QAA

Review of higher education in further education colleges in Wales

Summative review handbook

2010

Contents

Introduction

Introduction

1 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision in further education colleges.

2 Review of higher education in colleges in Wales comprises both Developmental review and Summative review.

3 In June 2008, QAA conducted two Developmental reviews of directly-funded higher education in further education. The Developmental review process focuses on the effectiveness of a college's quality assurance processes and the extent to which each college, and its awarding body partners, are able to maintain standards and assure and enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities; this process is described in QAA's handbook: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/developmentalReview/handbook/Handbook2007.pdf.

4 The outcomes of the Developmental review process feed into the Summative review process. There are a number of differences between the Developmental and Summative review process. The Summative review process includes the following:

- formal judgements of confidence in the management of quality and standards
- published reports
- the introduction of student reviewers
- the introduction of public information as a core theme of the review
- the capacity to adapt the review method to reflect developments in higher education delivered in further education colleges

5 Colleges, including those that currently do not have any directly-funded provision, may be interested in applying for Foundation Degree awarding powers. They may be advised, but are not required, to have Developmental and Summative reviews before they apply for degree awarding powers.

6 This document provides a handbook for the Summative review process proposed for the review of higher education in further education colleges in Wales from 2010-11 (unless otherwise stated, 'review' in this document refers to 'summative review'). Any subsequent changes to the review method would be subject to consultation with all interested parties.

7 The main purpose of Summative review is to ensure that colleges with higher education provision manage the student learning experience and discharge their responsibilities for the academic standards and quality of their higher education provision.

8 The purpose of this handbook is to:

- state the aims and objectives of review
- describe the programmes of study that the review covers
- explain how the review works
- provide guidance to colleges and their awarding bodies preparing for, and taking part in, the review.

Section 1: Overview of Summative review

9   This section gives an overview of the Summative review process including its aims, objectives and scope.

10   Colleges do not currently have powers to award higher education qualifications. They work with awarding bodies, in particular one or more higher education institutions and/or Edexcel or other awarding bodies. The awarding bodies retain responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in their names and for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through collaborative arrangements is sufficient to enable students to achieve the academic standards required for their awards. The review will focus on how colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their agreements with awarding bodies. QAA reviews the responsibilities of higher education institution awarding bodies within these relationships through Institutional review or Audit.

Aims and objectives

11   Against this backdrop, the overarching **aims** of the review are to:

- support colleges in evaluating, maintaining and improving the management of their higher education, for the benefit of students, and within the context of their agreements with awarding bodies
- enable the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to discharge its statutory responsibility for ensuring that provision is made for assessing the quality of education provided by the institutions it funds
- provide public information.

12   To realise these aims, the review has three **objectives**:

- to engage institutions in a process of preparing a reflective statement and peer review focused on reviewing, evaluating and improving the management of their higher education provision
- to produce reports of these review activities
- to contribute to public information about the academic standards and quality of higher education in colleges, including the dissemination of good practice.

13   Other considerations which have informed the development of the review method are:

- the benefits to colleges of a review method which is comparable to QAA's Institutional reviews of HE institutions in terms of both method and judgements
- the benefits of producing review reports that can inform other types of external scrutiny, such as Institutional review by QAA and inspections by Estyn.

Scope

14   The review method described in this paper applies to higher education in colleges in Wales from 2010-11, whether directly or indirectly funded.

15   The review is concerned with taught programmes of study at levels 4 to 8 of the *Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales* (CQFW) (and corresponding to levels 4 to 8

of *The framework for Higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)), with the exception of teacher and tutor education programmes. It does not apply to research degrees at master's or doctoral levels (or level 8 of CQFW), nor to higher education programmes funded by other organisations.

	CQFW	Level	FHEQ
Doctoral degrees		8	8
Master's degrees, Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas		7	7
Bachelor's degrees with Honours, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas		6	6
Foundation degrees, ordinary (bachelor's) degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education and other higher diplomas, BTEC Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Higher National Certificates (HNCs)		5	5
Certificates of Higher Education		4	4

Table 1: relationship between CQFW and FHEQ

Core themes

The focus of the review teams' enquiries will be on the three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

- Academic standards refers to the level of achievement a student has to reach in order to achieve a particular award or qualification.

- Quality of learning opportunities considers the effectiveness of everything that is done or provided by the college to ensure that its students have the best possible opportunity to meet the stated outcomes of their programmes and the academic standards of the awards they are seeking.

- Public information is information about the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities that is in the public domain. In some cases the publication of this information is the responsibility of awarding bodies, carried out on the colleges' behalf; some will be provided by the college and published by external organisations like Unistats; and for some the college itself will be responsible for publication.

Academic Infrastructure

16   In considering colleges' management of higher education provision against the three core themes, teams will be guided by the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure. The Academic Infrastructure is a set of nationally agreed reference points that inform and support the effective management of academic standards and quality in higher education. It is published by QAA and applies to all United Kingdom (UK) higher education wherever this is delivered. It comprises the following:

- the FHEQ, which includes descriptions of the five levels of higher education qualifications (there is a separate FHEQ for Scotland)
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, which comprises 10 sections
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- award benchmark statements, such as the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*, which provides a description of the characteristics of a foundation degree
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study.

QAA's Welsh Language Scheme

17   In planning, conducting and reporting on the reviews in Wales, QAA is committed to treating Welsh and English equally. The full details of QAA's Welsh Language Scheme are available at: www.qaa.uk/aboutus/policy/welshlanguage/welshscheme.asp

Evaluation of the process

18   QAA will encourage institutions and reviewers to contribute to the evaluation of the review process by inviting comment on the reviews in which they have participated.

Complaints and representations

19   Complaints about the conduct of the review and representations about the judgements made by the review team are considered by QAA in accordance with the formal procedures published on its website.

Section 2: Role of awarding bodies

20   This section provides guidance for awarding bodies and colleges, including higher education institutions (HEIs) and Edexcel, on how awarding bodies should be involved in the Summative review.

21   QAA assumes no preferred model for HE provision (that is whether directly funded, franchised, and so on), other than that it expects that any model must permit the awarding body to assure itself about the standards and quality of its collaborative provision with colleges. Further details of a higher education institution's responsibilities for its awards can be found in the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning).* QAA reviews the responsibilities of HEIs, including their management of collaborative agreements with colleges, through Institutional review in Wales or Audit in England and Northern Ireland. In circumstances where colleges are part of consortia activity or regional partnerships, QAA will look at adapting the review method to best meet the circumstances within which each college is operating.

22   The review is concerned with the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their agreements with awarding bodies. Nevertheless, higher education institutions are important stakeholders in the review for several reasons:

- they are identified in the reports in association with those programmes in colleges that lead to their awards
- review reports will be used as a source of evidence for the review of higher education institutions
- judgements, conclusions, recommendations and action plans arising from review or audit are not addressed to the awarding body; however, they may have implications for their relationships with partner colleges.

23   To enable awarding bodies to manage effectively their responsibilities for their collaborative arrangements and interests around the review, QAA will ensure that all review correspondence between QAA and colleges is copied to the heads of the relevant awarding bodies and/or their nominated contacts. Such correspondence will include confirmation of the dates of any meetings or visits, provisional outcomes of visits and draft reports. In addition, QAA will encourage colleges to copy all correspondence they send to QAA to their awarding bodies.

Joint involvement of colleges and their HE partners in the review process

24   QAA encourages colleges and their higher education partners to consider jointly how the higher education institution will be involved in the review process and to do this, ideally as soon as possible after QAA has confirmed the dates of the visits. At this stage, or just after attendance at the briefing event (see para 27, p 6), the college and each partner higher education institution should send details of the arrangements it has agreed with its awarding body(ies), signed by representatives of each partner institution, to QAA. Colleges and awarding bodies may wish to refer to the suggested list of responsibilities (Annex B in this handbook) for guidance.

25   The participation of the awarding body should be considered against the maturity of the relationship between the partners, the extent of the responsibilities the awarding body has conferred on the college, and the accuracy and completeness of existing written evidence about these responsibilities.

26   As a minimum, QAA will ensure that awarding bodies are invited to the briefing event, which will provide further guidance on the role of awarding bodies. However, awarding bodies are not required to attend the briefing, or any subsequent events (and only where agreed with the college).

27   Examples of joint involvement may include:

- the college inviting its awarding body(ies) to the briefing, and, if it wishes, to attend the preparatory meeting and the review visit; these arrangements must have been agreed in advance by the organisations concerned
- awarding bodies supporting their partner colleges through the review, by assisting, for example, with the preparation of the reflective statement and by attending various review events, including review visits.

Role of Edexcel

28   There are two distinct forms of Edexcel higher education provision in colleges:

- Higher National Diplomas and Certificates that are approved directly by Edexcel, to which Edexcel appoints its own external examiners and which Edexcel certificates[1]. In the case of this provision, Edexcel is the awarding body
- Higher National Diplomas and Certificates that are offered under the Edexcel Licence Agreement. The licence allows higher education institutions to validate their own versions of HND/C programmes as institutional awards. Where such licensed Higher National provision is operated on a collaborative basis in a college, the higher education institution will appoint its own external examiners and provide the certificate. In the case of this provision, the higher education institution is the awarding body.

29   In order to assist colleges and review teams to understand the responsibilities that Edexcel confers on colleges, Edexcel has produced a short guidance note. QAA encourages colleges to draw on this guidance note in describing the policies and procedures they have adopted with respect to Edexcel awards in their reflective statements. Edexcel will provide further information to colleges about the contribution Edexcel officers will be able to make to the process.

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[1] Currently, these arrangements are being reviewed and may be subject to change.

Section 3: Role of students

30   This section provides guidance for colleges on the involvement of students in Summative review. It should be read in conjunction with the descriptions of the process in Section 5.

31   One of the review's aims is to support colleges in reviewing and improving the management of their higher education provision for the benefit of students. In considering colleges' HE provision, review teams need to draw on students' views about their experiences as learners. Students of the college are involved in the review process in two principal ways; the preparation of an optional student submission and in meetings with the team.

32   Before a visit, students will be invited to produce a student submission that may take a variety of different forms. The principle of the student submission, irrespective of its form, is that it should reflect the students' own views of their experiences as learners. Colleges have a valuable role to play in helping their students to prepare a submission, for example by sharing information with them. Student representatives are also advised to make use of guidance available from NUS Wales.

33   Teams will meet students during review visits as a matter of course. The arrangements for organising these meetings are covered in Section 5 of this handbook.

34   QAA will provide further guidance to colleges on the involvement of students during the briefing and training events in preparation for the review.

Section 4: Review teams

35   This section describes the composition of review teams for Summative review, criteria for the selection of reviewers, and facilities and arrangements for training.

36   The number of members of the review team is normally four, usually comprising the coordinator and up to three reviewers appointed by QAA (one of whom will normally be a student). A smaller team may be arranged where limited HE provision is being reviewed (usually fewer than 50 FTEs). The college is invited to nominate a facilitator to act as a single point of contact between the college and the team during the visit and beforehand. Each team will include at least one reviewer with experience of colleges in Wales. QAA will appoint a Review Support Officer to assume overall responsibility for the management of the review process providing guidance and support to the Coordinator as required.

37   Before a review visit, colleges will be informed of the proposed membership of the review team. Team members will have been asked to declare potential conflicts of interest, including: any institution members of teams have worked in, or for, during the last five years; any institution where they have undertaken validation, external examining or consultancy work during the last three years; any institution to which they have recently applied for a post; and any institution where a close relative may be working.

38   Reviewers will be selected by QAA from nominations made by educational and other appropriate institutions. Existing reviewers in Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland who meet the criteria for this review process may be invited to take part in the review.

39   The role description and person specification for reviewers is given in Annex H.

40   The role description and person specification for facilitators is also given in Annex H.

QAA support for reviewers and facilitators

41   QAA will provide training for reviewers and facilitators. QAA recognises that those selected to be review team members are drawn from a pool of highly qualified, experienced and well-respected personnel who already have skills in the core activities of review. In particular, they are selected for their highly developed and practised skills of written and oral communication, conduct of meetings, analysis and synthesis of a wide variety of information, and evaluation leading to sound judgement. Reviewer and facilitator training seeks to build on these skills to assist review team members and facilitators to apply them to a specific review process.

42   Each review team member and facilitator can expect QAA to:

- provide induction to the work of QAA, its mission, standards and values
- train him/her in the skills needed to carry out or facilitate review work; for review team members, this includes effective use of the electronic communications system set up to support reviews
- assist him/her to develop sufficient confidence to undertake or facilitate their first review
- provide training reference material to use after completion of their training

- provide the QAA documents they need to conduct the reviews to which they are assigned
- provide them with opportunities to contribute to the evaluation of the methods in which they have reviewed.

43   Assuming successful completion of training, QAA will:

- provide review team members with feedback on their performance on their first review and, where appropriate, guidance on their further development
- encourage each team member to engage in the further development of his/her role as reviewer
- take into account experience of prior QAA review training and experience when training review team members and facilitators to carry out QAA review methods that are new to them.

44   This approach should provide the following benefits:

- confidence that review team members and facilitators are properly trained to undertake review work professionally and confidently
- consistent application of each review method
- consistency in the messages about the review method that the review team members and facilitators take back to their institutions.

Section 5: Operational matters

45   The purpose of this section is to describe how Summative review operates. This is summarised in a timeline at Annex A.

The review method

46   A team comprising a review coordinator and three reviewers will normally make a visit over three days (Annex E (i) in handbook) to the institution and prepare a report containing their evaluation, judgements and recommendations and highlighting features of good practice. Where limited HE provision is being reviewed (usually fewer than 50 FTEs), a shorter visit and/or a lesser number of reviewers (Annex E (ii), page 30 in this handbook) or exceptionally a desk-based review may be negotiated (Annex E (iii), page 32 in this handbook).

47   Preparation for the review will cover consideration of:

*   briefing for key personnel at the college and the awarding body(ies)
*   training for key personnel at the college
*   preparation of the reflective statement by the college
*   the preparatory meeting
*   the review visit
*   the provisional judgement meeting
*   where necessary, a second review visit (para 69, Section 5, page 13)
*   the report published on QAA's website.

48   The review is primarily concerned with reviewing, and making evaluations and judgements about, the effectiveness of the college's procedures for the management of the student learning experience and their implementation.

Conducting the review

Initial preparation

49   QAA will notify the college 26 weeks beforehand of the proposed date, size and duration of the visit and ask the college to identify the facilitator.

Briefing

50   Around 18 weeks before the visit, QAA will hold a briefing to which the college, its awarding body(ies) and students will be invited. The purpose of the briefing is to prepare colleges, in particular, by providing further guidance on preparing the reflective statement, helping students to prepare a submission and confirming the timeline of the review, including the review visit. The briefing also allows college staff to meet the coordinator (note paragraphs 46-48 above about ways in which the colleges and their higher education partners can be jointly involved in the review process).

Reflective statement

51   The reflective statement is at the heart of Summative review. QAA is concerned that the reflective statement provides a sound basis for the review and will not be prescriptive about its format. The reflective statement is the prime source of information on which the

review team bases its lines of enquiry. Guidelines for the reflective statement are given in Annex C.

Student submission

52   Students have an opportunity to be part of the review process, mainly through the student submission. The submission by students is voluntary. QAA would, nevertheless, give every encouragement to student representatives to meet the review teams.

53   The review team is just as interested in hearing about matters that have gone well as those which have not gone quite so well. However, the document should represent the overall views of higher education students at the college. This document will then be sent to the review team 12 weeks before they visit to help them ask the right questions during the visit.

54   If students are interested in helping to prepare a submission, information about how to do this, and the support available, will be provided either by colleges and/or QAA via briefings. QAA will make appropriate documentation available.

Preparatory meeting

55   The preparatory meeting takes place with the college and student representatives nine weeks before the visit, to develop the agenda in the light of the reflective statement (and the student submission if there is one) and to identify further evidence for the college to make available during the visit. It is also an opportunity for the coordinator to clarify the process. An indicative programme for the preparatory meeting is given at Annex D. QAA will provide the coordinator with a compendium of publicly-available information to help him/her prepare for this meeting.

Review visits

56   The review method normally requires review teams to visit the college. The visit will take the form of discussions between the team, staff engaged with the management and delivery of HE programmes, and between the team and groups of students. Discussions will focus on specific questions derived from the team's analysis of the college's reflective statement and the student submission plus any additional evidence provided by the college.

57   The team may also carry out direct observation of some elements of provision, for example learning resources. When a team requires evidence of teaching quality, this will usually be obtained from a documentary study of procedures such as the college's observation of HE teaching, the analysis of student evaluation questionnaires (including the outcomes of National Student Survey (NSS)) and other arrangements for gathering feedback. Very exceptionally and after appropriate consultation and preparation, the team may carry out class observations. For example, if a college cannot demonstrate that it has an effective policy and procedure for assuring the quality of higher education teaching and learning.

58   Conclusions and judgements will not be presented at the end of the visit (see paragraph 66). At the final meeting with the college, the coordinator, together with members of the team will summarise the point in the process the team has reached and will request any further evidence and give a date by which it is needed.

Recommendations and judgements

59   One week after the review visit, the team will conduct a virtual meeting or, if necessary, will meet in person. They will agree summaries of evidence and make provisional judgements about the college's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of the college's procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information it is responsible for publishing. Normally within two weeks of the review visit, the coordinator will write to the college outlining these provisional judgements.

60   An important element of Summative review reports is **good practice**. In the review, good practice is defined as practice that the team regards as making a particularly positive contribution to the college's management of the student learning experience of higher education in the context of that college, and which is worthy of wider dissemination within and/or beyond the college.

61   Recommendations for improving the college's management of its higher education provision are categorised as **essential**, **advisable** or **desirable** according to priority.

- Essential recommendations refer to important matters that the team believes are currently putting quality and/or standards at risk and which require urgent corrective action.
- Advisable recommendations refer to matters that the team believes have the potential to put quality and/or standards at risk and require preventative corrective action.
- Desirable recommendations refer to matters that the team believes have the potential to enhance quality, build capacity and/or further secure standards.

62   **Essential** recommendations may lead to the college having a limited or no confidence judgement because they indicate that quality and/or standards are at risk.

63   The provisional judgements for the core themes of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence.** The review team will also evaluate the effectiveness of the college's procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information it is responsible for publishing.

Confidence:

- where a college is found to be managing effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of the academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision
- where reliance can be placed on the management of the accuracy and completeness of the information that the college publishes about itself
- where the prospects for the future continuation of this appear good
- where it has rigorous mechanisms for the management of its higher education programmes in accordance with awarding bodies' requirements.

Limited confidence:

- where significant concerns exist about aspects of a college's current or likely future management of quality and/or delivery of the standards of its higher education programmes.

No confidence:

- where major concerns exist about significant aspects of a college's current or likely future capacity to secure and maintain quality and/or deliver standards of its higher education programmes, and/or the reliance that can be placed on the management of the accuracy and completeness of the information that the college publishes about itself.

64   Differentiated judgements for any of the core themes can only be made where a team regards a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the programmes of study of one awarding body to be substantially different from those of another.

65   In all cases, the college will be required to produce an action plan. If the judgements are limited or no confidence, QAA carries out a formal programme of follow-up action to check the college's progress in implementing the action plan. The awarding body takes part in formal follow-up to any limited or no confidence judgement(s) related to its award(s). In the case of a judgement of no confidence relating to the management of the accuracy and/or completeness of published information, relevant action identified in the action plan must be completed within the timescale for publication of the final report (see paragraph 68).

Reports and sign-off

66   The draft report is prepared and sent to the college and its awarding bodies no later than four weeks following the review provisional judgement meeting. The college is invited to provide the team with corrections of errors of fact. This gives the college the opportunity to draw the team's attention to any areas that it regards as inaccurate or incomplete and, if necessary, submit additional evidence.

67   The college is also asked at this stage (that is, four weeks after the review provisional judgement meeting) to produce an action plan to accompany the report if the provisional judgements are of confidence. The action plan describes how the college intends to take forward the reviewers' findings. The effectiveness of the implementation of the action taken will form part of the evidence base for any future review activity and constitute a published record of the college's commitment to developing its provision. It will be published as part of the report.

68   Normally, once the team has considered and responded to the college's comments, it will confirm the judgements. QAA will set out these judgements in writing to the college and the awarding body(ies) and will send a final version of the report to the college, its awarding bodies, HEFCW and Estyn. The final report is subsequently published on the QAA website 15 weeks following the end of the visit.

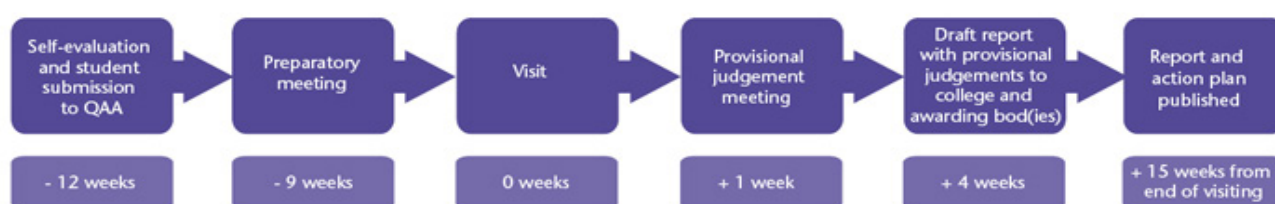| Self-evaluation and student submission to QAA	Preparatory meeting	Visit	Provisional judgement meeting	Draft report with provisional judgements to college and awarding bod(ies)	Report and action plan published
- 12 weeks	- 9 weeks	0 weeks	+ 1 week	+ 4 weeks	+ 15 weeks from end of visiting

Figure 1: key stages of a Summative review with one visit

69   If, however, after the college has commented on the draft report and had the opportunity to submit further evidence, the team continues to have limited or no confidence in either or both of the first two core themes, or considers that reliance cannot be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information the college publishes about itself, then the team will conduct a second visit to the college to review further evidence. Normally, the team for the second visit will be the same as the first. A second visit will also take place in the unlikely event that a team is unable to reach provisional judgements after the first visit; QAA will copy to the awarding body(ies) all correspondence from QAA to the college and the awarding bodies about a second visit. The second visit normally takes place 10 weeks after the first visit.

70   Whatever the outcome of the second visit, a report and action plan will be published. Should the judgements include a limited or no confidence judgement, the college must take part in a programme of follow-up action that must be completed by the college within 18 months of the publication of the review report.

Figure 2: key stages of a Summative review that results in a provisional and/or confirmed judgement of limited or no confidence in one or more of the core themes

Section 6: Annexes

Annex A - Timeline for Summative review

Stage and process. Time +/- visit (in weeks)	Actions required by QAA, college, coordinator, awarding body(ies) and **Summative review** team.
Preparation	
-26 (min)	**QAA** notifies the college of the proposed date for the visit. **QAA** asks the college to identify the facilitator. **QAA** notifies the awarding body(ies) of the review of its partner college. **College** confirms the facilitator to QAA.
-24	**Coordinator** contacts the college to offer a briefing meeting to discuss the preparation for the review and progress on the action plan formed following the Summative review. **Coordinator** copies the invitation to the awarding body. **College** responds to the coordinator's offer of an informal meeting.
-23 to -14 (optional activity)	**Coordinator** takes part in the informal meeting with the college if the college requires this meeting. **College** invites awarding body(ies) to take part in the informal meeting with the coordinator, if this has been previously agreed with the college. **Awarding body**(ies) responds to the college about its possible involvement in the informal meeting with the coordinator. After this meeting, the college sends to QAA agreements of the extent to which each awarding body will be involved in the review.
-22	**Coordinator** contacts the college to discuss the agenda and the participants of the preparatory meeting. **QAA** notifies the college of the review team and the QAA officer responsible for the review. **College** checks the proposed team for conflicts of interests. **QAA** sends details of the proposed review team to awarding body(ies).
-14	**Awarding body**(ies) comments to the college on the proposed team membership. **College** organises the preparatory meeting and identifies college participants, including staff and students. **QAA** sends details of the preparatory meeting to the awarding body(ies) if this has been agreed in advance.
-13	**College** reports potential conflicts of interest of team members to QAA.
Reflective statement	
-12	**College** submits the reflective statement to QAA. **Students** submit written submission, if appropriate. **QAA** officer and **coordinator** scrutinise the reflective statement, including the partnership agreement for HEI awards and the student submission, if provided. **QAA** informs college if the reflective statement is a suitable basis for the review. **QAA** officer will ask the college to revise the reflective statement if it is not a suitable basis for the review.
Reflective statement	
-11	**College** sends the reflective statement and the optional student submission to each member of the review team and to the awarding body(ies). **Coordinator** analyses the reflective statement.

-10	**Review team** analyses the reflective statement and the supporting evidence and reports through ARCS, including suggestions for further evidence and for the programme for the visit. **Coordinator** produces a summary of the team's analysis of the reflective statement and sends it to the college and awarding body(ies).

Preparatory meeting

-9	**Coordinator** chairs the preparatory meeting with the college. **Awarding body**(ies) attends if this has been agreed in advance with the college. **Coordinator** sends the college, its awarding body(ies), the review team and QAA a letter confirming the arrangements for the visit.
-2	**Coordinator** sends a briefing note and allocates areas of responsibility to each review team member.
-1	**College** assembles evidence in accordance with the team's requirements.

Review visit

0	**Coordinator,** with the review team, chairs the review visit. **Review team** conducts the visit. **College** takes part in the review visit. **Awarding body**(ies) takes part in the review visit in accordance with agreements with the college made in advance (during week -24). **Coordinator** offers a verbal update on the progress of the review to the college facilitator at the end of the visit.

Provisional judgement meeting

+1	**Coordinator** chairs the provisional judgement meeting off site with the **Review team** to agree summaries of evidence, provisional judgments, good practice and recommendations. **Coordinator** sends a letter to the college, copied to the awarding body(ies) and QAA, setting out the provisional judgements.

Report writing

+1	**Review team** refines report text. **Coordinator** edits the text and sends the first draft report to the team for comment. **Review team** comments on draft 1 of the report.
+2	**Coordinator** prepares draft 2 of the report and submits it to QAA Reports team.

Draft report to the college

+4	**Coordinator** sends the third draft of the report to the head of the college and to the awarding body(ies) for comments and for the provision of further evidence. This report draft includes the action plan template.
+5	**College** checks the draft report for factual accuracy and identifies any additional evidence it needs to submit. Liaises with relevant staff to discuss and develop the action plan. **Awarding body**(ies) provides any comment on the draft report to the college to collate into one response to the coordinator on the draft report. **College** collates all comments on the draft report and sends one set of comments on factual accuracy to QAA and provides additional evidence, if appropriate.
+8	**Coordinator** and the reviewers considers the college's (and its awarding body(ies) comments) and any further evidence submitted. They confirm judgements of confidence or agree that a second review visit to the college is needed.
+9	**QAA** confirms by letter either the final judgements of confidence to the college and its awarding bodies or confirms that a second visit is required.

	Awarding body(ies) contributes to the development of the action plan,
+10	if this has been agreed in advance with the college.
	College returns the completed action plan to QAA.

Report publication

| +15 | **QAA** publishes the report on its website. |

Annex B: Responsibilities checklist

College: **Awarding body(ies):**

Please identify management responsibilities (or for implementation within partnership agreements) using the checklist below. Where the college is fully responsible or implementation is devolved, please mark the college column. Where the HEI has full responsibility, mark the HEI partner column. Where responsibility is shared or the college implements under HEI direction, mark the shared column. If responsibility is vested in a partnership or consortium, mark this column. Where responsibility is devolved to the college or shared, please give references to the college document(s) that show how this is managed or implemented. These may be available in the reflective statement portfolio or in documents presented subsequently or available during the visit.

Item	College	HEI	Shared	Documentary references
1 Identification of local curriculum needs				
2 Strategic development of higher education				
3 Curriculum development				
4 Programme specifications and learning outcomes				
5 Setting assessments				
6 First marking of student assignments				
7 Moderation or second marking of assignments				
8 Giving feedback to students on their assignments				
9 Student recruitment and selection				
10 Monitoring student admission, retention and completion				
11 Reviewing and responding to AMRs and module evaluations				
12 Quality review of higher education provision				
13 Provisions for developing staff teaching and assessing skills at HE level				
14 Provisions for staff higher education subject updating and scholarship				
15 Monitoring the quality of higher education teaching and learning				
16 Student admission guidance and induction				
17 Academic tutorial/review and monitoring/academic guidance				

18 Library and learning resources available to students				
19 Guidance for progression				
20 Liaison with and involvement of employers				
21 Student appeal system				
22 Collecting and acting upon student feedback/opinion				
23 Programme and module information available to students				
24 Public information - eg on web or in prospectus				
25 Procedures for ensuring the accuracy of public information				

Annex C: Reflective statement

1   The reflective statement is a fundamental document for review. The purpose of the self-statement is to describe the responsibilities that the college has for the management of its higher education provision, making reference to its formal agreements with awarding bodies. The statement also provides the opportunity for critical self-reflection on the effectiveness of the processes and procedures the college has adopted for discharging these responsibilities. In simple terms, the statement explains:

* what the college is doing
* why the college is doing it
* how the college is doing it
* how the college knows that what it is doing works
* how the college can maintain and improve what it is doing.

An effective reflective statement is key to the college gaining substantial benefit from the review and to the smooth running of the review. QAA, therefore, encourages colleges to give its preparation due time and attention. The preparation of a reflective statement is a major focus of the briefing that QAA will arrange for colleges and their awarding bodies.

2   The review will address all aspects of the college's management of its higher education provision.

Structure

3   The reflective statement for the review should be structured according to the three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information. The statement should also include an introduction to the college, a list of higher education provision with details of agreements with awarding bodies. Within each core theme, the college should describe the responsibilities its awarding bodies have conferred on it and explain the processes and procedures it has adopted for discharging these responsibilities. A summary, comprising strengths and areas for development, and indicating what the college is doing to improve its provision is also useful.

Content

4   The college should, as far as possible, describe its responsibilities, processes and procedures by compiling a portfolio of existing documents. Any new material should be limited to a commentary signposting and/or contextualising the existing documents and reflecting on the effectiveness of these processes and procedures. Further guidance on the composition of this portfolio is provided in table 4, page 21.

5   The length of the commentary depends on the college's level of responsibility and the quality and comprehensiveness of existing written evidence. However, where a college feels confident in relying on a portfolio of existing evidence about the management of its higher education provision, QAA advises that the college restrict the commentary to six sides of A4.

6   Table 4 is intended to provide colleges with guidance on the structure and content of the reflective statement. It should not be regarded as prescriptive, since each college has different responsibilities reflecting individual agreements with awarding bodies.

Table 4: indicative structure of a reflective statement

	Sections	Suggested content (commentary)	Possible sources of evidence or references (portfolio)
1	Introduction and context	Brief contextual information on the college: • eg history, location, number of campuses, total college enrolment, total HEFCW-funded enrolments, plus full and part-time HEFCW funded enrolments, spread of provision across campuses, student numbers. Partnership agreements with the awarding body(ies): • include summary of key characteristics of each HEI partnership agreement and any arrangements with Edexcel; note any significant recent changes. Recent developments in higher education at the college: • include summary of any recent developments, eg new building work, expansion or decrease in provision, significant changes to the academic structure and/or staffing. Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission: • outline whether students sent QAA a submission and, if so, how it was prepared, eg any support or guidance provided by the college to the student representatives in the event.	• mission statement • prospectus retention, achievement and progression data tables • higher education annual monitoring reports • college's strategic plan • whole college improvement plan • college's higher education strategy • partnership agreements with higher education institution(s) • Edexcel standard note.

| 2 | Analysis and evaluation of the management of 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?
• What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?
• How does the college assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of the awarding body(ies)?
• What are the college's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standard(s)? | • quality assurance policy
• monitoring and review processes
• admissions policy
• accreditation of prior learning policy
• student assessment policy
• management structure
• meeting structure
• internal validation processes
• college and awarding bodies' regulations for progression
• action taken on receipt of external review or inspection reports
• statistical records
• programme specifications
• PSRB accreditation reports
• student complaints and appeals processes
• college student survey analyses
• national student survey results (if appropriate)
• information for higher education staff
• Developmental engagement report(s). |

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?
- How does the college assure itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding body(ies) to ensure that students receive appropriate learning opportunities?
- What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?
- How does the college assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?
- How does the college assure itself that students are supported effectively?
- What are the college's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?
- How is staff scholarship promoted and supported in the college?
- 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?

- quality assurance policy
- monitoring and review processes
- resource policy
- admissions policy
- accreditation of prior learning policy
- student support and guidance policy
- teaching and learning strategy
- management structure
- meeting structure
- staff development policy
- statistical records
- programme specifications
- college student survey analyses
- analyses of college student surveys
- student complaints and appeals procedures
- National Student Survey results (NSS)
- information for higher education staff
- ESTYN inspection reports
- Developmental engagement report(s).

Core theme 3: Public information

- What information is the college responsible for publishing about its higher education?
- 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?

- publishing policy and procedures for both electronic and paper-based information
- notes of meetings discussing scrutiny and approval of public information
- promotional material
- mission statement
- corporate plan
- programme specifications
- information for students.

3	Summary	• strengths • areas for development • actions being taken to improve
4	Evidence and references	• label and number evidence documents • provide clear references in the text
5	List of documents	• provide numbered master list

Evaluative commentary

7 The commentary should reflect the college's capacity for critical self-reflection on the effectiveness of its processes and procedures for managing higher education. A possible approach is to provide an opening statement containing a judgement, then qualify it with supporting evidence, for example:

> There is a comprehensive, but insufficiently differentiated Assessment Policy (1 Policies: doc 3i). It deals with all aspects of assessment from diagnostic testing to the appeals procedure and describes the responsibilities of key members of staff in detail, but is generic in its application to all of the college's provision.

Such a statement would typically be followed by a clear indication of what is being done to address an area identified for development, for example:

> The college's Quality Manager is currently reviewing the policy and a revised version, with sections specific to higher education and aligned to its higher education institution partner requirements, will be available from the start of the new academic year (6 Minutes: HE Development team meeting, 19/10/09, para 8).

Referencing

8 Reviewers will value a reflective statement in which they can readily find the material they need; it will, therefore be important for the college to consider the reviewers' needs when compiling the reflective statement portfolio. It is important to ensure that all evidence documents are clearly labelled and numbered and that there is a numbered master list of the supporting documentation. It is equally important to ensure that each document is clearly referenced to the appropriate text in the commentary using the same labelling and numbering system and providing paragraph numbers and dates of minutes as appropriate.

Drafting

9 The college is encouraged to circulate the draft reflective statement to higher education students, staff and awarding body representatives for comment as this widens the perspective and helps to keep colleagues informed and engaged in the process.

Submission

10 The reflective statement should be sent to the Logistics and Deployment contact at QAA 12 weeks before the start of the visit. One electronic copy is required, accompanied by electronic supporting evidence. Where only hard copy of any supporting evidence exists, three hard copies should be provided. Colleges are asked to use a CD-ROM or data stick, with the reflective statement as a Word file, and not to email individual files to QAA.

11   QAA will send a copy to the coordinator asking for confirmation of whether the reflective statement forms an appropriate basis for the review. Once this has been agreed, QAA will notify the college and ask for copies of the reflective statement and supporting evidence to be sent to the team.

12   QAA may return the reflective statement to the college for further work if it does not enable the team to identify the college's responsibilities and understand how these responsibilities are discharged. In these circumstances, the QAA Review Support Officer will provide the college with advice.

Advice

13   For advice on any aspects of the review process please contact Julian Ellis (01452 557127 (j.ellis@qaa.ac.uk) or Tony Platt (t.platt@qaa.ac.uk) at QAA.

Annex D: An indicative programme for a review preparatory meeting

1   The agenda below is indicative and QAA considers it the minimum necessary to enable the college, its awarding body(ies) and the coordinator to establish the requirements of the review. The coordinator, the college and its awarding body(ies) may feel it appropriate to include additional items. In practice, the programme for each college may vary. The coordinator should have some opportunity to meet a wider group of staff than those who will be involved directly, and have a separate meeting with students. QAA will give further guidance about who might attend the preparatory meeting at the briefing event.

2   It is important that colleges prepare to discuss each item on the agenda by, for example, ensuring that they have up-to-date information available at the meeting. The preparatory meeting provides college staff with a valuable opportunity to clarify their understanding of the review method.

Time	Activity	Suggested participants
1000	Overview of the Summative review process: • a standard presentation about the method • questions from college staff.	• the head of the college or a representative and relevant members of the senior management team • staff responsible for managing higher education and/or heads of faculties, schools or sections providing higher education, other staff who deliver higher education • the college's nominees and the facilitator • awarding body representatives, if agreed in advance.
1030	How the review will operate: • clarification of the scope of the review process • questions from college staff • next steps.	• college staff responsible for managing higher education • the college's nominees and/or the facilitator • awarding body representatives, if agreed in advance.
1130	The role of students: introductions • purpose of the preparatory meeting • clarification of the review process • clarification of the scope of the review • questions from students.	• students • students' representatives, eg Students' Union officers • college staff with responsibility for liaison with students.
1230	Lunch	
1330	Detailed planning, including confirmation of the team's requirements for the visit: • questions arising from the initial analysis of the reflective statement • confirmation that the statistical data is correct and accurate • the reviewers' requests for information to date	• college staff responsible for managing higher education • college's nominees or facilitator • awarding body representatives, if agreed in advance.

- establishing the programme of review activities
- clarification of the availability of evidence, including student work
- 'housekeeping' arrangements
- remaining questions from college staff or awarding body representatives
- next steps.

1530 End of meeting

Annex E (i): An indicative programme for a full review visit

Indicative programmes for the review visit are set out below. They are provided here primarily to illustrate the balance between meetings with staff, students and other stakeholders, and the time that teams will spend scrutinising evidence in private. In practice, each visit will have a bespoke programme informed by several factors, including the availability of staff and students, the involvement of awarding bodies and the questions the team wishes to explore. The programme will be discussed at the preparatory meeting and confirmed by the coordinator before the visit.

Review visit (for the first and usually the only visit): Day one

Time	Activity
0830	The team arrives at the college.
0900	A brief presentation by the college about its HE provision.
0915	The team develops a detailed work plan for the visit including questions for staff and students (team and facilitator).

It is recommended that the following meetings with selected college staff (and awarding bodies, if required) are held on day one:

- meeting to discuss the management of academic standards
- meeting to discuss the management of the quality of learning opportunities
- meeting to discuss public information.

Each meeting should take around one hour.

In between meetings the team will scrutinise the evidence (team only).

(Lunch and other breaks to be determined by the team).

Time	Activity
1700	A team meeting (team and facilitator) to summarise progress with review and to agree arrangements for day two.
1800	The team departs.

Review visit: Day 2

Time	Activity
0830	The team arrives at the college.
0900	A meeting with college staff to advise of any changes to the proposed programme.
0930	It is recommended that the following meetings are held on day 2:

- meeting with representative group of higher education students
- meeting with employers, if required.

Each meeting should take around one hour.

After these meetings, the team will:

- hold any further meetings as required, and agreed with the college
- continue to scrutinise the evidence (team only)

(Lunch and other breaks to be determined by the team).

1700   A team meeting (team and facilitator) to agree arrangements for day three.

1800   The team departs.

Review visit: Day 3

Time	Activity

0830   The team arrives at the college.

0900   A meeting with college staff to advise of any further meetings required.

0930   The team summarises the evidence and confirms that all areas have been addressed (team and facilitator).

1230   The coordinator, with the support of the team, gives a verbal update to the facilitator and the college contact on the progress of the review and the need for any additional evidence.

1300   End of visit; the team departs.

Annex E (ii): An indicative programme for a shorter review visit (where limited HE provision is being reviewed, usually fewer than 50 FTEs)

Indicative programmes for the review visit are set out below. They are provided here primarily to illustrate the balance between meetings with staff, students and other stakeholders, and the time which teams will spend scrutinising evidence in private.
In practice, each visit will have a bespoke programme informed by several factors, including the availability of staff and students, the involvement of awarding bodies and the questions the team wishes to explore. The programme will be discussed at the preparatory meeting and confirmed by the coordinator before the visit.

Review visit (for the first and usually the only visit): Day 1

Time	Activity
0830	The team arrives at the college.
0900	A brief presentation by the college about its higher education provision.
0915	The team develops a detailed work plan for the visit, including questions for staff and students (team and facilitator).

It is recommended that the following meetings with selected college staff and awarding bodies, if required, are held in the morning:

- meeting to discuss the management of academic standards
- meeting to discuss the management of the quality of learning opportunities.

Each meeting should take around one hour.

In between meetings the team will scrutinise the evidence (team only).

(Lunch and other breaks to be determined by the team).

1400   It is recommended that the following meetings are held in the afternoon:

- meeting to discuss public information
- meeting with selected higher education students
- meeting with employers, if required.

Each meeting should take around one hour.

After these meetings, the team will:

- hold any further meetings as required, and agreed with the college
- continue to scrutinise the evidence (team only).

1730   A team meeting (team and facilitator) to agree arrangements for day two.
1830   The team departs.

Review visit: Day 2

Time   **Activity**
0830 The team arrives at the college.

0900 A meeting with college staff to advise of any further meetings required.

0930 The team summarises the evidence and checks that all areas have been addressed
        (team and facilitator).
1230 The coordinator, with the support of the team, gives a verbal update to the
        facilitator and the college contact on the progress of the review and the need for
        any additional evidence.
1300 End of visit; the team departs.

Annex E (iii): Desk-based review

1   For colleges with low numbers of full-time equivalent students, in exceptional circumstances, HEFCW may agree to a desk-based analysis of the college's reflective statement and supporting evidence. This desk-based analysis is the equivalent of a visit to the college and following a review meeting of the team, the team will draft a report based on this analysis.

2   One week after their desk-based review activities, the team will conduct a virtual meeting to agree summaries of evidence, make provisional judgements and identify provisional features of good practice and recommendations. The draft report will be sent to the college and its awarding bodies for comments on factual accuracy and for the submission of further evidence following the standard process described in the handbook.

3   Should the team be unable to complete the report from the evidence available, or if the team reaches provisional judgements of limited or no confidence, QAA will arrange for the team to visit the college for one day or one and a half days to complete the review; in such cases, the review team will normally comprise three members: the coordinator and two reviewers; this visit will normally take place within 10 weeks of the provisional judgement meeting, and provisional dates will have been discussed and agreed at the preparatory meeting.

Annex F: Guidance notes on the Action plan

1   After a review, the college will be asked to develop an action plan, set out in a format provided by QAA, describing how the college plans to take action on the findings of the review. A template for the action plan can be found below.

2   Each row contains an individual aspect of good practice or a recommendation, each of which relates directly to the text of the report and echoes the wording of the good practice or recommendations identified in the conclusions of the report.

3   The action plan forms part of the published report. It is important that the action plan is completed by the college, in consultation with its awarding body(ies), in a timely fashion and returned to QAA by the given deadline.

4   The action plan, its implementation and impact will form part of the evidence base for any future review activity. It will also constitute a published record of the college's commitment to take forward the findings of the review.

5   If the college receives a judgement of confidence in the college's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, and an evaluation that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of public information, QAA will monitor the implementation of the action plan through the next review at the college. However, if the college receives a judgement of limited or no confidence, or no reliance on public information, then a programme of formal follow-up action will be taken.

6   Deadlines for completion of action plans:

Number of weeks after the visit to the college	Summative review timeline
+ 4 weeks	The college receives the draft report and action plan template.
+ 8 weeks	The college returns the draft report to QAA with comments on factual accuracy.
+ 9 weeks	The college returns the completed action plan to QAA, signed by the head of the college. QAA checks that the action plan is likely to enable the college to enhance its provision.
+ 10 weeks	QAA appends the completed action plan to the final report and proofs the document.
+ 15 weeks	QAA publishes the final report with the completed action plan on its website.

7   The column headings in the action plan template (below) are:

- **Good practice/Essential/Advisable/Desirable recommendation.**

This column is completed by the coordinator and repeats precisely the wording of the good practice or recommendations identified in the conclusions of the report.

The following columns are completed by the college in conjunction with its awarding bodies.

- **Action to be taken**

Identify what the college proposes to do in response to the good practice or recommendation identified in the report and listed by the coordinator in the action plan. Actions should be specific. Actions such as 'maintain', 'enhance' or 'continue' are difficult to identify a target date for, and consequently may not be completed or evaluated effectively.

- **Target date**

Set dates for when the actions proposed in the previous column will be completed. The more specific the action, the easier it will be to set a realistic target date.

- **Action by**

Identify the role of the person who has responsibility for ensuring that the action has been taken in accordance with the target date. It is helpful to identify a specific role or committee who will take responsibility for the action so they can be held accountable to the target date.

- **Success indicators**

Identify how the college and its awarding bodies will know when an action has been successfully undertaken. Again, if there is a specific action and a clear date for completion, it will be easier to identify the success indicators.

- **Reported to**

Identify the role of the person who will monitor the success of the action. This may be an individual role or a committee. A clear designation helps to maintain accountability and ensure successful completion of the action plan.

- **Evaluation**

This column **must** be completed **before** returning the action plan to QAA. Identify the processes or evidence that will be used by the college to evaluate the impact of the actions taken. Due to the timescale for completing the action plan it is not normally expected that any actions will have actually been completed by this stage. Should there be a judgement of no confidence in public information, however, the college will need to correct this before the report is published. It will be important to identify the anticipated sources of evidence that will show how successful the action has been and what the outcomes of the action are.

Action plan template

(Participating college) action plan relating to the (summative) review (Month/Year)					

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to
In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the college.					
(Example) • The extent of employer engagement in the delivery and support of the programmes (paragraphs 12, 13).	**(Example)** Establish employer forum and review annually. Review and enhance mentor and workplace supervisor support packs annually.	**(Example)** July 2010	**(Example)** HE coordinator with programme leaders.	**(Example)** Improved engagement with employers; positive evaluations from students on placements; regular communications between mentors and link tutors.	**(Example)** HE Forum; Employer forum

Essential	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success Indicators	Reported to
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **essential** for the college to take action:					
(Example) • The programme descriptions in the HE prospectus and online	**(Example)** Ensure all current programme documentation	**(Example)** November 2010	**(Example)** Programme Leader	**(Example)** All programme documentation contains accurate information.	**(Example)** HE Coordinator

student handbook should be updated to reflect the current aims and outcomes specified in the 2008-09 programme specification.	contains accurate information about the programme aims and learning outcomes; Ensure all students receive copies of updated information.				
	Institute annual checking and sign-off process to ensure all documentation is updated accurately.	July 2010	HE Coordinator	Annual checking process implemented effectively.	Vice Principal (curriculum); HE Forum.
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**
The team agreed upon a number of areas where the college should be **advised** to take action:					
• (list areas of advisable action individually paragraph XX).					
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**

The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desired** to take action:				
• (list areas of desirable action individually paragraph XX).				

Annex G: Public information about academic standards and quality of learning opportunities

1   The purpose of this annex is to give colleges and review teams an indication of the types of information to be considered within the third core theme of public information.

2   Public information means information about the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities that is in the public domain. Some information will be published by awarding bodies on colleges' behalf; some will be provided by the college and published by external organisations like Unistats or UCAS; and some will be published by the college itself.

3   The review considers whether or not the college has procedures in place that are effective in ensuring that the information the college is responsible for publishing about itself is accurate and complete. An indicative list of this information is provided in paragraph 4. This list reflects the expectations of QAA with respect to the availability of information about academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. It should be emphasised that this list is only indicative because different colleges will have different responsibilities for publishing information according to their arrangements with awarding bodies.

4   In respect of core theme 3, review teams will consider:

- information on the broad college context, for example:

  - mission statement
  - corporate plan
  - statement of quality assurance processes and procedures
  - strategy for higher education learning and teaching
  - higher education strategy
  - information about the college's agreements with awarding bodies
  - details of links with employers.

- information about the academic standards and quality of programmes, for example:

  - prospectuses, programme guides or similar
  - programme specifications
  - student handbooks
  - module/unit guides
  - information about the college's and/or its partners' procedures for programme approval, monitoring and review
  - details of accreditation from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
  - results of internal student surveys
  - arrangements for assessment and external examination procedures
  - the college's policies for student complaints, appeals and representations.

5   The review is not concerned with:

- the accuracy and completeness of information that is not available to students or other external stakeholders, such as management information (although teams may be interested in colleges' use of this kind of information in the management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities)
- auditing the accuracy of quantitative information

- information about the college which is published by other organisations, such as awarding bodies.

Annex H: Role descriptions and person specifications

Role title: Coordinator

Role purpose

1 The coordinator manages the review in each of the colleges to which s/he is assigned.

2 Key responsibilities include:

- leading a programme of reviews for QAA
- providing clear briefings to a wide range of college participants on the review method and participants' respective responsibilities
- discussing, and agreeing with the college, the review agenda
- discussing and agreeing focused review activities with the college and the reviewers to ensure effective use of time
- organising and coordinating review activities to ensure that conclusions, recommendations and judgements are sound and evidence based
- liaising effectively with all stakeholders through face-to-face, telephone, email and written communications to ensure the smooth running of each review
- providing additional training for reviewers, if necessary
- making effective use of QAA's secure electronic folder system throughout the review to ensure that a full evidence base is available to reviewers and QAA staff in a timely manner and is archived promptly
- respecting protocols on confidentiality
- producing high-quality reports that usefully inform all stakeholders of conclusions, recommendations and judgements, where appropriate.

Person specification

3 Knowledge and understanding to include:

- current or recent knowledge and understanding of current issues affecting higher education in colleges
- awareness of current higher education teaching methods and curricula
- knowledge and understanding of the assurance of standards and quality
- awareness of the role of professional statutory and regulatory bodies in programme accreditation
- experience of liaison with senior management and a range of staff at other levels.

4 Skills include ability to:

- manage small teams (with experience either in higher or further education or in other employment)
- work within tight timescales and to strict deadlines
- chair meetings
- communicate effectively in face-to-face interaction
- train others in methods of work
- produce clear and succinct reports on time
- word process

- communicate electronically, including emails, attachments and use of web mail
- be flexible and devise sound plans when situations change with little notice.

Role title: Reviewer

Role purpose

5   The reviewers contribute to evaluating academic standards and the quality of higher education provision through a peer-review process. They engage in a variety of activities designed to gather and analyse evidence so that they can arrive at considered conclusions, recommendations and judgements. These outcomes help the college being reviewed to prepare an action plan to further enhance higher education provision.

6   Key responsibilities include:

- reading, analysing and preparing written commentaries of the reflective statement submitted by the college and any other documents sent in advance of a review
- adhering to the review schedule agreed between the college and the coordinator
- participating in visits to the college in order to gather, share, test and verify evidence
- drawing conclusions, making recommendations and judgements on the three core themes: academic standards achieved, the quality of the learning opportunities provided, and public information
- recording evidence gathered from a variety of review activities and submitting this to the QAA secure folder in a timely fashion
- drafting sections of the report that are referenced to evidence gathered during the review
- respecting protocols on confidentiality
- contributing to and commenting on the compilation of the report of the review to agreed schedules and deadlines
- being available for the whole period of a review for which they have been selected and committing to complete all processes of a review once they have embarked upon it.

Person specification

7   Knowledge and understanding include:

- current or recent experience, knowledge and understanding of higher education provision, including an understanding of current issues affecting higher education in further education colleges.
- knowledge and familiarity with the Academic Infrastructure and other external reference points such as those of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- for reviews requiring subject expertise, experience of providing higher education-level teaching and learning delivered in colleges or higher education institutions: in the case of industrially or professionally-based reviewers, familiarity with teaching and learning in higher education
- understanding of programme entry requirements and the ability to interpret progression statistics, including withdrawal, transfer and failure rates and destinations data
- familiarity with academic support strategies and the functions of academic tutorials
- experience with examining and/or verification (and preferably external examining or external verification)

- knowledge of the quality assurance processes employed by colleges providing higher education
- familiarity with the standards of higher education awards in colleges and universities in the UK.

8   Skills include the ability to:

- conduct meetings and interviews with staff
- conduct meetings with a range of current and former groups of students
- write succinctly and coherently
- meet tight timescales and deadlines
- work effectively as a member of a team
- work courteously and professionally
- maintain confidentiality
- communicate electronically, including emails, attachments and use of web mail.

Role title: Facilitator

Role purpose

9   The facilitator ensures the smooth running of the review by acting as the single point of contact between the college staff and the reviewers.

10   Key responsibilities include:

- providing effective liaison between the reviewers and the college staff
- ensuring that the reviewers obtain accurate, timely and comprehensive information about the educational provision and the college context
- helping the reviewers to come to a clear and accurate understanding of the structures, policies, priorities and procedures of the college, and the nature of the provision under scrutiny
- ensuring that reviewers are provided with appropriate evidence to allow them to reach conclusions, recommendations and judgements
- bringing additional information to the attention of the reviewers and correcting factual inaccuracy
- observing objectively, and communicating clearly with the reviewers and the subject provider
- respecting protocols on confidentiality
- establishing effective relationships with the coordinator and the reviewers, as well as with the college staff
- participating in the college's preparations for the review
- attending all meetings other than those with students and employers, or where judgements are discussed
- monitoring the pattern of review activities
- maintaining regular telephone and/or email contact with the coordinator to ensure that reviewers are receiving the information or documents that they need, particularly for off-site analysis.

11   Knowledge and understanding include:

- thorough knowledge of the structure, policies, priorities, procedures and practices of their college
- knowledge and experience of working in higher education at a senior level
- experience of quality assurance
- knowledge and understanding of the review process and method.

12   Skills include the ability to:

- locate cogent information
- maintain confidentiality
- deal conscientiously with detail
- make accurate records of discussions
- meet exacting timescales and deadlines
- work effectively with reviewers
- continue to work effectively as part of the college team after the review has been completed
- communicate electronically, including emails, attachments and use of web mail
- influence colleagues within their college and take forward the action plan.