QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

May 2010

Brooklands College

SR91/2009

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 Brooklands College carried out in May 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 open and collaborative partnership with Oxford Brookes University, including active participation at a senior level, supports the College in maintaining appropriate academic standards on its higher education programmes

- the effective partnerships between employers and staff ensure that students are able to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace

- the consultative approach to the development of a comprehensive and user-friendly higher education prospectus serves both to inform interested parties and enhance the higher education identity at the College.

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:

- continue to develop and implement clear and consistent structures for the strategic management of, and indicate executive responsibilities for, higher education at college level in order to secure academic standards

- develop and implement systems for the submission of student work across all higher education programmes to ensure equivalence of the student experience

- further develop and implement systems for the strategic management of the differing requirements of the various awarding bodies in order to ensure comparability and equality of the student experience across the College

- establish an effective procedure for the introduction and evaluation of learning initiatives, such as the use of anti-plagiarism software, which takes into account both the differing needs of programmes and also of their students

- further develop and implement effective systems for the students to make their views known and for reporting back to them comprehensively in order to ensure that students engage fully with these systems

- establish an effective mechanism for the strategic management of resources in order to support students' learning, ensuring equality of provision

- ensure that information provided to students about the possibility of progression from a Foundation Degree to an honours degree is detailed and up to date and is included in course handbooks.

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

- develop its website information to reflect the distinction between its further and higher education provision in order to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about their studies.

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 Brooklands College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, the University of Greenwich, Kingston University and Oxford Brookes University. The review was carried out by Mr David Charlton, Mrs Catherine Fairhurst and Mr Colin Stanfield (reviewers), and Dr Daniel Lamont (coordinator).

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

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

4   The College is a large general further education college, with its main campus based in Weybridge, Surrey. Since its merger with the former Spelthorne College in August 2007, it also has a campus based in Ashford in the Borough of Spelthorne. The academic year 2007-08 was the first involving merged activity and joint reporting. In addition to the provision offered at Weybridge and Ashford, the College provides part-time courses, primarily in basic skills and supported learning, at 18 other venues, including Community Centres and the workplace, in the Elmbridge, Runnymede, Surrey Heath and Spelthorne areas. The failure of a bid to the Learning and Skills Council to enable it to undertake a substantial building programme has caused the College some financial difficulties.

5   During 2008-09, Brooklands enrolled 2,681 students aged 16 to 18 years, of whom 2,204 were full-time, and 1,830 adults, of whom 89 were full-time. Of these, some 33 per cent are from non-white British backgrounds, and a total of 477 learners received additional learning support. Provision is offered in 14 of the 15 subject sector areas, with the most significant in engineering, art, media and performing arts, health, social care and public services, and skills for life and supported learning. Programmes from entry to level 3 are available in the majority of curriculum areas, with a growing number also offering higher education qualifications, both directly and indirectly funded. The College has been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence status in three areas: public services, engineering and aerospace.

6   During the Ofsted inspection in October 2009, of the six curriculum areas inspected, grades awarded to those faculties offering higher education provision were as follows:

Engineering   Grade 2

Child care   Grade 2

Art and design   Grade 3

In summary, the inspectors reported that 'Brooklands is a satisfactory college with the capacity to improve. It could and should be better. Students enjoy what they do and make the progress expected of them on their courses, but not enough of them pass their assessments to gain their main qualifications. Most students, however, develop good personal and social skills and improve their prospects of employment. Inspectors looked at six subject areas in depth, and found that those studying engineering and child development are taught particularly effectively and do especially well. In the other four subject areas, and elsewhere in the College, they are taught competently and they receive good advice, guidance, and specialist support when needed'.

7   The College works in partnership with the University of Greenwich, Oxford Brookes University and Kingston University to provide courses in teacher education, engineering and early years respectively, while offering Edexcel Higher National Certificates/Diplomas (HNC/ Ds) in public services and graphic design. In 2008-09 the College had 276 higher education students across both campuses; of those, 88 were studying full-time and 178 were part-time.

Validated by Edexcel

- HND Public Services (14 full-time equivalents (FTEs))

- HNC Graphic Design (10 FTEs)

- HND Graphic Design (5 FTEs)

Validated by the University of Greenwich

- Certificate in Education (12 FTEs)

- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (4 FTEs)

Validated by Kingston University

- FdA Early Years (13 FTEs)

- FdA Management and Leadership in Early Years (11 FTEs)

- FdA Children's Special Education Needs (11 FTEs)

Validated by Oxford Brookes University

- FdSc Motorsport Engineering (29.68 FTEs)

- HND Motorsport Engineering (19 FTEs)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

8   The College has formal partnership agreements with each of its higher education awarding bodies, as well as a standard agreement with Edexcel covering the Higher National awards. While the terms of the agreements vary in detail to reflect the nature of each, all are up to date, with the responsibilities of both partners clearly defined. Partnership arrangements with the universities are devolved, with clear mechanisms in place for maintaining rigorous oversight of the provision. There is a strong sense of partnership between the College and its partner institutions, which is exemplified by the provision of documentation to support the partnership and the arrangement of relevant staff training events.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9   The College has recently developed and validated a Foundation Degree in Computing with Oxford Brookes University, with plans for the first intake in September 2010. There are also plans to further enhance the provision in the areas of public services, graphics, health and social care, business and professional studies, and performing arts.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The College held a series of focus groups with students on all higher education courses. Following this, the College compiled a summary of the views expressed by students. This process was overseen by the Quality Improvement Manager. In addition, the review coordinator explained the Summative review process with student representatives at the preparatory meeting and the team met with full and part-time students. The submission identified a number of issues that were useful to the team, and which were discussed in the meetings with students 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 draft Higher Education Strategy describes how the College's management structure was revised following the merger with Spelthorne College in August 2007. The management of the higher education provision is integrated within the mainstream performance improvement, monitoring and reporting systems. Each course has a programme leader, who reports to the appropriate head of school, with the exception of the education courses, where the programme leader reports directly to the Deputy Principal. There is, therefore, a clear management structure at school level.

12   The College is currently being managed by an interim Principal and interim Deputy Principal because it is in a 'recovery position' following the failure of the bid to the Learning and Skills Council and the critical Ofsted report (see paragraphs 4 and 6). At the time of the visit, therefore, the College was undergoing considerable change. While this change is taking place, the committed management by the individual tutors and programme leaders is sustaining the quality and standards of the programmes.

13 The Higher Education Working Group, chaired by the Curriculum Area Manager (early years and caring professions), advises the College on higher education matters and supports the development and operation of higher education. It is the key group for the consideration of higher education and serves as a useful repository of information. It has been successful in many areas, particularly that of quality assurance, and is working towards achieving comparability of student experience across the College. Its activities are now reported fully and reflected in its minutes, which hitherto were very brief and limited in scope. The relationships between the various committees, such as the Higher Education Working Group and the Curriculum and Quality Team, are clear and the team has been able to determine how the College is managing its higher education provision in the current interim situation. The team considers it to be advisable that the College continue to implement clear and consistent systems for the strategic management of higher education at college level in order to ensure that academic standards continue to be maintained and to keep these systems under review.

14 As a result of its detailed discussions with staff of the College, the team was able to ascertain how the higher education provision is managed at college level within the newly introduced management and executive structure and the committee structure. The team is satisfied that the management of higher education at course level is effective, and it was able to determine how higher education is managed at college level with the newly introduced structures. It is advisable, especially since it plans to develop its higher education provision, that the College should continue to develop and implement clear and consistent structures for the strategic management of the higher education provision at college level in order to secure academic standards and future enhancement. Effective college-wide management of these standards and the way the College management monitors such standards is of fundamental importance.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 Documentation and discussions with staff confirm that the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure have been implemented in the higher education provision at the College, underpinned by the partner institutions' quality systems. The College self-evaluation states that each awarding body takes responsibility for ensuring that programmes reflect the Academic Infrastructure. Meetings take place between College staff and managers at the partner institutions to facilitate the development of shared knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure.

16 The *Code of practice* is integrated into key documents such as the Assessment Policy and Board of Examiners' agenda. The impact of the Academic Infrastructure is evident in the agendas and discussions at validation events, which encourage consideration of relevant subject benchmark statements and alignment with the level descriptors in the FHEQ, and are reflected in the production of module descriptors and student handbooks. Discussions with staff demonstrated their familiarity with the Academic Infrastructure. Articulation and progression arrangements with specific honours degree programmes are considered at validation events.

17 Overall, it is judged that proper account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure in relation to academic standards, and this is integrated within the planning, delivery and monitoring of the College's higher education provision.

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

18   Partnership agreements with validating partners are kept current and the documentation sets out the particular responsibilities of the College and its partners. The College, through its programme leaders, is an active member of college partnership networks with the Universities of Kingston and Greenwich. There is an open and collaborative partnership with Oxford Brookes University, including active participation at a senior level. In the past, the Assistant Principal (Adult and Skills) has been a member and past chair of the Oxford Brookes College Partnership, where discussions about strategic issues and Lifelong Learning Network matters take place. This ensures that the College programmes are informed by current practice elsewhere and demonstrates that the College participates in programme development.

19   At course level there is evidence that effective management and quality assurance of standards are in place and are consistent. Each higher education course produces a higher education course self-evaluation document, which contributes to a course quality improvement plan. This is summarised by the Assistant Principal (Adult and Skills) and a higher education quality improvement plan is produced, which includes areas for improvement and areas for development and enhancement. The Assistant Principal is assisted in this at an operational level by the Performance Improvement Manager, who works closely with programme teams. Annual review procedures at programme level meet the reporting requirements of the validating bodies.

20   Staff preparing for new programme validations are supported by the College. Discussions with staff, scrutiny of the documentation and minutes of several recent validations conducted at the College suggest that course approval events are well conducted and attended by university representatives and external advisers. Staff also confirmed that sufficient time is allowed for the proper scrutiny of proposed curricula, intended learning outcomes and their assessment. Programmes are internally validated before external review and validation.

21   External examiners appointed by the universities and Edexcel confirm that the standards and quality of the provision are sound and that student achievement is at an appropriate level. There are procedures for receiving the reports, identifying and progressing concerns and checking their completion through the course quality improvement plans.

22   An extensive range of well-designed assessment tools is used across the higher education programmes. For example, the early years childcare courses require students to maintain a reflective journal, drawing on the application of the theory to school-based practice. The value of this was confirmed by both staff and students, who cited a wide variety of examples, such as written assessments, individual and group presentations, examinations, event organisation, practical sessions, work-based activities, and educational trips and visits, which enabled them to undertake effective formative assessment. External examiner reports and student feedback also support the assertion of the College that the design and range of assessment methods enable students to achieve appropriate standards. The Developmental engagement in 2008 confirmed that assessment standards in the sample of work scrutinised were appropriate. The team noted that the recommendation to continue to develop systems and procedures to enhance the rigour of the admissions process for future enrolments has been appropriately addressed.

23   When students submit work, it is marked and internally verified; this system applies across all programmes. This marking is then checked again both by other members of the partnerships and also by the external examiner for each programme. Issues relating to the parity and comparability of assessment across the provision are recognised by the College. Thus, there is evidence that the College has in place robust systems for ensuring that assessment grades are comparable at subject level within partnerships. However, at college level there are variations in the systems used for submission of student work, especially where resubmission is required or in dealing with late work. This also applied where two programmes were run for the same awarding body, where there were differences in the time allowed for resubmission. The team considers it advisable that the College develop and implement systems for the submission of student work across all higher education programmes to ensure equivalence of the student experience and that academic standards are consistently upheld.

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

24   The Continuing Professional Development Manager, who reports to the Deputy Principal, is responsible for the management of continuing professional development, is proactive and works closely with staff. Academic standards are enhanced by staff participation in a wide range of internal and external development events based on the higher education staff development strategy document and the higher education staff development plan. The validating partners also organise staff development sessions for College staff.

25   The higher education staff development plan includes, in addition to enhancement of teaching and learning, the management of plagiarism, the IQER process and the FHEQ. Staff are enthusiastic about staff development and the time allocated for higher education staff development. In addition, during the college-wide dedicated staff development days there have been specific slots for higher education, such as a session on giving encouraging feedback to students. Scholarly activity is also encouraged by, for example, support for attendance at subject-related conferences and mentoring and support for staff that are following master's programmes. The team agreed that the arrangements for staff development to support appropriate academic standards are appropriate.

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?

26   At course level, operational management of the quality of learning opportunities is the responsibility of course teams, led by a programme leader who reports to the appropriate head of school. Annual quality reviews include information on the evaluation of teaching and learning, and staff and student evaluation of the quality of learning opportunities. Staff monitor the effectiveness of programmes through regular team meetings. There are also regular informal discussions between programme leaders about the day-to-day management of their courses, which facilitate the spreading of good practice. The team

found that the arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities at programme level are effective.

27 The College intends that every student should have a comparable experience. From its discussions with staff and students, the team found that there were disparities within the student experience. There are varying approaches to the submission of drafts of assignments for preliminary feedback and guidance. However, the team found that students on different courses do have a comparable experience as all courses provide feedback on work in progress. The College has engaged with external agencies to map the differing requirements of the various awarding bodies. The team was therefore able to determine how this is being managed strategically across the College and how the current plans of the interim management team will facilitate effective management in the future. It is advisable that the College should further develop and implement systems for the strategic management of the differing requirements of the various awarding bodies in order to ensure comparability and equality of the student experience across the College.

28 The Performance and Excellence Team, under the supervision of the Deputy Principal, is responsible for the implementation of quality systems and processes on a cross-college basis. Within the proposed revisions to the management structure of the College, responsibility for operational issues related to higher education activity will rest with curriculum area managers and directors of campus. The delivery of these responsibilities will be monitored through the management structures operational within the College. The team agreed that this revised management structure will facilitate the management and oversight of learning opportunities at college level, and also how the staff will be informed and incorporated into the process.

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

29 The team found much evidence of a high level of employer engagement in the design and delivery of assessments, particularly on the FdSc Motorsport Engineering, HND Public Services and the early years provision. Employers commented that students on placement take matters of health and safety as second nature. The employers also commented that skills learnt by their employees during their college courses have been beneficial in the workplace. While not all employers were involved in the design of assessments, they did feel that their views were taken on board and that they could influence the design of the programme. Employers contribute to the course delivery through guest lectures and, in one case, offering a module. The effective partnerships between employers and staff ensure that students are able to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace. Curriculum teams have time set aside to share good practice and to make positive contacts with employers. The team considers that the effective partnerships with employers at course level, which assist students to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace, represent good practice.

30 Scrutiny of samples of marked work and associated feedback sheets revealed that students are provided with comprehensive guidance on how to improve, and that the feedback includes encouragement to aspire to achievement of higher grades. In the case of students on the FdA Early Years, although discussions around improvement take place in tutorials following the return of assignments, there are also appropriate comments in the written feedback. The Developmental engagement identified the need for feedback comments to encourage students to aspire not simply to pass but to achieve higher grades, particularly on graphic design provision, where students were originally only encouraged to

aspire to a pass grade during their first year of study. The team's scrutiny of a sample of student work showed that feedback comments now encourage students to achieve higher grades.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

31 In addition to the appropriate application of the Academic Infrastructure to the management of the quality of learning opportunities, appropriate account is taken of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. The team confirmed the findings of the Developmental engagement that there was good evidence of a high level of employer engagement in the design and delivery of assessments, particularly on the motorsport engineering, public services and early years provision.

32 The College has policies and procedures for the assessment, support and conduct of work-based learning and the design and validation of new courses, and a standards handbook which reflects the Academic Infrastructure. Students are properly and fully informed about the learning objectives and outcomes for their programmes and what is expected of them.

33 All programmes are underpinned by programme specifications. The HN module specifications are produced by Edexcel and the team noted that the course teams had sought to apply the procedures from the university-validated programmes in order to improve the student experience. Within each unit of the HN programmes, there is guidance on delivery and assessment. In the case of Foundation Degrees, programme specifications have been produced by the course teams in conjunction with partner institutions. The specifications for programmes developed with partner universities contain a section on teaching and learning, which is used by curriculum team leaders and course managers to inform schemes of work and the range of learning activities to be used on each programme.

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

34 A range of effective procedures supports the assurance of the quality of learning opportunities. A key aspect is the College lesson observation procedure, which aims to ensure the effectiveness of the learning and the quality of the students' experience, and to highlight both best practice and development needs. All observations take place during the first term in order to facilitate timely identification of any support needs and to ensure that these are addressed through targeted staff development activities. The resultant grade profiles inform the self-assessment and quality improvement action planning process. The overall responsibility for this rests with the Continuing Professional Development Manager. The process is supported by an effective staff development programme as outlined in paragraphs 24 and 25 above. The higher education staff development plan addresses teaching and learning through such topics as the distinction between higher education and further education, assessment and the use of the virtual learning environment.

35 The involvement of external observers in the external quality review provides moderation and validation opportunities for the College's internal observers, and serves to endorse the rigour of the process. A mentoring scheme underpins the lesson observation process to provide additional support to facilitate further improvements in teaching and learning. The Ofsted report for the October inspection recognised the 'scrupulous

monitoring of teaching and learning', acknowledging that 'clear and realistic actions taken to bring about improved teaching, from skilful mentoring to enhanced pedagogy, stem readily from astute lesson observations'.

36   The College is piloting the use of anti-plagiarism software in several higher education programmes. The use of this software is not solely to detect plagiarism but also to help encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. This is in line with the College assessment policy, which states that 'Where practicable, assessment will be through guided self-marking, to encourage reflection on what contributes to successful learning'. This software has, however, been introduced in a somewhat ad hoc manner. Originally it was implemented in order to help Postgraduate Certificate in Education students prepare their work, and its use, in that case, had been carefully developed. Moreover, the students were briefed fully on how to use it and welcomed its implementation. However, it is now being used on other programmes. In these cases, it has been introduced with little or no briefing or consultation with the students concerned and with limited planning. The team considers that it is advisable for the College to establish an effective strategy procedure for the introduction and evaluation of learning initiatives, such as the use of the anti-plagiarism software, which takes into account the differing needs of programmes and also of their students.

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

37   Student representatives attend meetings with staff at programme and cross-curricular levels, and the feedback from these meetings is passed upwards to both the Higher Education Working Group and the validating partners. However, both staff and students agreed that the system is not working as effectively this year as it has in the past. In an attempt to overcome this, space has been set up on the virtual learning environment for student representatives to note their comments and experiences on their programmes; although at this stage it appears that this facility has not been much used. While module or unit reviews are completed by students for some higher education programmes, it was not apparent that this applies consistently across all higher education programmes.

38   Students can make their views known to tutors through the widely used system of group and individual tutorials. Students were unanimous in their appreciation of the accessibility and helpfulness of their tutors. The informal systems appear to be more effective than the formal ones and there was evidence of staff responsiveness to issues raised. However, some students are not aware of structures for the effective systematic gathering of student views leading to action by the College and for reporting back to them. When the matter of the student written submission was mentioned, no students could claim either ownership or awareness of the document. The team considers it advisable that the College further develop and implement effective systems for students to make their views known, and for reporting back to them comprehensively, in order to ensure that students engage fully with them.

39   There is substantial and well-embedded support for students, which is delivered in many ways, such as open evenings and informal discussions with prospective students and extended inductions, while public services students attend residential and weekly tutorials. Students confirmed that it is during these tutorials that lecturers support them in the interpretation of academic language, particularly around the requirements of assessment criteria. Students are also encouraged to form their own course-based 'support networks', which are very successful. The team noted students' desire for this to be extended across the higher education provision to facilitate their interaction with other higher education students at the College.

40 The 'bridging' and study skills provision also offer good support for students. The Engineering Faculty runs preparatory courses to facilitate the acquisition and/or improvement of science and numeracy skills, and to ensure students are able to understand and use mathematical concepts on the FdSc in Motorsport Engineering. Similarly, both the FdA in Early Years and Postgraduate Certificate in Education teams embed study skills within their inductions/tutorials, and all draw on the Guide to Referencing provided by the Learning Resources Centre.

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?

41 The College has been able to update its library book stock and has subscriptions to a number of online sites. The College is developing its resources, especially in e-learning, in order to provide the students with a safe 'hard-wired' environment in which to work. Extra resources have been funded by monies from the validating partners, which have, for example, made it possible to purchase some laptops for students. While students reported that there is a shortage of computers on campus and that they are unable to access the internet with their own laptops while they are on campus, the team found that the College had recognised the need to enhance IT infrastructure on both campuses. Discussions with staff and scrutiny of evidence revealed considerable use by students of the College's virtual learning environment. The College plans to invest £300,000 in updating the infrastructure, which will enable it to provide up-to-date hardware and software to support teaching and learning and to ensure that the network is stable and responsive. The Motorsport programmes, in particular, have very good resources. This last point was emphasised by the students, who commented appreciatively that they had access to the facilities without intrusive supervision.

42 The future of the Ashford Campus has been uncertain, so that the facilities to support students have not been as good as those on the Weybridge Campus. One consequence of this has been that there have been difficulties in, for example, accessing the library. These variations in provision, especially access to the library and its resources, are in the process of being addressed by the College in order to ensure that all students have the resources they need to meet the intended learning outcomes of their programmes.

43 The team noted that under the proposed new structure a group is to be established with responsibility for developing information technology systems. However, it is concerned that there is no strategic management for the updating and replacement of computer software and infrastructure, and that students do not have equal access to learning resources. The team considers it advisable that the College establish an effective mechanism for the strategic management of resources in order to support students' learning and ensure that appropriate learning resources are available and that there is equality of provision.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of 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?

44 The extent to which the College is responsible for the publication of information about its HEFCE-funded provision varies according to the awarding body. The Learning

Partnership Agreement with Oxford Brookes University and the Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Greenwich indicate that the College must seek advance agreement in the development of promotional materials for their respective programmes. The Institutional Agreement with Kingston University states that the University retains control of marketing for all programmes and that all marketing material must be submitted on an annual basis for approval prior to publication. Staff and awarding body representatives had a good understanding of where their respective responsibilities lie and gave useful examples of how the institutions liaise to agree on pre-programme promotional material.

45 At programme level, course handbooks are produced either solely by the College, as in the case of the Public Services and Graphic Design programmes, or by the validating partner, as in the case of the Postgraduate Certificate of Education and the FD Early Years programmes. In the latter case, the team found that the College and University have liaised effectively to act on the recommendation made in the Developmental engagement that they 'review the language used in module descriptors to ensure that it is accessible and understandable by all students'.

46 College information on its higher education provision is published in a newly developed higher education prospectus and in curriculum brochures which encompass further education, adult and higher education provision in a given curriculum area. Staff and students agree that the higher education prospectus is a valuable tool in providing useful information and helping to strengthen the identity of higher education provision at the College. The student handbook and diary, while not differentiated for higher education, provides additional generic information for students such as a helpful section on time management.

47 Much of the information published about the College's higher education provision is replicated on the College website, although this site does not emphasise the distinctive nature or the extent of the College's higher education provision. The website contains a range of useful generic information for students about applications, study support and College policies and procedures. However, little of this relates specifically to higher education. The profile of the College's higher education provision on the validating partner websites is low. On-programme information to students is also available through the College virtual learning environment, which is well used and received by students. The team considers it desirable that the College develop its website information to reflect the distinction between its further and higher education provision in order to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about their studies.

48 Students were mostly positive about the pre-induction and on-programme information, advice and guidance that they received. However, some students on the Early Years programme commented that some information had been very late and that this had impacted on their studies. There was some uncertainty among students about possible progression routes from FDs to honours degrees. Students indicated that the information they had received was insufficiently detailed and there had been some delay in receiving it, and that the promised memory stick containing the information was not received at the start of the course. Staff explained that in fact students were given verbal and written information and a memory stick at the start of the programme; tutors from Kingston University also met with students to outline progression opportunities. The team recognised that because of the changing sectoral environment it was difficult to give definitive guidance on the best progression routes. The team noted that the course handbooks, which are issued to students at the start of the academic year, did not contain any information about progression routes from Foundation Degrees to honours degrees. The team considers it advisable that the College ensure that information provided to students

on possible progression routes is detailed and up to date and is included in course handbooks.

49 The team confirmed the conclusion of the Developmental engagement that the College publishes clear and accurate information about assessment and that students are able to clearly articulate their understanding of how they are informed about learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

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?

50 Responsibility for ensuring that College policies and procedures are reviewed and updated lies with the Leadership Team, with this responsibility being delegated to one of a number of College committees. The Higher Education Working Group has had an instrumental role in higher education developments, including those relating to public information. Evidence from the minutes of this committee indicates that it has actively considered higher education public information.

51 The higher education prospectus is developed by the College marketing team in collaboration with curriculum area managers. It is submitted to all validating partners prior to publication and it is ultimately signed off as accurate and complete by the Director of Campus (Weybridge).

52 Liaison between programme leaders and the College admissions team provides a mechanism to ensure the accuracy and completeness of advice to students at the application and interview stage. A range of mechanisms exists for the quality assurance of programme documentation, much of which is developed at programme level. However, in the case of early years and postgraduate certificate in education provision, such documents are developed centrally by the awarding body's programme team. College staff gave examples of how they work effectively with their validating partner to develop and quality-assure programme documentation. For example, the Motorsport team receives specific programme handbook guidelines from the school at Oxford Brookes University.

53 There is a diversity of approaches to the provision of information about work placements, both to students engaged in work placements and to employers providing such placements. Students and employers indicated that the information they receive is adequate to allow them to fulfil their placement responsibilities, but the College may wish to consider reviewing the information it provides about work placements to ensure the consistency and fullness of such information.

54 Summative assessment grades are reported to assessment boards which take place at the host school of the university. Assessment board decisions are formally recorded and results formally transmitted to students including, where necessary, details of requirements for re-assessment.

55 Feedback from students on a range of matters, including programme information and guidance, is captured in student surveys at module, programme and college level. Students also engage with the National Student Survey. However, discussions with students suggested that many did not know how such formal methods of student involvement might enhance the provision and were not aware of any feedback to them in this respect.

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

56 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in June 2009. The review included two institutional nominees. The lines of inquiry agreed with the College were as follows:

- How does the College assure itself that processes and procedures for marking and moderation are fair, robust and safeguard academic standards?

- How effective are the design and range of assessment methods and the nature and quality of feedback on assessment in enabling students to achieve the appropriate standards, and is effective support provided?

- Does the College publicise its assessment processes and procedures in ways that are explicit, valid and reliable?

57 The scope of the Developmental engagement encompassed two HND programmes (Edexcel), one HND programme (Oxford Brookes University), one Foundation Degree programme (Oxford Brookes University), two Foundation Degree programmes (Kingston University), and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme (University of Greenwich).

58 The Developmental engagement team identified several elements of good practice. The College demonstrated its commitment to the development of its higher education provision by introducing a new management and committee structure, supported by new appointments at a senior level and by developing appropriate policies and procedures. There is an effective and collaborative relationship with partner higher education institutions and other associated colleges, ensuring both robust moderation and verification procedures for assessment, and also the sharing of good practice. The College has well-planned continuing professional development provision for staff aimed at developing both generic higher education skills and subject specialisms. There is a wide range of assessment tasks, and these are well designed to enable students to achieve appropriate academic standards. Employers are closely engaged in the design and delivery of assessment, particularly on the FD programmes. There is well-embedded and effective support for students, notably the provision of weekly tutorials on all programmes and bridging strategies to enable students to progress. Following extensive consultation with staff, students and higher education institutions, the College has developed a comprehensive and user-friendly higher education prospectus that explains assessment methods used on each programme of study.

59 The team considered that it would be desirable for the College to continue to develop systems and procedures that will enhance the rigour of the admissions process for future enrolments, to ensure that all entrants are able to meet the required academic standard and that written assessment feedback offers sufficient encouragement to students to achieve higher grades. In consultation with awarding bodies, it would also be desirable to review the language used in module descriptors, to ensure that they are accessible and understandable by all students.

D Foundation Degrees

60 The College currently offers four FD programmes, which take close account of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Strengths include close and collaborative relationships with employers, high-quality student support and the incorporation of skills development in programmes.

61 Foundation Degrees provide enhancement opportunities for students to extend work-based learning and see the relevance of linking this to theory. Good relations with employers include their involvement in curricular design and in contributing to assessment. For example, the FdSc Motorsport Engineering provides opportunities for students to gain experience in a professional motorsport operation, and specialists from the industry contribute to the teaching. Similarly, the FdA in Children's Special Education Needs draws on and complements the students' skills from their current employment.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

62 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Brooklands 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, the University of Greenwich, Kingston University and Oxford Brookes University.

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

- the open and collaborative partnership with Oxford Brookes University, including active participation at a senior level, supports the College in maintaining appropriate academic standards on its higher education programmes (paragraph 18)

- the effective partnerships between employers and staff ensure that students are able to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace (paragraph 29)

- the consultative approach to the development of a comprehensive and user-friendly higher education prospectus serves both to inform interested parties and enhance the higher education identity at the College (paragraph 46).

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

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

- continue to develop and implement clear and consistent structures for the strategic management of, and indicate executive responsibilities for, higher education at college level in order to secure academic standards (paragraphs 12, 13, 14)

- develop and implement systems for the submission of student work across all higher education programmes to ensure equivalence of the student experience (paragraph 23)

- further develop and implement systems for the strategic management of the differing requirements of the various awarding bodies in order to ensure comparability and equality of the student experience across the College (paragraph 27)

- establish an effective procedure for the introduction and evaluation of learning initiatives, such as the use of anti-plagiarism software, which takes into account both the differing needs of programmes and also of their students (paragraph 36)

- further develop and implement effective systems for students to make their views known and for reporting back to them comprehensively in order to ensure that students engage fully with these systems (paragraphs 37, 38)

- establish an effective mechanism for the strategic management of resources in order to support students' learning, ensuring equality of provision (paragraphs 42, 43)

- ensure that information provided to students about the possibility of progression from a Foundation Degree to an honours degree is detailed and up to date and is included in course handbooks (paragraph 48).

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

- develop its website information to reflect the distinction between its further and higher education provision in order to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about their studies (paragraph 47).

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

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

69 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.

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 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 open and collaborative partnership with Oxford Brookes University, including active participation at a senior level, supports the College in maintaining appropriate academic standards on its higher education programmes (paragraph 18)	Establish a strategic reporting relationship with Kingston and Greenwich Universities based on the Oxford Brookes Model	May 2010	Deputy Principal Director of Campus (Weybridge)	To promote open and collaborative relationships with all HEI partners	Higher Education Working Group (HEWG) Leadership Team	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910 HEWG minutes College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910
• the effective partnerships between employers and staff ensure that students are able to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace (paragraph 29)	Develop a framework for evaluating employer partnerships for all programmes	December 2010	Deputy Principal/ Director of Campus (Weybridge)/ HEWG Chair/ Performance Improvement Manager/	Implement a process for curriculum leaders to evaluate current practice	HEWG	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ HEWG minutes/ College Higher Education Self-

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
			Continuing Professional Development Manager			Evaluation Document 0910
	Agree and confirm minimum employer partnership requirements for each programme e.g. work placement	December 2010	Director of Campus (Weybridge)	Clear and transparent student entitlement identified for each programme e.g. work placement	HEWG	HEWG minutes/ College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910
	Review employer and student surveys to ensure appropriate & relevant questions are asked to support continual achievement of above	October 2010	Director of Brooklands Business Focus (Employer) / Performance Improvement Manager (Students)	Appropriate survey assessment mechanisms in place	HEWG	Student feedback / Employer feedback

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the consultative approach to the development of a comprehensive and user-friendly higher education prospectus serves both to inform interested parties and enhance the higher education identity at the College (paragraph 46).	Using a consultative approach model, recreate new prospectus for 2011-12	November 2010	Head of Marketing HE curriculum leaders HE students HEI partners	High-quality HE prospectus	HEWG Deputy Principal	HEWG minutes/ College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910
	Using the consultative approach model, create new Brooklands College Higher Education Student Handbook for 2011-12	July 2011	Head of Student Services Approved by HEI partners	Identity of higher education at the College is strengthened	HEWG Deputy Principal	HEWG minutes/ College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **advisable** for the College to take action:						
• continue to develop and implement clear and consistent structures for the strategic management of, and indicate executive responsibilities for, higher education at college level in order to secure academic standards (paragraphs 12, 13, 14)	New management structure with HE strategic and executive responsibilities identified	August 2010	Leadership Team	Clear reporting line for HE matters; timely and consistent response on issues requiring strategic action	Principal	Leadership Team minutes Curriculum & Quality minutes HEWG minutes College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910 College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910
• develop and implement systems for the submission of student work across all higher education courses to ensure equivalence of	Formalise a higher education student work submission policy and/or	Dec 2010	Director of Campus (Weybridge) HEWG Chair Performance	Equitable HE student experience	Deputy Principal	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
the student experience (paragraph 23)	procedures for HND courses		Improvement Manager			Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910
• further develop and implement systems for the strategic management of the differing requirements of the various awarding bodies in order to ensure comparability and equality of the student experience across the College (paragraph 27)	Review & map the impact of differing requirements of HEIs on student experience & entitlement Provide comparable student experience for Brooklands College HE students from 2011-12	December 2010 June 2011	Director of Campus (Weybridge) Chair HEWG Performance Improvement Manager Deputy Principal Director of Campus (Weybridge) In consultation with HEIs where required	Opportunities to further develop equitable HE student experience identified Parity of experience for all higher education students at Brooklands College	Deputy Principal Principal	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910 Learner feedback/College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 1011/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 1011
• establish an effective procedure for the introduction and evaluation of learning initiatives, such as the	Develop a framework for the evaluation of new learning initiatives	Jan 2011	Deputy Principal	Formal and effective evaluation of new initiatives and planned	Principal	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
use of anti-plagiarism software, which takes into account both the differing needs of programmes and also of their students (paragraph 36)				roll out		College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910 Student feedback Staff feedback
• further develop and implement effective systems for students to make their views known and for reporting back to them comprehensively in order to ensure that students engage fully with these systems (paragraphs 37, 38)	Review current processes and systems for enabling HE students to make their views known and reporting back	July 2010	Performance Improvement Manager HEWG HE Curriculum Leaders Student Services	Creation of revised systems for enabling student involvement and reporting back actions taken as a result	Director of Campus (Weybridge)	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910/ Student feedback
	Implement revised student feedback activities and reporting back systems	October 2010	Performance Improvement Manager	Comprehensive feedback to and from students	Director of Campus (Weybridge)	College Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan 0910/ College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910/Student feedback

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• establish an effective mechanism for the strategic management of resources in order to support students' learning, ensuring equality of provision (paragraphs 42, 43)	Allocate appropriate funds to support the development of higher education resources	August 2010	Leadership Team	Appropriate level of investment to support development of learning for higher education students	Governors	Higher Education Strategy College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910
• ensure that information provided to students about the possibility of progression from a Foundation Degree to an honours degree is detailed and up to date and is included in course handbooks (paragraph 48).	Ensure detailed and up-to-date progression information is provided to all HE students during their induction Refer students to HEI handbooks & the information about progression. Alert students to HEI progression route induction days	July 2010	HE curriculum leaders	Learner feedback about progression information	Curriculum area managers Director of Campus (Weybridge)	Course Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910 Learner feedback

Brooklands College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following area where it would be **desired** to take action:						
• develop its website information to reflect the distinction between its further and higher education provision in order to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about their studies (paragraph 47).	E-Learning and Marketing to develop and modify home page and website	June 2010	Head of Marketing E-Learning Manager	The College website reflects the distinction between further education and higher education	Deputy Principal	College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document 0910 Marketing & E-Learning Self-Assessment Reports 0910