Actions identified in curriculum team, department and College self-assessment reports are monitored by programme, quality and senior management staff working in collaboration. External examiner reports are used effectively to identify actions necessary to maintain, or further improve, academic standards.

12 Student feedback is an important characteristic of the College's management of higher education standards. It is obtained through twice-yearly questionnaires. Students are also invited to attend programme team meetings. However, part-time students find it difficult to attend. While it is apparent that an effective informal feedback mechanism exists at programme level, a similarly effective formal mechanism does not. College recognition of these shortcomings has prompted the development of a Learner Involvement Strategy in order to improve the effectiveness of the contribution of student feedback in the management of higher education academic standards.

13 Employers are involved in the development and delivery of higher education programmes but do not contribute to the summative assessment process. However, their involvement in the provision of formative feedback is valuable to the student learning experience. The well-developed interaction noted during both Developmental engagements between the College and employers has continued and the team found this relationship to be mutually beneficial.

14 There is a clear line of reporting within the College. Annual programme review is reported to awarding bodies and informs their quality monitoring procedures. College responses to external examiner reports are made formally by the awarding body. The relevant head of department sees and approves all responses, although the team found that there was no formal record available of external examiner endorsement of the appropriateness of the responses. As a means of further securing the academic standard of its higher education provision it would be desirable to discuss with awarding bodies a method for recording formally that external examiners have been given an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of actions taken as a result of previous reports.

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

15 All awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that their policies and procedures meet the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure. Due consideration of the Academic Infrastructure is mandatory to fulfil awarding body approval and monitoring requirements. Employers supporting the delivery of programmes have an implicit understanding of the elements of the Academic Infrastructure, and refer to 'qualification frameworks' in addition to requirements in terms of industry specific competencies.

**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?**

16 The College's rigorous self-assessment review and quality improvement processes, and the curriculum level self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans are fundamental to awarding partner annual monitoring processes. Programme and curriculum team leaders are responsible for the management of higher education programmes and these are monitored within the College through the review and self-assessment processes and by awarding body link tutors. Academic standards are assured by means of awarding body course boards. Boards are informed by module or unit evaluation questionnaires, reports from the College's self-assessment review process and input from external examiners who are appointed by the awarding body.

17 All programme and curriculum teams recognise the vital liaison role undertaken by the link tutor appointed by each awarding body. Link tutors are generally subject specialists who act as a conduit for the relay of academic information between the awarding body, the programme team and students. Link tutors have a specific role to ensure that concerns identified by external examiners are addressed and remedial actions implemented as appropriate.

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

18 All higher education staff undertake five days of individual professional development during the academic year either at the College, an awarding body or at an external workplace. Events attended in the current academic year have focused on pedagogic and subject-specific matters. Higher education planning and development days are held each term. Recent agendas have included themes related to the development of the virtual learning environment in the teaching, learning and assessment of programmes; embedding of language and literacy, and the development of Developmental engagement action plans. These planning and development days provide an appropriate and effective forum for facilitating the sharing of good practice across the College's higher education provision.

19 Staff development planning is undertaken in curriculum teams through individual discussion as part of the appraisal system. Development needs are prioritised according to individual, programme, centre and College higher education priorities. Heads of department with responsibility for higher education provision are allocated funding based on the training needs identified in the departmental teaching and learning development plan and further support is provided by the College's Training and Development Department where necessary. The team found this direct link between the allocation of staff development resources and the annual self-assessment process to be a feature of good practice.

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

20 Responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for the programmes under review reflect those for managing the delivery of academic standards through both the strategic and operational groups. The development of a comprehensive higher education strategy provides a framework for the effective management of the quality of the students' learning in the context of the particular requirements for study at FHEQ levels 4, 5 and 6.

21 The higher education curriculum is managed by curriculum team leaders. In practice, the management of the higher education provision involves a collaborative working relationship between the curriculum, programme leaders and teaching teams with the input of the relevant university link tutor. The teaching teams are small, well established and meet frequently enabling very good opportunities to discuss issues and effect enhancements. During the review awarding body representatives affirmed their confidence in the quality of the provision at the College.

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

22 Each programme has an operational agreement with the relevant awarding body that defines the expectations for the quality of learning opportunities. These relate to resource provision for the day-to-day running of the programmes, referring in particular to any resources committed through validation or subsequent programme review. Continual dialogue with awarding bodies on the quality of learning opportunities is sustained through the annual curriculum team self-assessment processes. The programme annual review process, in conjunction with external examiner reports, enable the awarding bodies to have confidence in the quality of the students' learning experiences.

23 The College has substantial delegated responsibility for the delivery and quality assurance of learning opportunities. All awarding bodies assure themselves of the quality of the College staff who teach on their programmes through consideration of their qualifications and experience at validation and subsequent review. Scrutiny of staff *curricula vitae* indicates a highly-qualified teaching staff, some with sector-leading professional experience. Students appreciate the currency of the knowledge of subject staff and the impact of their industrial expertise on their learning experience.

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

24 In addition to the appropriate application of the Academic Infrastructure to programme design and implementation noted in paragraph 15, the continuing development of a specifically higher education focused learning and teaching strategy has been strongly informed by the precepts of the *Code of practice*. The College has produced a helpful guide that describes how its provision articulates with the Academic Infrastructure. The defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees are particularly significant in the learning and teaching strategy. The team found that all aspects of the provision were well aligned with the Academic Infrastructure which is well understood and applied by staff.

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

25 A range of strategies is used to monitor and review the quality of learning opportunities including: analysis of retention, achievement and success data; monitoring of module performance; feedback from learners and employers; and College evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum team leaders conduct regular meetings with individual staff to review success and make any necessary changes to delivery. The student voice is an important focus for managing the quality of learning and teaching. Module and annual evaluations from students, combined with the strong informal links students have with the staff, serve to assure the College of the good quality of learning and teaching opportunities.

26 The team found abundant evidence of an enhancement-led quality culture at the College with a strong focus on enhancing student learning opportunities and standards. An example of the success of this culture is the improvement in student retention that has taken place over the last three years. The clear articulation of, and focus on, the whole quality improvement process and the robust systems of self-assessment and validation by strong and effective leadership underpinned by an evaluative and evidence-based approach are considered good practice.

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

27 Student support is one of the four core values of the College, and the College identifies the flexible delivery of support, well matched to the individual needs of its non-traditional students, as a key element of its provision. The College has also identified student support as a crucial component of its strategy to improve retention. Students confirmed the value of individual development planning for their progress and achievement on their programmes. The team confirmed the view expressed during the second Developmental engagement that the use made of the virtual learning environment to enable students to develop, review and update their personal development plans and to enable staff to deliver, support, monitor and assess students' progress with their plans is a continuing feature of good practice.

28 The College takes a proactive approach to provide individual students and client groups with learning packages to meet their needs. For example, the provision for the cohort of Army students has been adapted to enable students to continue to study while on active service overseas. The use of the virtual learning environment and associated information and learning technologies developed for this group of students has been evaluated positively by staff and students. It is beginning to be adopted for other groups and programmes within the hospitality, travel and tourism area to the benefit of students.

29 The College strives to be inclusive, with mechanisms to cater for students with differing information access needs. It provides comprehensive pastoral support catering for the needs of all higher education students. Welfare advisers offer advice on many issues on both a drop-in and appointment basis at all College centres. The Access and Mental Health team have a role in ensuring that different media are available including Braille, recordings and computer screen reading software for students who have sight impairments. This commitment to access is also reflected in the College widening participation agenda focusing on 'strong student support, language support and study skills'. The College has Matrix accreditation for its admissions, advice and careers service. Student support services undertake the same rigorous self-assessment processes as academic departments. Students confirmed that the College's support systems are comprehensive and valued. The team found the comprehensive pastoral support available to higher education students to be a feature of good practice.

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

30 As noted in paragraphs 18 and 19 the College has a strong commitment to staff development. Abatement is provided for those for whom the majority of their work is with higher education programmes to support the additional subject and professional updating and networking needed to teach at this level. Training and professional development needs are identified through the appraisal scheme and regular discussions with line managers.

31 Some staff development activities have been supported by successful funding bids to the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund; London South Bank University and the Linking London Lifelong Learning Network. Staff development has also taken place through activities and work shadowing with employers associated with the programmes. These have resulted in enhancements to the provision in the use of the virtual learning environment; study skills and further development of students' personal development plans. The team found that staff development across the provision was well targeted and effective in enhancing learning opportunities for students and for enabling some innovations, especially in the use of the virtual learning environment to support personal development planning and other aspects of student 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 Requirements for learning resources are set out at validation with the awarding bodies. Awarding bodies consider the continued appropriateness of resources as part of their annual monitoring of programmes. There is no separate resource allocation for higher education programmes, although the Higher Education Strategy makes clear the strong resource base for the provision. The adequacy of human and physical learning resources and the effectiveness of their utilisation is evaluated annually at curriculum team and department levels through the self-assessment process.

33 The team found evidence of the high quality of resources in all of the areas of the provision. Staff curricula vitae indicated good academic backgrounds with some highly-qualified staff. In the written submission and in meetings with reviewers students reported that there are good resources to support their learning with the availability and accessibility of information on the virtual learning environment being exceptional. Other evidence from the National Student Survey indicated a high degree of student satisfaction with information technology services; general library resources and services; and specialist rooms and equipment.

34 Both Developmental engagements identified the use of the College's virtual learning environment as good practice. Since then, the hospitality and business team has enhanced the virtual learning environment further to support interactive learning opportunities between staff and students. Smaller in scope, but important at a programme level, have been the opportunities granted by the sponsorship of cutting edge culinary products by an employer that have inspired staff and students to create innovative culinary products.

35 The range and quality of learning resources and the extent to which the College has deployed innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in the continued engagement and development of the virtual learning environment in the hospitality programmes, and the use of cutting edge food technology products in culinary arts, is a feature of good practice.

**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 College is responsible for pre-enrolment information including publicity, information given to enrolled students and public information relating to strategies and governance. Programme teams agree the content of public information materials, which are usually derived as a result of validation processes, with their awarding bodies. Other information including teaching and learning materials and assessment schemes are all subject to scrutiny through internal quality mechanisms.

37 The College website provides a number of published documents covering such areas as policies, governance, committees and Freedom of Information. The College also makes clear its general policy on privacy and the collection and distribution of data and this is monitored and controlled by the Marketing Department. Public information in this context is the responsibility of the College Secretary. Awarding bodies confirmed that they check all public information produced by the Marketing Department.

38 Teaching teams manage the monitoring of public information along with the Marketing Department, subject to checking by the Higher Education Board. The virtual learning environment information is also managed at teaching team level, with department-led quality checks to monitor and manage the accuracy of assessment information. Learner Advice and Support Services information is checked prior to publication against benchmarks stipulated by Matrix accreditation requirements.

39 Students were able to access information about their potential programmes of study from a range of sources including UCAS, the College website and through personal recommendation. Students indicated concern over the quality and usefulness of pre-course information and the availability of materials and more specifically that programme details were limited, particularly for those who came through UCAS. However, once students had attended enrolment and induction the course was fully explained as the resulting information provided them with accurate information of the learning activities and requirements of study on their programmes. Discussions with staff indicated that steps were being taken to address this matter. As a means of further enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities offered to its students it would be desirable to review the quality and usefulness of pre-course information that potential students receive through UCAS access routes.

#### **What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing? How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?**

40 Staff believe that there are clear and effective mechanisms for checking the accuracy of published materials. Responsibility for the accuracy and effectiveness of public information is largely controlled by programme teams at department level. The Marketing Department provides key dates and action points for the publication of the higher education access guide. However, at the time of the visit there was no clear evidence of a formal strategy or written operational procedures for checking the accuracy of published materials.

Similarly, the mechanisms for ensuring that the virtual learning environment and the College website contain accurate information are not subject to systematic audit processes. Teaching staff are able to upload teaching materials to the virtual learning environment and these are also monitored at departmental level. Materials used by programme teams are regularly monitored by the awarding bodies and external examiners. As a means of further assuring the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing, it would be desirable for the College to develop a procedure for checking and monitoring the accuracy of published materials.

**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.**

## **C1 Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment (May 2008)**

41 The lines of enquiry for the first Developmental engagement agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit were:

**Line of enquiry 1:** The quality of feedback to students and the role of the virtual learning environment in this

**Line of enquiry 2:** The quality of work-based and/or work-related assessment, especially in Foundation Degrees

**Line of enquiry 3:** The range and variety of assessment methods and their match to the learning outcomes within programme specifications.

42 In the course of the Developmental engagement, the team identified several areas of **good practice**. The virtual learning environment plays an increasingly effective role in the delivery and submission of assessment, the provision of online assessment feedback and for providing students with module and programme information. Students are provided with a range and variety of effective vocationally-relevant formative and summative assessment methods informed by employers and practitioners. The assessment process is underpinned by effective and robust quality procedures that are well embedded across all subject areas and recognised by awarding body partners and external examiners as providing a quality assessment framework that effectively supports the management of the College's higher education provision. The significant contribution to the students' learning experience provided by the nature and the extent of employer and practitioner engagement in the delivery and support of the programmes. The effective support provided to students to encourage their progression to further higher education study.

43 The College was **advised** to take action to continue to explore the provision of assessment feedback to students within an agreed timeframe and to ensure that this process is fully understood and consistently applied by all staff across the College. The College was similarly advised to continue their efforts to ensure that the approved College referencing policy and associated penalties are consistently applied across its entire higher education provision.

44 It was **desirable** for the College to continue to monitor and review assessment distribution and submission dates across all of its higher education programmes. It was also desirable to expand the development of its structured schemes of work that enable tutorials to inform personal development planning more formally to all higher education



programmes, and desirable to consider developing a College-wide strategy for engaging employers and practitioners which clearly defines the scope of and the terminology associated with work-based and work-related learning within the College.

## **C2 Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in personal development planning (May 2009)**

45 The second Developmental engagement examined aspects of personal development planning identified in the lines of enquiry. The Developmental engagement covered one of the College's awarding partners, the University of Westminster and three Foundation Degrees. The lines of enquiry for the Developmental engagement agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit are set out below and reflect a broad range of matters relating to personal development planning.

**Line of enquiry 1:** The effectiveness of programme planning, target setting, teaching and assessment strategies in supporting the students' personal development planning

**Line of enquiry 2:** Personal development planning is embraced by learners, teachers and tutors in order to enhance the achievement of intended learning outcomes and to meet the needs of the diverse student body

**Line of enquiry 3:** The information that is shared with students in relation to personal development planning is well managed, fit for purpose, relevant, accurate and timely.

46 In the course of the second Developmental engagement, the team identified several areas of **good practice**. The integration of personal development planning within the academic content of programmes and the support that this provides to students. The steps taken by the College to ensure that its diverse student body has equal access to the personal development planning process. The clear communication channels between subject and personal tutors to assist students in the development of their personal development plans. The use made of the virtual learning environment to enable students to develop, review and update their personal development plans and to enable staff to deliver, support, monitor and assess students' progress with their plans.

47 It was **desirable** for the College to continue to develop the personal development planning process to ensure that the recognised good practice embedded in year one provision is fully integrated into year two. It was also **desirable** for the College to continue to develop guidance on a timeframe for providing students with feedback on the development of their personal development plans through the virtual learning environment and ensure that this is consistently applied, and to continue to develop communication between subject and personal tutors to help to ensure that identified good practice in some programmes is consistently applied.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

48 As noted in paragraph 5, 11 of the 16 programmes included within the scope of this Summative review are Foundation Degrees. At the time of the review the College has 268 students studying on programmes leading to the award of a Foundation Degree. Foundation Degrees are awarded in partnership with London South Bank University in accountancy, business, public administration and culinary arts, and with the University of Westminster in hospitality management and travel and tourism. The College has worked closely with its awarding partners to develop the programmes particularly in hospitality and management and travel and tourism where the College has initiated and led the

development of the Foundation Degrees. The validation process of all Foundation Degrees has ensured that full account has been given to Academic Infrastructure and *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* requirements.

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

49 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Westminster Kingsway 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.

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

- the structure for the management of higher education academic standards and the strategic nature of the Higher Education Board (paragraph 10)
- the clear articulation of, and focus on, the whole quality improvement process and the robust systems of self-assessment and validation by strong and effective leadership underpinned by an evaluative and evidence-based approach (paragraphs 11, 16, 25 and 26)
- the direct link between the allocation of staff development resources and the annual self-assessment process (paragraph 19)
- the development of personal development planning and the extent of student and staff engagement with this (paragraph 27)
- the comprehensive pastoral support available to higher education students including the individual development planning and the provision of access to individual information needs (paragraphs 27 and 29)
- the range and quality of learning resources and the extent to which the College has deployed innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in the continued engagement and development of the virtual learning environment in the hospitality programmes and the use of cutting edge food technology products in culinary arts (paragraphs 33 and 34).

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

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

- to publish formal written terms of reference for the Higher Education Board (paragraph 10)
- to continue to develop and implement its Learner Involvement Strategy (paragraph 12)
- to discuss with awarding bodies a method for recording formally that external examiners have been given an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of actions taken as a result of previous reports (paragraph 14)

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

- to review the quality and usefulness of pre-course information that potential students receive through UCAS access routes (paragraph 39)
- to develop a procedure for checking and monitoring the accuracy of published materials (paragraph 40).

52 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 it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements, for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

53 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 it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreements, 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 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 the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the structure for the management of higher education academic standards and the strategic nature of the Higher Education Board (paragraph 10)</li> </ul>	<p>Teams to continue consistent application of quality &amp; link management processes to ensure maintenance of academic standards.</p> <p>HE Board to implement and review HE strategy as required</p>	<p>Throughout academic year.</p> <p>HE Board meeting dates</p>	<p>HE teams and HE Board</p>	<p>Full and consistent compliance with standards – reflected in college and collaborative partner quality reporting documentation</p>	<p>HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review and SAR processes</p>	<p>Annual course review and HE SAR</p>

Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010							
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the clear articulation of and focus on the whole quality improvement process and the robust systems of self-assessment and validation by strong and effective leadership underpinned by an evaluative and evidence-based approach (paragraphs 11, 16, 25 and 26)</li> </ul>	<p>Teams to continue consistent application of quality review and reporting processes to ensure robust self assessment</p>	<p>Throughout academic year and Quality Cycle key dates</p>	<p>HE teams and HE Board</p>	<p>Full and consistent compliance with and application of quality procedures and improvement planning. Improved student retention, achievement and satisfaction</p>	<p>HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review, QIP and SAR processes</p>	<p>Annual course review and HE SAR. Programme team meetings</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the direct link between the allocation of staff development resources and the annual self-assessment review process (paragraph 19)</li> </ul>	<p>Maintain monitoring and assessment of staff development resources and requirements through the appraisal and course review processes</p>	<p>Quality Cycle and Appraisal key dates</p>	<p>HE teams, HODs, Programme managers and T&amp;D</p>	<p>Teaching and learning supported by a knowledgeable and able teaching team delivering in the context of current practice Improved student retention and</p>	<p>HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review, QIP, SAR and appraisal processes</p>	<p>Annual course review and HE SAR. Student surveys and feedback</p>	

Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the development of personal development planning and the extent of student and staff engagement with this (paragraph 27)</li> </ul>	Liaison with T&D and external agencies and links where appropriate	Ongoing throughout academic year.	HE teams and personal tutors	<p>achievement and positive student feedback on quality of learning</p> <p>Improved demonstration of HE and PDP skills</p> <p>Improved student retention and achievement</p>	HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review and SAR processes	Annual course review and HE SAR. Student surveys and feedback

Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range and quality of learning resources and the extent to which the College has deployed innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in the continued engagement and development of the virtual learning environment in the hospitality programmes and the use of cutting edge food technology products in culinary arts (paragraphs 33 and 34).</li> </ul>	<p>Continue current good practice and monitor embedding of practice across all course teams and provision.</p> <p>Course teams to continue implementation and development of 'Teaching &amp; Learning Development Plans' and to extend peer work and support</p> <p>Share and develop practice through P&amp;D days</p>	<p>Quality Cycle, P&amp;D days and Appraisal key dates</p>	<p>HE teams, HODs, Programme managers and T&amp;D</p>	<p>Improved student retention, achievement, feedback and satisfaction</p>	<p>HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review and SAR processes</p>	<p>Annual course review and HE SAR. Student surveys and feedback</p> <p>Programme team meetings</p>

Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be <b>desired</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to publish formal written terms of reference for the Higher Education Board (paragraph 10)</li> </ul>	HE Board to produce and publish formal written terms of reference	December 2010	HE Board	Publication of formal written terms of reference	Senior Management Board and Board of Governors	HE SAR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to continue to develop and implement its Learner Involvement Strategy (paragraph 12)</li> </ul>	<p>Course teams to extend and monitor consistent opportunities for implementation of Learner Involvement Strategy.</p> <p>Identify and formalise the range of review meetings, feedback and survey opportunities -</p>	February 2011	HE teams, HODs, Programme managers and HE Board	Improved effectiveness of the contribution of student feedback in the management of higher education academic standards.	HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review and SAR processes	Annual course review and HE SAR. Student surveys and feedback



Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	and associated reporting mechanisms					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to discuss with awarding bodies a method for recording formally that external examiners have been given an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of actions taken as a result of previous reports (paragraph 14)</li> </ul>	Identify, with link tutors, a formal procedure for EEs to monitor and record commentary on course team responses to EE reports and requests for action	February 2011	HODs, Programme managers and Link Tutors	Formal record of EE commentary on course team responses to EE reports and requests for action	HE Board, HOD, and Quality teams through curriculum review and SAR processes	Annual course review and HE SAR. EE reports Programme team meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to review the quality and usefulness of pre-course information that potential students receive through UCAS access routes (paragraph 39)</li> </ul>	Programme managers and HOD to work with marketing colleagues to review quality of information available to potential students applying through UCAS access routes	September 2010	HODs, Programme managers and Marketing	Good quality, useful information meeting the needs of potential students applying through UCAS access routes	HE Board	HE SAR Student surveys and feedback

Westminster Kingsway College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to develop a procedure for checking and monitoring the accuracy of published materials (paragraph 40).</li> </ul>	<p>Marketing team to develop an auditable procedure for checking and monitoring the accuracy of published materials.</p> <p>HODs and programme managers to develop a procedure for checking and monitoring the accuracy of materials published on the VLE</p>	December 2010	HODs, Programme managers, Marketing and HE Board	Publication of systematic audit processes	HE Board	Annual course review and HE SAR. Student surveys and feedback

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Fax 01452 557070  
Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)