Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Yeovil College

December 2011

SR 020/11

Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

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

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

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

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

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

Executive summary

The Summative review of Yeovil College carried out in December 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:

- the College's initiative to roll out to all programmes the format of student unit evaluations and unit module reviews, originally provided by one awarding body, which provides a consistent approach to gaining student and staff feedback
- the College has built strong relationships with employers, supported by documents such as the Employer Guide and work placement handbooks, which contribute to enhancing the student learning experience.

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 **advisable** for the College to:

- effectively communicate information about progression routes and their availability at regular stages in students' programmes to ensure that students are kept fully informed, particularly when progression routes are uncertain.

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

- seek ways to improve the clarity of roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within quality procedures
- develop a systematic process to take a strategic, college-wide view of higher education staff development needs, to ensure continuing enhancement of the higher education provision
- continue to explore ways to share external examiner reports clearly and effectively with students in line with evolving sections of the *Code of practice*
- establish forums to share good practice on a more formal and frequent basis
- take steps to update the website to ensure it provides accurate and complete information that is consistent with information provided in other formats.

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 Yeovil 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 Bournemouth University, Edexcel, and the University of the West of England. The review was carried out by Professor Christopher Gale, Mr John Holloway, Mr Rob Mason (reviewers), and Dr Susan Hill (coordinator).

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

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

4   Yeovil College is a tertiary college serving its community in South Somerset and North and West Dorset. Its mission states that the College sees its role as supporting the development of social and economic prosperity for the whole community through excellent education and training. The College currently has a total of 4,504 students (2,191 full-time equivalents).

5   All higher education provision is delivered at the University Centre Yeovil, formed in 1998 as the Joint University Centre, which was a partnership of Bournemouth University, the University of Exeter and Yeovil College. The current building was purchased by Bournemouth University in 2003, when it was retitled the University Centre Yeovil. In 2011-12, there are 359 students studying HEFCE-funded courses validated by Bournemouth University, Edexcel, and the University of the West of England. There are 56 staff teaching on higher education programmes.

6   In 2011-12, the College offers the following higher education programmes. Full-time equivalent student numbers are given in brackets.

Bournemouth University

- FdA Business and Management, full-time (29)
- FdA Business and Management, part-time (27)
- FdSc Computing and Internet Technology, full-time (15)
- FdSc Computing and Internet Technology, part-time (15)
- FdA Early Years, part-time (49)
- FdSc Sports Development and Coaching, full-time (35)
- BA (Hons) English and History, full-time (24)

- BSc (Hons) Sustainable Graphics and Packaging, full-time top up (11)
- BSc (Hons) Sustainable Graphics, part-time top up (0.7)

Edexcel

- HNC/D Aerospace Engineering, part-time (29)
- HNC Electronic Engineering, part-time (15)
- HNC Mechanical Engineering, part-time (15)

University of the West of England

- Certificate in Education/Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Skills, part-time (8)
- FdA Creative Practices - Fine Art, part-time (11)
- FdA Creative Practices - Media Practice, full-time (19)
- FdSc Forensic Science, full-time (11)
- FdA Garden History and Heritage Horticulture, part-time (15)
- FdA Supported Learning, part-time (19)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   The College works in collaboration with three awarding bodies in the delivery and assurance of its higher education courses. There are written agreements with the two University partners and the Edexcel Standard Note. The College has a long-standing relationship with Bournemouth University, while the links with the University of the West of England date from 2008.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   In the last year, the College has seen a reduction in the number of higher education programmes offered and in the number of students, which reflects the current challenges facing the higher education sector. However, it was successful in launching a new Foundation Degree in Forensic Science, and the College is exploring a new partnership with Swansea Metropolitan University in relation to the development of a new BSc in Composite Engineering.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. In June 2011, a large group of students met as focus groups to discuss the higher education provision and respond to questions put to them by the Student Liaison Officer. A total of 210 students took part in the focus groups and their responses formed the basis of the written submission. Some of those who were not able to be involved in the original focus groups submitted a video of a focus group meeting. This information was helpful to the team. Students met reviewers during the review visit, and the coordinator at the preparatory meeting.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

10 Awarding bodies have ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the awards delivered by the College, while the College is responsible for the day-to-day management of these programmes in line with awarding body procedures. Executive responsibility for higher education quality issues lies with the Higher Education Quality Subgroup of the College's Senior Curriculum and Learning Group. This is a senior management group whose stated membership comprises the Vice Principal for Learning and Quality, Head of Quality Assurance and Improvement, the Director of Higher Education, and one senior representative from the relevant teaching areas. However, discussions with staff revealed that the membership has expanded to include programme leaders.

11 The subgroup assures quality compliance of all higher education programmes, monitors progress of actions identified by programme teams, and is able to respond to emerging higher education issues. It meets twice within the annual cycle and on each occasion it then meets separately with each higher education programme leader. The subgroup considers all external examiner reports, student feedback, programme retention, and achievement data. At an operational level, management responsibility lies with the faculty directors, curriculum quality managers, and the higher education programme leaders. These staff report to the Director of Higher Education, although the line management diagram provided to the team did not make this clear.

12 Although an appropriate range of quality and operation groups and individual staff roles was identified during the visit, there is a lack of clarity in the documentation produced by the College to describe how these roles, responsibilities and reporting lines operate across the annual cycle. The team considers it desirable that the College seeks ways to improve the clarity of roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within quality procedures.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13 The College has produced a staff handbook that informs its staff about the various aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. It is clear that College staff at all levels who have been involved in course development are fully aware of the relevant aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, and have been supported in this by the Director of Higher Education, who plays a significant role in the sharing of critical information and effective practice. Local employers are involved in the development of new courses, as required by the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. For example, following discussions with owners and managers of regional heritage gardens, College staff identified a need for a Foundation Degree in Garden History. In general ways, knowledge of the Academic Infrastructure informed the development of the Higher Education Curriculum Quality Managers' Checklist and also the Edexcel assessment brief template.

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

14   Annual programme reviews consider information gathered from students, external examiners and course statistics. The reviews are evaluative, evidence-based, and produced to a standard template that has been applied across the College since 2008. The College has designed common templates and procedures to ensure uniformity of approach across all programmes, irrespective of the awarding body, and higher education programme team meetings also operate to standard agendas. This year the College has introduced a quality checklist for the Curriculum Quality Managers to assure process and procedural compliance. Once fully embedded, the checklist should enhance consistency across curriculum areas.

15   All programmes have a higher education quality folder on the College's shared drive where the programme review and supporting documents and data are stored. This folder includes external examiner reports, together with the College's responses, minutes of programme team meetings, statistics, and Quality Improvement Plans. This aids transparency and is accessible to awarding body link tutors.

16   Programme teams meet formally at least three times a year and allow staff to focus on quality issues, strengths and areas for improvement. As well as staff opinion, they review performance data, student feedback and external examiner reports. Minutes of these meetings are retained in course files, uploaded onto the higher education quality shared drive, and are copied to the relevant faculty director. The College plans to publish these minutes on the virtual learning environment in future, in order that all students have access to records of issues raised and actions taken.

17   Unit monitoring reports, completed by unit tutors, inform the final programme team meeting of the year. These reports were originally introduced by one of the awarding bodies but were identified as good practice within the College and introduced for all units and modules, irrespective of the awarding body, to ensure consistency across the provision. Unit monitoring reports contribute to each programme's Quality Improvement Plan, which is a key aspect of the annual Higher Education Programme Review. The mid- year Quality Improvement Plan update is used effectively to inform the review and business planning processes.

18   In addition to programme team meetings, student opinion is gathered in a variety of ways, including the Student Induction Survey, actions communicated in Quality Action Plans, and student unit evaluations. As with the unit monitoring reports, student unit evaluations were required by one awarding body and are now used for units on all programmes, irrespective of the awarding body. The team considers that the College's initiative to roll out the format of student unit evaluations and unit module reviews across the provision provides a consistent approach to gaining student and staff feedback and is good practice.

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

19   Of the 56 staff employed by the College to deliver on higher education programmes in the current year, 27 have master's or PhD degrees or are studying for them. Of the 15 staff teaching on the final year of honours degree courses or on the Postgraduate Certificate in Education, 12 have master's or PhD degrees and one is working towards completing a master's award. The College financially supports staff in the achievement of higher awards following an application process that requires the applicant to identify how the proposed course of study will benefit the course and the College, as well as the individual.

Where applications are rejected, feedback is given and criteria for successful bids are also identified. The Higher Education Research Conference is used to disseminate the outcomes of staff research and all staff supported by the College present a paper at the conference. The event is held annually and is attended by most higher education staff.

20   While the College clearly supports staff to engage in research and scholarly activity, it relies on individual staff seeking opportunities and applying for them. The College would benefit from taking a more proactive approach in identifying the goals that the College is moving towards in its higher education provision, and the staff development that will be needed to achieve them. The team considers it desirable that the College develops a systematic process to take a strategic, college-wide view of higher education staff development needs to ensure continuing enhancement of the higher education provision.

> **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?

21   Responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities are as stated in paragraphs 10 and 11. Many of the operational aspects, such as checking documents and putting together assessment schedules, are dealt with by the Higher Education Programmes Administrator.

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   Mechanisms used by the College to ensure that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies are described in paragraphs 14 to 18.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

23   The team agreed that the College is taking appropriate account of the precepts of the *Code of practice*, subject benchmark statements, and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Meetings with staff confirmed that lecturers teaching on higher education programmes are familiar with the Academic Infrastructure. Staff were able to show how relevant sections of the *Code of practice* had assisted in the development of new courses, for example the FdSc Forensic Science and the development of FdA Garden History and Heritage Horticulture.

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

24   The College has a lesson observation programme under which all teachers are observed. Observers are trained and part of a team, with a moderator who oversees their practice. The College uses specific software to enable observations to be tracked in terms of their timeliness and the quality of feedback and judgements. Moderators provide feedback to

observers using this software. This process has been fully embedded in the College for many years to meet the requirements of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Observations are scheduled by faculty directors to ensure that staff teaching on higher education programmes will be observed teaching higher education classes by colleagues with higher education experience. Those who teach higher and further education programmes will not necessarily be observed teaching higher education each year. There is also a system of peer observation: a member of staff teaching on higher education programmes asks another to observe his/her teaching and make comments on particular areas. The observation comments are then discussed, but not shared formally beyond these individuals.

25   The College has a well established team of five advanced practitioners, three of whom deliver on higher education programmes, and in 2010-11 seven subject learning coaches were introduced. Advanced practitioners support the work of teachers and learning support staff to enhance the experience of students. Subject learning coaches are assigned to staff with a view to further enhancing an already good performance in a particular area, such as use of the virtual learning environment or specific delivery techniques. The effectiveness of teaching and learning is also evaluated effectively through the use of student unit evaluations.

26   The College assessment procedures describe the essential elements of good feedback and require that feedback is provided to students within three working weeks of the submission date. The feedback turnaround time is met by the majority of programmes and there has been improvement since the Developmental engagement. The majority of assessment feedback is of a high quality and helps students prepare for future assessments. A college-designed standardised assessment feedback sheet is used for all programmes.

27   The management of processes for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning is successful as evidenced by high success rates and positive external examiner reports, student feedback, and teaching observations. However, in relation to a recommendation of the Developmental engagement, the team found that external examiner reports are not yet regularly shared with students, and only a minority of students saw a summary of the reports. The team considers it desirable that the College continues to explore ways of sharing external examiner reports clearly and effectively with students, in line with evolving sections of the *Code of practice*.

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

28   All students are assigned a personal course tutor who meets with the students to support their learning and pastoral needs. Students are also offered diagnostic assessment, and those identified as having support needs are referred to the Higher Education Learning Advisor. This service is appreciated by students and it has been successful in supporting students with learning disabilities to progress and achieve. A series of drop-in workshops on study skills, such as referencing and plagiarism, are also arranged and there is a published programme of study skills available in the College's Student Handbook.

29   Students on full-time Foundation Degrees normally have a placement as part of their programme. Part-time students are normally in employment and this is used as their work placement. Full-time students receive a work-based learning handbook to support them and it is also disseminated to staff and employers. Links with employers are maintained through programme leaders who arrange the work placements. The College has built strong relationships with employers, supported by documents such as the Employer Guide and work placement handbooks, which contribute to enhancing the student learning experience. The team considers this a feature of good practice.

30   Students are able to raise issues through student voice meetings with the Higher Education Student Liaison Officer and the Director of Higher Education. Responses are published and updated as actions progress, so that students have an up to date picture of the actions taken. However, some students stated that they were unclear about progression routes to top-up degrees and felt that the College had not communicated the position clearly to them. There was particular concern among second-year students on the FdA Creative Practices - Fine Art programme, whose top-up degree has been withdrawn by the awarding body, and therefore they had limited time left to plan their future studies. Students on other programmes were or had been in similarly uncertain positions since, for example, the top-up degree in business had also been withdrawn. While the withdrawal of a top-up programme is a matter for the awarding body, the College has a responsibility to keep the student body informed of developments to resolve the problem. Staff explained that the College intended to wait until a solution became clear before informing students. The team considers it advisable for the College to effectively communicate information about progression routes and their availability at regular stages in students' programmes to ensure that students are kept fully informed, particularly when progression routes are uncertain.

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

31   The College arranges an annual staff development day where staff are able to choose from a variety of activities. Staff are also able to apply for funds to support their attendance at short courses and one-day conferences. Only one member of current staff is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and the College may wish to encourage more members of staff to seek membership as part of a longer term strategy. Dissemination of good practice takes place at the Higher Education Research in Progress conference and informally. However, the team believes the College is missing opportunities for further enhancement and considers it desirable to establish forums to share good practice on a more formal and frequent basis.

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   There is a clear procedure for identifying learning resource requirements through the College's capital bid programme which is linked to business planning, Quality Improvement Plans, and programme developments. Faculty directors are responsible for this bidding process, working closely with curriculum quality managers, and successful bids are approved by senior management. Resources for new courses are identified during the validation and business planning processes. In addition, a Higher Education Learning Resources Advisor attends programme team meetings where resource requests can be made.

33   All texts and books required for modules are provided to students in either hard copy or electronic versions. A budget for the provision of higher education books and journals is set annually. In addition, students are able to remotely access e-books and journals through their partner universities' virtual learning environments, a facility they find very useful. The team conclude that resources are, overall, sufficient and used effectively.

34   The College has carried out significant development work on their student virtual learning environment since the Developmental engagement. Programme teams are responsible for managing materials and many use the resource effectively for teaching and learning through, for example, forums, chat rooms, and interactive tasks. All programme leaders post their handbooks and course information on the virtual learning environment.

35   All students are able to access the College's virtual learning environment in the College and remotely. This is especially helpful to part-time students and certain groups working overseas, for example, students on HNC/D Aerospace Engineering employed by the Ministry of Defence. In addition all students are able to access partner university resources. Staff documents, such as College policies and procedures, are also located on the virtual learning environment in an area that is currently under development.

> **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 publishing a wide range of information to inform current and prospective students and other interested parties. The partnership agreements between the College and its two university partners broadly identify how these responsibilities are delegated to ensure that public information is accurate and complete. In addition, supplementary documents and guidelines from each partner outline the responsibilities for other areas of public information, such as assessment and handbook content, and promotional and marketing literature.

37   The range of information includes a University Centre Yeovil Higher Education Prospectus, Higher Education Strategy, student handbooks and guides, assessment information, a range of policies and procedures, and promotional and marketing literature. The information in the prospectus is mirrored on the College website, allowing details to be accessed by a wider audience.

38   The College's University Centre Yeovil website, which is clearly linked from the Yeovil College main website, contains comprehensive details of its current higher education programmes and links to partner universities are clear. There is also helpful information about Foundation Degrees for employers in both the prospectus and on the website. The College also publishes a number of important generic documents on its website, which apply to both higher and further education. These include policies on equality and health and safety.

39   At the start of their programmes all students receive two handbooks in hard copy, while electronic versions are also available on the virtual learning environment. The first, a generic University Centre Yeovil student guide, gives extensive details of the College and its services including contacts, term dates, regulations, and other essential guidelines. The second, a programme handbook, contains programme-specific information including intended learning outcomes for each unit, programme specifications, assessment regulations, and schedules. There is some duplication of information in these two handbooks, such as details of financial information, mitigating circumstances, and assignment handing-in procedures. Programme specifications clearly indicate the key elements of the programmes and units. In addition, all students receive individual module guides. Some students following Bournemouth University awards receive an additional University handbook.

40   Students having a period of work experience in their programme receive a placement handbook, which provides them with helpful guidance and comprehensive information to enable them to meet work experience requirements. A companion guide is also given to employers, who comment that handbook information enables them to support students effectively.

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?

41   Procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of public information vary according to its type and format. The College uses standard templates and guidelines provided by partner universities to develop a minimum content and structure for assessment briefs, programme handbooks, and programme specifications. Handbooks and assessment documents for Edexcel programmes follow similar formats.

42   Programme handbooks are collated and produced by the College's Higher Education Administrator, using templates from the appropriate awarding body. There is a thorough process for ensuring the accuracy of information, including checks by programme leaders, the Director of Higher Education, and University link tutors. The process also ensures that electronic versions are accurate and match those in hard copy. The production of University Centre Yeovil generic course handbooks follows a similar process. Work placement handbooks follow awarding body guidelines. Content is checked and approved at validation or revalidation, and annually by programme leaders.

43   Website programme information is produced by curriculum quality managers and then checked by programme leaders before being forwarded to the College's marketing department for web publishing. Programme leaders subsequently check the website for accuracy. The website is also audited annually for accuracy, and discrepancies are followed up by the Director of Higher Education. Assessments and written exams are checked for errors and suitability by external examiners.

44   The team found some discrepancies between prospectus and website information. For example, on the FdA Business and Management and FdA Creative Practices - Media Practice, modules indicated in the prospectus do not match those on the website. Differences in some programme titles also exist; for example, the website information on the forensic science programme does not indicate that it is a Foundation Degree and the FdA Sustainable Graphics and Packaging Design does not appear in the prospectus.

45   The College stated that it was aware of these discrepancies which are due to a change in management of the website from the College to a private company, resulting in a delay in updating programme details. However, it remains the College's responsibility to maintain the accuracy and completeness of the information it publishes, and the team considers it desirable for the College to take steps to update the website to ensure it provides accurate and complete information that is consistent with information provided in other formats.

46   Checks of student information for content currency and accuracy on the virtual learning environment are carried out by programme leaders, overseen by the Director of Higher Education. Staff documents in electronic format are similarly checked by the respective document owners and overseen by the Director of Higher Education. Data for induction surveys noted that students considered that the information they received was accurate. This was confirmed at a meeting between students and the team.

47   The College has made good progress in addressing the recommendations relating to public information identified at the Developmental engagement in 2010. All students now receive an assessment schedule with their programme handbook at the start of their programme, and assessment information is effectively checked for accuracy and consistency.

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

48   The Developmental engagement took place in October 2010 and explored three lines of enquiry agreed with the College, which allowed all IQER core themes to be addressed. The lines of enquiry were as follows:

Line of enquiry 1: How effective is the College's management of assessment policies and practices in assuring academic standards?

Line of enquiry 2: How successfully does feedback to students on their work support and help students achieve intended learning outcomes?

Line of enquiry 3: To what extent does information about assessment enable students to plan, understand and manage their learning?

49   The team found two areas of good practice in relation to the introduction of the Higher Education Review, which further secures standards in assessment, and the Higher Education Research in Progress conference, which makes a positive contribution to developing a higher education ethos in the College.

50   The team also found areas which required further development, such as the working practices in some areas which needed to be reviewed so that the three-week turnaround time for the return of marked work and accompanying feedback can be adhered to; it was also considered advisable to establish a clear system to ensure that all students receive their assessment schedules at the beginning of the year. The team considered it desirable for the College to ensure that staff have a greater awareness of the Academic Infrastructure, that salient points of external examiner reports are shared with students, and that students are able to access feedback for work submitted at the end of an academic year more easily. The team further recommended that mechanisms for checking the accuracy and consistency of assessment information be established. The College has made reasonable progress in addressing the weaknesses identified in the recommendations.

D   Foundation Degrees

51   As of 2011-12, the College is delivering 11 part-time and/or full-time Foundation Degrees. Bournemouth University validates those in Sports Development and Coaching, Computing and Internet Technology, Early Years, Business and Management, Contemporary Fine Art, and Sustainable Graphics and Packaging Design. The University of the West of England validates the remaining Foundation Degrees in Garden History and

Heritage Horticulture, Supporting Learning, and Creative Practices (Media and Fine Art pathways). A Foundation Degree in Forensic Science, validated by the University of the West of England, recruited its first intake of students in 2011-12.

52   The College has made a strategic decision to work with employers in the joint development of Foundation Degrees in order to support employers' business development and growth, and employers have been actively involved in the development of the Foundation Degrees. The College works closely with its partners who provide effective support for the delivery of the programmes. Full-time Foundation Degree students obtain substantive work placements as part of their programme, and programme annual reports indicate that the majority move into work or continue to study using progression routes provided by the awarding partner.

53   All conclusions indicated in paragraphs 55 to 58 are equally relevant to the Foundation Degrees provided by the College.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

54   The team has identified a number of features of good practice in Yeovil 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, Bournemouth University, Edexcel and the University of the West of England.

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

- the College's initiative to roll out to all programmes the format of student unit evaluations and unit module reviews, originally provided by one awarding body, which provides a consistent approach to gaining student and staff feedback (paragraphs 17 and 18)
- the College has built strong relationships with employers, supported by documents such as the Employer Guide and work placement handbooks, which contribute to enhancing the student learning experience (paragraph 29).

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

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

- effectively communicate information about progression routes and their availability at regular stages in students' programmes to ensure that students are kept fully informed, particularly when progression routes are uncertain (paragraph 30).

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

- seek ways to improve the clarity of roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within quality procedures (paragraphs 10 to 12)
- develop a systematic process to take a strategic, college-wide view of higher education staff development needs, to ensure continuing enhancement of the higher education provision (paragraphs 20 and 31)
- continue to explore ways to share external examiner reports clearly and effectively with students in line with evolving sections of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 27)

- establish forums to share good practice on a more formal and frequent basis (paragraph 31)
- take steps to update the website to ensure it provides accurate and complete information that is consistent with information provided in other formats (paragraph 45).

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

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

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

Yeovil College action plan relating to the Summative review: December 2011						
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 **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the College's initiative to roll out to all programmes the format of student unit evaluations and unit module reviews, originally provided by one awarding body, which provides a consistent approach to gaining student and staff feedback (paragraphs 17 and 18)	College to continue to develop consistent student feedback processes to ensure that programme and unit level feedback is collected from all courses	December 2012	Processes; Higher education quality subgroup Implementation; Programme Leaders	Student feedback obtained from all programmes	Higher education quality subgroup	Higher education quality subgroup to evaluate as part of annual higher education reviews
• the College has built strong relationships with employers, supported by documents such as the Employer Guide and work placement handbooks, which contribute to enhancing the student learning experience (paragraph 29)	Identify areas within the College where there is best practice in support of employer engagement and implement in all areas	September 2012	Higher education quality subgroup	Appropriate documents available in all areas	Higher education quality subgroup	Higher education quality subgroup to evaluate as part of annual higher education reviews

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• communicate information about progression routes effectively at regular stages in students' programmes to ensure that students are fully informed, and particularly when progression routes are uncertain (paragraph 30)	Inform all students annually, via their course handbooks, of the progression routes available to them. Any changes imposed by higher education institutions which occur within the academic year will be communicated with students via the virtual learning environment	September 2012	Higher education Programme Leaders	All handbooks contain up to date progression information and supplemented by additional information on the virtual learning environment where changes occur in year	Higher Education Programme Administrator	Audit of programme handbooks and the virtual learning environment
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:						
• seek ways to improve the clarity of roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within quality procedures (paragraphs 10 to 12)	Review roles, responsibilities and reporting lines within quality procedures and produce revised documentation to ensure greater clarity	September 2012	Higher education quality subgroup	Quality documents are clear and accurately reflect roles and responsibilities	Higher education quality subgroup	Documents are approved via the standard college processes
• develop a systematic process to take a strategic, college-wide view of higher education staff	Use the annual appraisal process to identify and address specific staff development needs.	September 2012	Vice President for Learning and Quality, Vice President for Participation and	Coherent plan of higher education staff development produced annually	Vice President for Learning and Quality and Head of Human Resources	Staff development plan circulated to staff

development needs to ensure continuing enhancement of the higher education provision (paragraphs 20 and 31)	Staff should apply for staff development using the standard College forms which will be considered by the staff development group. The College will identify an appropriate Higher Education Academy-approved programme for further education staff delivering higher education programmes. Appropriate staff will be encouraged and supported to take this course through the appraisal process		Development, Director of higher education			
• continue to explore ways to share external examiner reports clearly and effectively with students in line with evolving sections of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 27)	External examiner reports to be published on the virtual learning environment for each programme	Reports uploaded annually within 4 weeks of receipt	Higher education Programme Leaders	All students able to access external examiner reports via virtual learning environment	Higher education quality subgroup	Audit of virtual learning environment
• establish forums to share good practice on a more formal and frequent basis (paragraph 31)	Establish twice yearly meetings of Programme Leaders	September 2012	Higher education quality subgroup	Good practice identified and shared at meetings	Higher education quality subgroup	Records of meetings held
• take steps to update the website to ensure it provides accurate and complete information	Faculty Directors to undertake scheduled accuracy checks to identify areas where	March 2012	Faculty Directors and higher education administration	All inaccuracies identified and corrected	Higher education quality subgroup	Annual audit of website

that is consistent with information provided in other formats (paragraph 45)	website is inaccurate and feedback to marketing		staff			