QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

April 2010

Bishop Burton College

SR73/2009

Preface

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

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college

- an optional written submission by the student body

- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit

- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days

- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education

- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents

- reviewing the optional written submission from students

- asking questions of relevant staff

- talking to students about their experiences.

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications

- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*

- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects

- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study

- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential, advisable** and **desirable.** To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.

- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence, limited confidence** or **no confidence.** There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published.

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

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

Executive summary

The Summative review of Bishop Burton College carried out in April 2010

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

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the College has strong relationships with the awarding bodies that embody a proactive engagement with the maintenance of academic standards

- the comprehensive processes for annual monitoring operate efficiently and help to keep standards constantly under review

- the College uses innovative assessment strategies to support vocationally relevant learning on a number of courses

- retention and completion rates are generally high in most areas, with well-developed strategies to facilitate internal progression from level 3 courses to higher education and to honours degrees from Foundation Degrees

- the College has well-established links with employers to support the development of an appropriate range of placements and live projects

- there is effective use of the virtual learning environment to support distance learning students in Canine Behaviour and Training, which could be shared usefully with other areas

- the College publishes high-quality information for higher education students, including a well-designed dedicated section on the College website, an attractive and detailed prospectus, comprehensive joining instructions, a helpful student handbook and supportive academic writing pamphlets.

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:

- develop and implement a reliable, accurate and navigable virtual learning environment to enable all course managers to make it more integral to the learning process

- implement a formal system for checking completeness, accuracy and currency of literature available to students, especially to ensure consistency within the virtual learning environment.

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

- consider introducing a specific higher education system of peer teaching observation, which would be more appropriate for the higher education provision

- consider how the College's arrangements for feedback from students provide an effective way of communicating with them, particularly in reporting back any actions taken as a result of their comments

- develop the information to employers to clarify their contribution to student learning in the workplace.

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 Bishop Burton 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 courses which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Huddersfield and the University of Hull. The review was carried out by Mr Graham Brotherton, Ms Ann-Marie Colbert and Mr Brian Whitehead (reviewers) and Ms Penny Blackie (coordinator).

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

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

4   Bishop Burton College is located in the East Riding of Yorkshire near the town of Beverley and a few miles north of the city of Hull. It is a specialist provider of vocational education and training in further and higher education for businesses, industries and communities that are mainly, but not exclusively, rural and land-based. The college mission statement is 'To be the college of choice for learners and business, promoting first-class skills development within a dynamic rural environment'.

5   The College is the only specialist provider of land-based and rural skills within the Humber region. The 60 full-time further and higher education courses cover a wide range of land-based industries and over 200 part-time courses cater for the practitioner in rural industries. The College was awarded the Training Quality Standard with excellence in Environmental and Land Based Training in 2008. The specialist vocational nature of the courses the College offers and the widely dispersed recruitment area necessitate the provision of the residential facilities that are a distinctive feature of specialist land-based colleges. Accommodation is available for up to 340 residential learners, including 122 higher education students.

6   The College provides learning opportunities for around 3,500 students, including approximately 900 full and part-time higher education students, amounting to 680 full-time equivalents, funded by HEFCE. They study on Foundation Degrees and honours degrees validated by the University of Hull and Leeds Metropolitan University. There are three Edexcel Higher National Certificate courses and some teacher education provision validated by the Universities of Huddersfield and Hull. Eighty members of staff,

including part-time staff from industry, teach on higher education courses. Most staff members teach across higher and further education.

7   The higher education awards funded directly or indirectly by HEFCE are listed below, beneath their awarding bodies and with full-time equivalent numbers of students for 2009-10:

Leeds Metropolitan University

- BSc Agricultural Resource Management (10)

- FdSc Agriculture (37)

- BA Design (13)

- FdA Design (22)

- FdA Garden Design (15)

- BA Floristry Design (7)

- FdA Floristry Design (16)

- BA Police and Community Studies (9)

- FdA Police and Community Studies (47)

- FdSc Police and Forensic Studies (7)

- BA Sport and Adventure Management (19)

- FdSc Sport Coaching Development and Fitness (38)

- FdA Sport and Adventure Management (29)

University of Hull

- BSc Applied Animal Science (9)

- BSc Applied Animal Behaviour and Training (56)

- FdSc Animal Management and Behaviour (48)

- FdSc Applied Ornithology (1.5)

- BSc Canine Behaviour and Training (13)

- FdSc Canine Behaviour and Training (82)

- BSc Environmental Conservation (16)

- FdSc Environmental Conservation (10)

- FdSc Wildlife and Countryside Conservation (9)

- BSc Equine Business Management (23)

- BSc Equine Science (37)

- FdSc Equine Management, Business and Equitation (29)

- FdSc Equine Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation (21)

- FdA Planning and Development (7)

- Certificate in Education (34)

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (39)

University of Huddersfield

- BA Education and Training (21)

- Certificate in Education (13)

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (14)

Edexcel

- HNC Animal Management (6)

- HNC 3D Design (3)

- HNC Equine Management (12).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

8   Bishop Burton College has formal partnership agreements with four awarding bodies for its higher education provision. The arrangements, including the responsibilities of the College, vary between partnerships but are clear to College staff. To promote consistency across the wide spread of higher education provision, the College has established its own overarching higher education mechanisms and procedures. The partnership with Leeds Metropolitan University through the Higher Education Scheme gives the College significant delegated responsibility. This responsibility includes the implementation of some areas of the University's regulatory framework through college procedures. The agreement with the University of Hull gives the College at least partial responsibility for the design, delivery, assessment and reporting of the courses. For those courses validated by Edexcel and the University of Huddersfield, the College's responsibilities are limited to delivery and carrying out but not designing assessment.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9   The College has continued to develop new courses to meet the needs of employers in specialist fields. Some of its plans for growth, as outlined in its Higher Education Strategy, may be affected by changing circumstances and lead to an increase in part-time students. In 2008-09 the validation of a number of courses was transferred to Leeds Metropolitan University from the University of Hull. This was a strategic decision in view of Leeds Metropolitan University's special interest in sport. In the coming year, a group of design and equine courses that reflect this interest have been validated by Leeds Metropolitan University and will also be transferred. The College has recently established the post of Higher Education Administrator and a Higher Education Management Group, which acts as a consultative and developmental body to support higher education. The Director of Quality and Standards, another recently established post, is involved with aspects of higher education such as the centralisation of external examiner reports. In the past, external examiner reports were sent to and remained within faculties: they are now housed in the Quality Office and monitored there. Considerable developments have taken place to

provide impressive specialist facilities on the spacious college site, for example the animal management unit, equine arena and the sports complex.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10   Students studying on higher education courses at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. This written submission offered a range of student reflections from 15 courses and was used extensively by the team over the period of the review. The development of the student submission was led by the Assistant Principal, Higher Education, who contacted all student representatives by email with a set of questions similar to those used in the National Student Survey. A great deal of ground was covered by individual groups but no attempt was made to draw any conclusions as a whole. Students also made useful contributions to the review in a meeting during the visit.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

11   The responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards and the reporting procedures are clearly identified and articulated in the College's Operating Procedures and these are monitored by the Director of Quality and Standards from the College Quality Office. Staff have a clear understanding of the higher education structures and procedures. The oversight of the management of higher education is the responsibility of the Assistant Principal, Higher Education, who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Assistant Principal chairs the Higher Education Management Group, which was formed in September 2009. This group meets monthly to discuss and coordinate the ongoing delivery of the higher education provision.

12   Procedures for formal reporting begin at course team level. Teams meet six times a year to consider the quality of provision, including assessment, verification and moderation. The final meetings lead to the production of the higher education monitoring reports. These reports are presented by course managers to a meeting of senior staff at the College. A Higher Education Board of Studies is responsible for new course approval and internal validation. The team confirms that these procedures are working effectively.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13   The Developmental engagement in assessment reported on the strong relationships the College has with its awarding bodies, in line with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. While the regulatory frameworks of each awarding body determine their own academic standards, the College has developed an overarching quality framework for higher education, including quality assurance procedures. Representatives of awarding bodies and the partner monitoring reports confirm that the College is meeting its responsibilities in respect of the partnership agreements and that appropriate academic standards are being safeguarded. The College demonstrates strong relationships with the awarding bodies that embody a proactive engagement with the maintenance of academic standards. The team regards this as a strength.

14   Validation procedures require the production of programme specifications and the College approaches this in a structured way. Reference is made to subject benchmark statements, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*, and level descriptors from the FHEQ. The awarding bodies provide support to college staff during the design stages of courses, which ensures that the Academic Infrastructure is understood and embedded in college developments.

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

15   Each curriculum area produces an annual review report that contributes to the awarding body's overall annual monitoring report. The reports sampled during the review offer evidence of a self-critical approach with, on the whole, well-focused action plans. In addition to the requirements of the awarding bodies, the College has introduced a range of internal policies and monitoring procedures to enhance the quality mechanisms and the provision. The higher education monitoring reports are carried forward into the next academic year as course team rolling action plans, which are regularly updated following team meetings and monitored by the college Quality Office. Curriculum and learning managers undertake a formal mid-year review of the courses in their areas, producing position statements in January that are also monitored by the Quality Office. The team considers that the comprehensive processes for annual monitoring are operating efficiently and are an example of good practice that helps to keep standards constantly under review.

16   External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies. Their reports supplied for the review are generally consistent in confirming that the standards and quality of the provision are sound and that student achievement is at an appropriate level. The arrangements for the moderation of assignment briefs and for the second marking of submitted work are efficient and transparent, although some external examiners have reported that these are not always consistently applied. Since the Developmental engagement, the College has introduced more robust procedures, with enhanced audits of its internal processes on matters such as dealing with external examiner reports and the use of the virtual learning environment. The audits are rigorous and objective and lead to improvement, if somewhat slowly in the case of the virtual learning environment.

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

17   The College has a structured approach to staff development and a strategic training plan that includes higher education and supports the achievement of academic standards. Staff have opportunities to participate in staff development activities both internally and externally through conferences and events offered by the awarding bodies. Many members of higher education staff are pursuing teacher training qualifications. Staff members new to higher education have a dedicated induction in addition to the general college induction, and are usually assigned a mentor. Following concerns expressed by external examiners in 2008, and the recommendations in the Development engagement in 2009, about over-generous marking, the College has introduced staff development sessions in 'levelness' to ensure all higher education staff have a thorough grounding in the descriptors of the FHEQ.

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?

18 The general responsibilities and arrangements for managing and reporting on the quality of learning opportunities are those described in paragraphs 11, 12, 13 and 15. As highlighted there, the College is working to ensure that the developing systems are appropriate to the particular needs of higher education courses and students.

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

19 The arrangements by which the College ensures it is fulfilling its obligations to awarding bodies and students are clear and effective, as described in paragraphs 11-13. Learning opportunities, including resources, are systematically considered as part of programme approval and review events. College staff and awarding body representatives who met the team reported that these arrangements work effectively. Course committees, with awarding body, college and student representation, monitor this process.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

20 Programmes are developed in partnership with the awarding bodies in a structured way, which takes account of the FHEQ. This is confirmed by comments from external examiners on a range of courses. There are well-established links with employers to support the development of placements and work-related learning and the work-related learning modules clearly reflect the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. The management of Foundation Degrees reflects the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The College tutorial approach uses personal development planning as a key contribution to higher education students' learning and development.

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

21 To support its land-based specialisms the College has recruited well-qualified staff from appropriate vocational backgrounds, a number of whom have higher degrees. The College has extensive links with appropriate industries and employers. There is a range of excellent specialist facilities, for example the equine arenas, animal management centre and sports facilities to support students in gaining appropriate practical and vocational skills. The Developmental engagement drew attention to the integration of theory and practice, which is enhanced by these facilities.

22 A thorough generic college-wide teaching observation system is contextualised for higher education teaching and learning and all observers are experienced higher education practitioners. The current system is largely managerial. The College may wish to consider introducing a specific higher education system of peer teaching observation.

23 A variety of methods, formal and informal, enables students to comment on the quality of learning opportunities, including teaching and learning. Formally structured feedback is elicited through a number of focused internal surveys, module evaluations, course committees and the National Student Survey. Some students identified less than satisfactory arrangements for 'communicating changes' about courses as an important issue

in the National Student Survey. This was supported in both the student written submission and the meeting with students during the visit. A small number of students criticised the management of staff absence or staff change. For example, some students felt that support for their dissertation preparation should have come earlier. The College has a well-developed system of learner forums to support student feedback and there are opportunities for students to meet the Principal through an open-door policy. Not all students are aware of the actions that result from their comments. The team considers it desirable that the College consider the effectiveness of the arrangements for communicating any actions taken as a result of feedback from students.

24 The College has a coherent and appropriate system for ensuring effective assessment design using internal verification. In many cases course teams use vocationally relevant and innovative assessment strategies, as was identified in the Development engagement. Well-thought out virtual assessments on distance-learning courses, such as the FdSc/BSc Canine Behaviour and Training, are appreciated by the students. Other examples include BSc Equine Science students, who construct a flowchart to demonstrate the equine reproduction system for a horse, and BSc Environmental Conservation students, who produce a comparative study of the distribution of bird species between a local wood and the woodland edge. The arrangements for the moderation of assignment briefs and for the second marking of submitted work are efficient and transparent, although some external examiners have reported that these are not always applied consistently. The team considers it good practice that the College uses innovative assessment strategies to support vocationally relevant learning on a number of courses.

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

25 Student support has developed to reflect the needs of higher education students, including support for independent learning and dissertation writing. Support is provided through academic tutorials and the College's learner services. Arrangements for these are set out in the student handbook, which all students receive. Most of the students the team met praised the approachability of staff and the help they offer. The team considers it a strength that retention and completion rates are generally high in most areas, with well-developed strategies to facilitate internal progression from level 3 courses to higher education and to honours degrees from Foundation Degrees.

26 Some external examiner reports seen during the Developmental engagement pointed to some poor academic writing and referencing skills. The reports suggested in some cases that this was more widespread than in the sector generally. The College has addressed this by producing specific guidance to enhance academic skills. All higher education students are now issued with Successful Academic Writing, a document produced by College staff, and with dissertation guides. A staff dissertation group now discusses student proposals before approving them. Many students appreciate these documents and feel that they are well supported by knowledgeable and responsive teaching staff.

27 In their written submission and at the meeting during the review, students identified some issues around the textual and electronic resources available to them. The College has an agreed strategy to address this and build its higher education learning resources, especially electronic journals. Some students believe that study space to meet the needs of higher education students is not always available when they need it. Students welcomed the provision of the Higher Education Centre, which usually stays open until midnight. A very small number of students felt that it did not fully meet their needs for computer access.

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

28 The College's strategic training plan identifies the needs of the higher education provision and is coordinated for the College by the Human Resources department (see paragraph 17). Internal activity targeted at higher education staff includes sessions on tutorial training for higher education, events for new tutors, and moderation and second marking. In addition, course teams attend staff development relevant to the whole College, for example course team rolling action plan training and quality improvement days. Much of the professional development of higher education staff focuses on access to teacher training. There are opportunities, along with staff development offered by the awarding bodies, to apply for funding or time to undertake scholarly updating through industry links and attendance at professional conferences or events. The College usually supports these requests. A small number of staff are involved in research and professional writing. In its self-evaluation, the College acknowledges that the issue of whether courses are sufficiently 'challenging and intellectually stimulating' had been identified by students in their responses to the National Student Survey. The College has implemented a staff development programme to address this.

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?

29 The College has made a major financial investment in the development of high-quality specialist facilities and a well-designed learning resources centre. The facilities are used by further and higher education students and some have a broader application, for example the European Pony Championships will be held in 2010 at the College, using its indoor and outdoor equine arenas. The previous learning resources centre has been converted into a dedicated Higher Education Centre, with around 20 PCs, teaching and study space, staff offices, social space and a pleasant cafe. Learning resources are managed by a team of staff who work closely with higher education course teams.

30 Following the Development engagement, the College has sought to increase off-site opportunities for work-based learning through its extensive links with local employers. College staff and employers reported positive developments through the provision of placements and through opportunities for students to take part in industry-relevant projects, notably in the floristry and design areas.

31 The College is introducing a new virtual learning environment in 2010-11 to improve access and navigation. Some students reported that it can be difficult to find materials on the virtual learning environment and to gain access to it off-campus. Some curriculum areas use the virtual learning environment very effectively, particularly the canine behaviour and management distance-learning courses. However, some of the materials in other areas, including the course manuals, are out-of-date or absent. The team recommends that the College is advised to develop and implement a reliable, accurate and navigable virtual learning environment to enable all course managers to make it more integral to the learning process.

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?

32   Responsibility for publishing information about courses is shared between the College and the awarding body. Responsibilities for publication are clearly defined in formal agreements with each partner. Marketing and publicity materials are produced by the College and agreed by the awarding body prior to publication. The College is responsible for providing details of courses to students, for example in course manuals and module guides, for awards validated by Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Hull. For courses leading to University of Huddersfield awards, information is supplied directly by the University. The College is also responsible for published information relating to Edexcel provision. The College publishes a range of information, including a clearly expressed College Strategic Plan Summary 2009-2010 and Higher Education Strategy and a range of policies and operating procedures. These documents are generally comprehensive and detailed, and make responsibilities clear.

33   Pre-course information for potential students includes the informative higher education prospectus and website. The prospectus contains information about work and study-related progression opportunities and the availability of financial support. Details about each programme are unambiguously presented, with reference made to the respective awarding body. The College website is readily navigable and includes a dedicated higher education area with factsheets for each programme. Information for new students includes comprehensive joining instruction pamphlets, which provide full details about support for students, for example financial support and counselling services. The pamphlet to support academic writing is useful and the handbook available to all College students contains key information about the support and guidance available, such as careers, the chaplaincy and the study skills centre. The team considers the high-quality information for higher education students to be good practice, including a well-designed dedicated section on the college website, an attractive and detailed prospectus, comprehensive joining instructions, a helpful student handbook and supportive academic writing pamphlets.

34   Programme specifications, although available, are not routinely provided to students on all courses and there is no consistent means by which students' attention is drawn to them. Course manuals are produced to a standard template for Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Hull awards. Course managers have overall responsibility for producing the manual for their course, with core information provided by the Director of Quality and Standards. Manuals advise students of their responsibilities and entitlements. Information about assessment, complaints and appeals is incorporated and reference is made to resources available at the respective partner institution. Course manuals also guide students to the academic regulations of each partner. All students receive a course manual during induction but, although students confirmed receipt of course manuals, some of those students the team met expressed some concern about the currency of the manuals available electronically.

35   Module guides are effective and students confirm their value. In particular, the work-based learning module guides that include information about intended learning outcomes and assessment are valued by employers. Other work placement information clarifies responsibilities for employers and identifies what is expected of students. It was a recommendation of the Developmental engagement that the Work Placement Handbook for Providers should 'include more information and advice about how employers can contribute

formally or informally to the assessment process'. An employer pack contains letters and a pro forma, but a handbook would enable the College to expand on what is expected and be more explicit. Employers are asked to record their satisfaction with students on a checklist, which includes key aspects such as attitude, reliability and technical competence. The team considers it desirable that the College develop the information it provides to employers in order to clarify their contribution to student learning in the workplace.

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?

36 Approval of marketing and publicity materials rests with the Head of Marketing and Events in liaison with course staff prior to approval by the awarding body. Approval is also required for information to be uploaded on the College website. Processes for checking completeness and accuracy of module guides differ according to the awarding body. Although there is no formal approval process, curriculum and learning managers check the module guides and course manuals that module leaders and course managers produce. Responsibility for uploading information on the virtual learning environment rests with module leaders and course managers. The quality of content is subject to internal quality audit. Because such audits occur on a sampling basis, not all literature is subject to timely checking. The team considers it advisable that the College implement a formal system for checking completeness, accuracy and currency of literature available to students, especially to ensure consistency within the virtual learning environment.

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

37 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in May 2009 and covered all the higher education provision. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College and ensured that all IQER core themes could be addressed: the support for student development of higher-level skills through the assessment process; the communication of the assessment of work placements to staff, students and assessors and the contribution of work placements to the quality of learning opportunities; and the contribution of assessment processes to the assurance of academic standards across the College.

38 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. The partnership arrangements are well managed, as are internal quality processes such as internal quality audit and annual monitoring reviews. A range of innovative assessments are linked to work-based learning opportunities. Students are supported with useful guides to enhance academic writing and dissertations. A specialist site offers opportunities for work-related assessments, which demonstrate the integration of theory and practice.

39 The team also made a number of recommendations. It considered that the College should review the management of assessment processes, particularly in relation to internal verification. It could build on staff development sessions related to the level of courses and over-generous marking. The College should consider rewriting the work placement module and Work Placement Handbook, to increase the involvement of employers in assessment.

More realistic work-based assessment opportunities could be provided by extending the number of off-site placements. The good practice in use of the virtual learning environment in some areas could be extended to other higher education courses.

D Foundation Degrees

40 The College introduced Foundation Degrees soon after their inception in 2001. They made a strategic decision to replace their Higher National courses with Foundation Degrees, which they developed in partnership with the University of Hull, transferring some in the last year to Leeds Metropolitan University. The higher education strategy embraces Foundation Degrees as having strong potential for growth, particularly in the workplace. The College has used Foundation Degrees as vehicles for widening participation, providing students who might not otherwise have engaged with higher education opportunities to study in both full and part-time modes. The College involves employers in programme and assessment design, and demonstrates a willingness to meet the needs of employees and students in terms of curricula, delivery and assessment support. Many employers offer work placements; some students are allocated placements in the College.

41 Foundation Degrees are offered in agriculture, animal management and behaviour, applied ornithology, design, environmental conservation, equine management, business and equitation, equine sports therapy and rehabilitation, floristry design, garden design, planning and development, police and community studies, police and forensic studies, sport coaching development and fitness, sport and adventure management, and wildlife and countryside conservation. The majority of Foundation Degrees courses offer a progression route to the third year of an honours degree on the college site. The conclusions below relating to good practice and recommendations apply equally to Foundation Degrees.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

42 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Bishop Burton 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: Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Huddersfield and the University of Hull.

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

- the College has strong relationships with the awarding bodies that embody a proactive engagement with the maintenance of academic standards (paragraph 13)

- the comprehensive processes for annual monitoring operate efficiently and help to keep standards constantly under review (paragraph 15)

- the College uses innovative assessment strategies to support vocationally relevant learning on a number of courses (paragraph 24)

- retention and completion rates are generally high in most areas, with well-developed strategies to facilitate internal progression from level 3 courses to higher education and to honours degrees from Foundation Degrees (paragraph 25)

- the College has well-established links with employers to support the development of an appropriate range of placements and live projects (paragraph 30)

- there is effective use of the virtual learning environment to support distance learning students in Canine Behaviour and Training, which could be shared usefully with other areas (paragraph 31)

- the College publishes high-quality information for higher education students, including a well-designed dedicated section on the College website, an attractive and detailed prospectus, comprehensive joining instructions, a helpful student handbook and supportive academic writing pamphlets (paragraph 33).

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

The team agreed a number of areas where the College is **advised** to take action:

- develop and implement a reliable, accurate and navigable virtual learning environment to enable all course managers to make it more integral to the learning process (paragraph 31)

- implement a formal system for checking completeness, accuracy and currency of literature available to students, especially to ensure consistency within the virtual learning environment (paragraph 36).

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

- consider introducing a specific higher education system of peer teaching observation, which would be more appropriate for the higher education provision (paragraph 22)

- consider how the College's arrangements for feedback from students provide an effective way of communicating with them, particularly in reporting back any actions taken as a result of their comments (paragraph 23)

- develop the information to employers to clarify their contribution to student learning in the workplace (paragraph 35).

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

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

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

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the College has strong relationships with the awarding bodies that embody a proactive engagement with the maintenance of academic standards (paragraph 13)	Disseminate the good practice from each university to the other in relation to academic standards, particularly in the developing relationship with Leeds Metropolitan University.	June 2011	Assistant Principal Higher Education and HE Course Managers Director of Quality and Standards	All teaching staff understand academic standards and maintain them in teaching and assessment.	HE Management Group	Successful validations, external examiners' reports and annual course reviews. Quality Audits by the Quality Office.
• the comprehensive processes for annual monitoring operate efficiently and help to keep standards constantly under review (paragraph 15)	All course reviews monitored through the College Quality Office and result in centrally monitored action plans.	December 2010	Director of Quality and Standards	All actions from Course Rolling Action Plans are completed in a timely manner and effectively to maintain good practice.	HE Management Group Curriculum and Standards Executive Quality Improvement Committee	Monitoring of action plans by senior staff.

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
● the College uses innovative assessment strategies to support vocationally relevant learning on a number of courses (paragraph 24)	Workshops on innovative assessment design included in the staff development programme to share good practice.	June 2011	Assistant Principal Higher Education and HE Course Managers Director of Quality and Standards	The range of innovative assessments is increased across all programmes particularly regarding work-based learning and higher-level skills.	HE Management Group Curriculum and Standards Executive Quality Improvement Committee	External examiner reports and annual course reviews. Quality Audit of assessment.
● retention and completion rates are generally high in most areas, with well-developed strategies to facilitate internal progression from level 3 courses to higher education and to honours degrees from Foundation Degrees (paragraph 25)	Share best practice from programmes with good retention rates to others below target. Continue FE2HE Strategy including taster days, parents' evenings and progression agreements with level 3 providers in the region.	June 2011 June 2010	Assistant Principal Higher Education HE Course Managers Director of Quality and Standards	Retention rates on all programmes are at target or above. Progression rates reach target levels.	HE Management Group Curriculum and Standards Executive	Learner data reports. Monthly retention reports.

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
● the College has well-established links with employers to support the development of an appropriate range of placements and live projects (paragraph 30)	Employer Forums are developed and maintained in all key curriculum areas.	December 2010	Curriculum and Learning Managers HE Course Managers Director of Quality and Standards	Employers' forum operational in each area and meeting twice per year.	HE Management Group	Successful validation of new programmes and involvement of employers in work placements and projects. Employer survey feedback.
● there is effective use of the virtual learning environment to support distance learning students in Canine Behaviour and Training, which could be usefully shared with other areas (paragraph 31))	Introduce regular virtual learning environment workshops for teaching staff with input from the tutors on the Canine Behaviour and Training Programme.	December 2010	Assistant Principal Higher Education	All students are able to access programme and module details on the virtual learning environment.	Curriculum and Standards Executive Quality Improvement Committee	Every programme and module has comprehensive information on the virtual learning environment. Quality Audit Report.

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the College publishes high-quality information for higher education students, including a well-designed dedicated section on the College website, an attractive and detailed prospectus, comprehensive joining instructions, a helpful student handbook and supportive academic writing pamphlets (paragraph 33).	Implement a system to ensure all information is complete, consistent and accurate.	October 2010	Deputy Principal (Academic) Assistant Principal Higher Education Marketing Manager	All published information is complete, accurate and timely.	HE Management Group Curriculum and Standards Executive Marketing Group	Regular audits of website, prospectus, joining instructions, student handbook and other published information.

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be **advised** to take action:						
●develop and implement a reliable, accurate and navigable virtual learning environment to enable all course managers to make it more integral to the learning process (paragraph 31)	Ensure the virtual learning environment platform is fit for purpose. All programmes and modules make comprehensive use of the virtual learning environment.	September 2010 June 2011	Assistant Principal Performance and Planning Assistant Principal Higher Education	All programmes and modules on HE courses make effective use of the virtual learning environment.	Curriculum and Standards Executive	Staff feedback. Audit of virtual learning environment use. National Student Survey.
●implement a formal system for checking completeness, accuracy and currency of literature available to students, especially to ensure consistency within the virtual learning environment (paragraph 36).	All published information is formally signed off by senior staff before publication. The same information source is used for all published information.	September 2010	Assistant Principal Higher Education HE Course Managers Marketing Manager	All published information is accurate and complete.	HE Management Group Curriculum and Standards Executive	Feedback from Student Forums. National Student Survey.

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desired** to take action:						
● consider introducing a specific higher education system of peer teaching observation, which would be more appropriate for the higher education provision (paragraph 22)	All HE teaching and learning observations are undertaken by HE qualified staff.	June 2011	Director of Quality and Standards	All HE lesson observations are graded 2 or better.	Quality Improvement Committee	Annual course reviews. Observation of teaching and learning reports
● consider how the College's arrangements for feedback from students provide an effective way of communicating with them, particularly in reporting back any actions taken as a result of their comments (paragraph 23)	Include feedback from previous issues raised as a standard agenda item on Student Forums. Ensure course-specific issues are reported back directly to the course concerned.	December 2010	Director of Quality and Standards Assistant Principal Higher Education HE Course Managers	Feedback is given within 3 weeks.	HE Management Group Quality Improvement Committee	Student Engagement Report.

Bishop Burton College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• develop the information to employers to clarify their contribution to student learning in the workplace (paragraph 35).	Produce an employers' pack which contains all the information that they need about their responsibilities and the academic requirements of the course.	September 2010	Assistant Principal Higher Education Manager, Services to Business HE Course Managers	Employers' pack in use for the start of the 2010-11 academic year.	HE Management Group	Positive feedback from employers and students through the use of internal surveys and forums.