Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Epping Forest College

October 2010

SR008

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 Epping Forest College carried out in October 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 agreement, for the standards of the award it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programme it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the programme team's active involvement in the Discipline Network Group enables a significant College contribution to the design of the curriculum, the development of teaching and assessment strategies and the dissemination of good practice to maintain and enhance the quality of the provision
- the College's support for staff through reduced contact hours enables the programme team to undertake extensive assessment in practice, considerable external liaison and staff development to support and develop high-quality learning opportunities.

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:

- fully implement the Curriculum Management Committee and Quality meetings, and clearly articulate the reporting lines at all levels of management, both within the College and with the University, to ensure the quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- identify the evidence that informs annual monitoring reports to ensure their rigorous completion and provide clear audit trails for action planning in order to support quality improvement
- clarify and fully implement a quality assurance and monitoring system to ensure the accuracy of public information.

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

- develop a strategic approach to support the development of higher education staff
- implement systematic forms of evaluating the student experience to capture the specific issues of higher education students and inform the quality improvement process
- review the delivery and recording of the induction programme
- develop further use of the virtual learning environment, in line with the e-Learning Strategy, and ensure that students are adequately briefed and supported in its use.

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 Epping Forest 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 the programme which the College delivers on behalf of Anglia Ruskin University (the University). The review was carried out by Ms Maxina Butler-Holmes and Mr Dan Morgan (reviewers), and Mrs Monica Owen (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 body, meetings with staff, students and the partner institution, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice 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 awards, Section D of the Summative review report would normally summarise details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College. However, as the College does not offer any Foundation Degree programmes, Section D of this report contains a statement to reflect this position.

4   The College is a medium-sized general further education college located in West Essex, close to the towns of Loughton and Debden. The College's vision is 'to provide high-quality, inclusive general education for the community it serves'. The majority of students are from West Essex and from economically and socially deprived East London boroughs. The pattern of recruitment means that the College is ethnically diverse. A March 2010 Ofsted Inspection found the majority of its provision satisfactory and improving.

5   The College has approximately 2,400 full-time and 1,200 part-time students, of whom 64 are enrolled on one part-time higher education programme, the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector. The programme is taught by two full-time members of staff. The College offers programmes in 14 subject areas and the programme is located within the Teacher Training Department. In 2007-08 and March 2010 Ofsted inspected the Initial Teacher Training programmes as part of its inspection of Anglia Ruskin University. Although the College's programme was not specifically graded, feedback direct to the College indicated a number of strengths and areas for attention. The conclusions of the 2010 inspection are reflected in the University's Further Education Pathway Improvement Plan.

6   The College offers the following programme, with the full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets:

Validated by Anglia Ruskin University

- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (38).

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

7   The College is a regional partner of Anglia Ruskin University and has delivered teacher training programmes for the University since 2002. The partnership agreement with the University clearly lays out the responsibilities of the College and the University, as well as the governance and financial arrangements of the partnership. The University has ultimate responsibility through its Senate for the academic standards of the award. The University's regulations govern the management and assessment of the programme, the membership of assessment panels and award boards, and the appointment of external examiners. The College is required to contribute to the University's annual monitoring of programmes, and the programme team comments on the Annual Monitoring Report produced by the Anglia Ruskin Pathway Leader.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   The College moved to a new purpose-built state-of-the-art campus in September 2008 on the existing Borders Lane site. There is an Interim Principal and a new senior management team has recently been appointed. A revised Strategic Plan indicates that the College intends to increase higher education provision by 50 full-time equivalent students by 2012 and develop progression pathways for apprentices to higher education. The College Higher Education Strategy 2009 to 2012 also plans for a closer partnership with the University and an increase in the number of partnerships with higher education institutions.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9   Students studying on the higher education programme at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team and a submission was made. Three out of six students expected attended a focus group in June 2010. The Student Adviser chaired the focus group, which analysed 41 responses from a previous questionnaire distributed to the students. This provided the focus of discussion exploring all aspects of the student experience. The Student Adviser drafted the student submission, which one of the students attending the focus group confirmed as a true representation of the discussions. No member of the academic staff was involved in this process and the team considered the submission helpful in highlighting issues and good practice for further enquiry. The team also met students during the review 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?

10   A new management structure has been introduced for 2010-11. The Vice-Principal, Learning and Teaching, is the senior manager responsible for higher education and for liaison between the University and the College. She attends the University's Faculty Liaison Group as required by the partnership agreement. She manages the Curriculum Areas and the Teacher Training Department and acts as Pathway Leader for the programme. The two members of the teaching team undertake the operational activities of running and delivering

the programme, including close liaison with the University's Pathway Leader. The Head of Quality and Learning and Teaching also reports to the Vice-Principal, Learning and Teaching, and works closely with teaching teams, including the teacher training team, to effect quality improvements. The responsibilities for managing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities are clear.

11   The programme is fully integrated into the University's systems to maintain academic standards and promote consistency and quality of learning opportunities. The College staff attend the University's departmental assessment panel and the relevant Discipline Network Group. At this group, colleagues from the University and regional partners meet to share good practice and engage in discussions related to teaching and learning and improving the curriculum. Minutes of meetings showed that the teaching staff are involved in changes to modules and assessment and share ideas and resources through these meetings. The programme team confirmed that the Discipline Network Group meetings are a route for personal development through networking with peers and the sharing of best practice. The programme team's active involvement in the Discipline Network Group enables a significant College contribution to the design of the curriculum, the development of teaching and assessment strategies and the dissemination of good practice to maintain and enhance the quality of the provision, and the team considers this to be good practice.

12   The College's annual monitoring process oversees all its programmes. The programme team produces a College programme review, which feeds into a departmental self-assessment report. The Senior Management Team and the Quality Department review these reports, which inform the College self-assessment, and this is considered at the Corporation's Monitoring Committee. The Vice-Principal, Learning and Teaching, and the Head of Quality report on key performance indicators at this meeting and also reported on the Developmental engagement in assessment. The 2009-10 Quality Improvement Plan incorporates the Developmental engagement recommendations, which were reported to the Senior Management Team and the Corporation's Monitoring Committee. Although the team received an updated Developmental engagement action plan, the team could not identify where progress on these and other actions from the self-assessment have been discussed in any detail, and the updates on the Quality Improvement Plan are not specific.

13   In response to the Developmental engagement action plan, the College has introduced a planning and quality calendar for 2010-11, which includes the University's quality planning and monitoring activity. The aim of this is to ensure that the findings of the University's review and assurance processes are considered by the College's own review processes. While this shows the links between committees, feedback links are less explicit. However, the College has introduced monthly Quality meetings with the Senior Management Team and heads of department to monitor performance and track action and processes. This will include monitoring of all action plans, such as course review and the University Further Education Pathway Improvement Plan arising from the University's 2010 Ofsted inspection of teacher training. A Quality meeting for the teacher training programme had not yet taken place at the time of the Summative review, although, as part of its monitoring of key performance indicators, the College is investigating ways of improving the programme's retention and achievement. The College has not, however, attempted to benchmark its performance with other colleges using available University data. This information would support the monitoring and improvement of the programme's performance.

14   The University requires the College to establish a College Curriculum Management Committee, with course team membership, student and university representation, to oversee the quality assurance of the programme. The University terms of reference and membership of this committee define the University's minimum expectations of local oversight and management of the University's pathways. This committee was approved by the University's

Senate in November 2009, but was not in place at the start of the 2010-11 academic year to ensure greater College oversight of higher education provision as recommended by the Developmental engagement. It is advisable that the College fully implement the Curriculum Management Committee and Quality meetings and clearly articulate the reporting lines at all levels of management, both within the College and with the University, to ensure the quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15   The University's procedures and documentation for the approval of programmes, their assessment and quality assurance all ensure appropriate referencing to the FHEQ, *Code of practice* and, where appropriate, subject benchmarks. Documents such as pathway specifications and module definition forms are set within the context of the Academic Infrastructure. Participation in the Discipline Network Group also enables the programme team to benefit from a range of activities relating to the Academic Infrastructure. Following the Developmental engagement, the programme team has participated in a College staff development workshop on assessment practices in the context of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Student assessment.* There is no evidence of a plan to consider the dissemination and understanding of the other aspects of the Academic Infrastructure in the College.

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

16   The College is required to contribute to the University's annual monitoring of programmes, and the programme team comments on the Annual Monitoring Report produced by the Anglia Ruskin Pathway Leader. This process is supplemented by the College's annual monitoring procedures. During 2009-10 the College revised its internal performance review and management processes to include three points during the year when the College course review is produced, updated and reviewed by the monthly Quality meetings. The Developmental engagement identified that the programme team includes limited details of feedback from the Anglia Ruskin processes for review and action within the College, and this was identified as an area for improvement by a College audit. The most recent course review document contains little evidence to support perceived strengths and weaknesses, with action plans lacking specific detail. There is no clear guidance to help programme staff produce more evaluative reports that draw upon external examiner and student feedback. However, although the College has not prioritised the programme for its monthly Quality meetings to provide evidence of how this process would support improvement, the College is committed through its Quality Improvement Strategy to the carrying out of rigorous course reviews. The Quality Improvement Plan dated July 2010 clearly indicates that the course review will capture information from the Anglia Ruskin quality assurance processes during 2010-11. It is advisable that the College identify the evidence that informs annual monitoring reports to ensure their rigorous completion and provide clear audit trails for action planning in order to support quality improvement.

17   External examiners have a substantial role in the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards, in line with the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining.* External examiners, appointed by the University, carry out external monitoring, including the sampling of student work across the partnership, according to the University's Code of Practice on External Examiners for Taught Programmes. External examiners rarely comment in their reports on a specific college's assessment, but take an effective overall view of academic standards across the Anglia Ruskin provision. The external examiner provides specific feedback to the College at the departmental assessment panel. For example, notes of the 2010 summer panel indicate improvements in the quality of Epping

Forest feedback, which was more detailed and clearly linked to learning outcomes. The external examiner's feedback and written report contribute to the University Further Education Pathway Improvement Plan and are discussed at the Discipline Network Group meetings.

18   The programme team carries out marking, second marking and moderation according to the University's Code of Practice on the Assessment of Students. The external examiner reports confirm that effective cross-college moderation takes place. One of the key actions in the University's Further Education Pathway Improvement Plan is to ensure more effective moderation of observations by tutors and mentors. Paired observations are carried out with other colleges and the University's staff, and mentor training has taken place. The 2009-10 external examiner's report notes that there is considerable improvement in the consistency of tutor feedback on observations across all partners. The College has initiated a new approach of quarterly audits of internal verification and moderation processes. The Developmental engagement confirmed that student work on the programme meets the expectations of the pathway specification and is at the appropriate level in line with the FHEQ. Students confirmed that assessment feedback is effective and timely.

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

19   The self-evaluation states that the College Higher Education Strategy will be revised in 2010-11 to include staff development as a key element in planning future higher education provision. As well as the Discipline Network Group and associated assessment meetings, the teaching team has attended a number of development events through the Anglia Ruskin partnership. These include activities on new forms of assessment and individual learning plan training. The College recognises the value of this staff development and recognises the commitment in terms of a significant time allowance for the teaching team. This allows the programme team to attend University events and undertake professional updating and scholarly activity. As a result of the University partnership, the programme team is also very familiar with the Academic Infrastructure.

20   An Anglia Ruskin staff development day in March focused on assessment, and has helped frame ongoing discussions at the College on how academic standards can be maintained through assessment practice. This wasan important theme for the College staff development programme during 2010, and the programme team has attended College training events to support improvements in assessment practice. However, there is no evidence since the Developmental engagement of a strategy in place to support higher education staff development. It is desirable that the College develop a strategic approach to support the development of higher education staff.

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 body.

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

How are responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

21   Line management responsibility and reporting arrangements for the quality of learning opportunities are detailed in paragraphs 10 to 14. The Head of Learner Services, who is responsible for disability services, additional learner support, careers advice and guidance and library services, also reports to the Vice-Principal, Learning and Teaching. She works closely with the Head of Quality and Learning and Teaching and the Head of e-Learning to deliver high-quality learning opportunities. The two members of the programme team share many of the responsibilities of a pathway leader, including interviewing applicants, enrolments, arranging assessment and attending all relevant meetings at the University.

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

22   The College is responsible for the recruitment and admission of students, the general welfare and discipline of the students and the delivery and support of the curriculum. This includes the appointment and support of suitably qualified staff, the provision of library services, computing facilities and welfare services. The process by which the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to awarding bodies is detailed in paragraphs 16 to 18. Since the Developmental engagement the team have held more formal recorded meetings, which have including the Head of Quality and Learning and Teaching and the Vice Principal, Learning and Teaching. The brief notes of the meetings indicate a strong focus on the quality of learning opportunities, such as tutorial arrangements and teaching observations, but limited discussion on external examiner reports and feedback from moderation and assessment meetings.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

23   The College has considered the *Code of practice* in the development of relevant policies and procedures. For example, the College's admissions policy procedures are aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education.* During the admissions process students are interviewed and asked to complete numeracy, literacy and academic exercises to ensure their suitability for the course. In order to improve the retention and completion rate on the course, the admissions practice is currently being updated to include a more rigorous assessment of the student's potential to complete the programme with a particular focus on their academic abilities. The students reported that the admissions process was effective. Staff also develop their understanding of the *Code of practice* through the Discipline Network Group meetings and other Anglia Ruskin events and clearly understand the use of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

24   Overall, the team concludes that there are effective College systems to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. There is a new 2010 Human Resources Strategy, and as part of the College's overall improvement plan there is a system for annual teaching observations and performance review. Guidance explains how teaching observations are linked to the grading of performance. The teacher training team participate

in this process and are also observed by staff from the University Discipline Network Group to support the consistency and quality of teaching across the partnership.

25   There is a College Learning and Teaching policy, which is supported by college-wide strategies for e-learning and additional learning support. Teaching strategies and resources are discussed, developed and shared at the Discipline Network Group. Teaching observations of students' professional practice by tutors and mentors are an integral part of the programme. Paired observations are undertaken with staff from across the partnership and the programme team has been involved in developing more effective feedback from observations.

26   The College involves students in the evaluation of their learning experience in various ways. All module tutors are required to undertake end-of-module evaluations using standard University-designed questionnaires. The University processes the Anglia Ruskin module evaluations centrally and the results are sent to the relevant University faculties and to the College to inform annual monitoring. The University also undertakes student satisfaction surveys, which are shared with the College and are considered by the programme team. The College intends to hold regular focus groups with the students, the findings of which will be discussed at the new programme committee. A recent college-wide survey on the success of admissions and the enrolment process was undermined by a fault with the electronic survey, and the students reported difficulties in completing the paper-based questionnaire.

27   Following the Developmental engagement recommendation, student representatives have now been elected for each year group. In line with College policy, course representatives are expected to attend the Student Council once a month and meet the Head of Department twice termly. A leaflet is provided to students explaining the role, but the first-year student representatives had little understanding of their role and had not received any explicit training. The College intends to introduce a formal programme committee, which would also include student representatives. These meetings would also provide more formal input into the course review process. Students confirmed that there are no problems in making their views heard. It is desirable that the College implement systematic forms of evaluating the student experience to capture the specific issues of higher education students and inform the quality improvement process.

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

28   College policy entitles students to individual feedback on assessment through tutorials. Students are given the opportunity to attend a one-to-one tutorial meeting with their tutors on completion of their modules, and these are now a more formalised requirement of the programme, following the recommendation of the Developmental engagement. This was evident in the completion of tutorial record forms. Students are also provided feedback through individual learning plans, which currently are largely paper-based and which are now used more systematically at tutorials to provide assessment feedback.

29   An appropriate induction programme is stated in the College Tutorial Policy and Learner Engagement Policy. The teacher training programme does use the College induction checklist and customises it to suit the programme's needs. However, some of the College induction activities are not covered directly, and students do not have a record of whether they have undertaken all the activities. It is desirable that the College review the delivery and recording of the induction programme**.**

30   Students are given full information on the assessment of observations and on the role of the mentor. Mentors receive a comprehensive guide and are offered training. Information is provided to employers, and this is supported by an Employer Agreement that

commits the employer to providing the minimum number of hours of teaching practice and a Subject Specialist Mentor in the workplace. The University Ofsted Inspections for teacher training identified the continued development and integration of subject-specialist mentors as an area for attention. Progress has been made through the University Further Education Pathway Improvement Plan, and the students expressed satisfaction with their mentors.

31   There is support for students with disabilities, and additional learning support, with a detailed Additional Learning Support Strategy and Action Plan. Staff gave examples of help provided to students with dyslexia and partially-sighted students. There is a range of central support services including counselling and careers, although the students were not formally introduced to the range of services available, with the exception of the Learning Resource Centre. The programme team provides careers advice and students can also access the University careers service. All these services are monitored through annual monitoring, student feedback and the management and committee structure.

32   It is a requirement of the partnership agreement that a Student Adviser approved by the University supports the programme. The Student Adviser has a key role in implementing the University's Academic Regulations. The role includes authorising extensions to assignment deadlines, the administration of pleas in mitigation of assessment outcomes, withdrawals and deregistration. The students appreciated the support they received from the Student Adviser, particularly in resolving pastoral and financial difficulties. The students also confirmed that the teaching team were very helpful and accessible by phone, email and in person.

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

33   In promoting high-quality learning, the programme team engages effectively with the College's staff development programme. This includes a continuing professional development day focusing on teaching and learning and advanced practitioner workshops, at which the team has participated in support of more effective practice. In response to the University's Ofsted Inspection, the College is planning a specific staff development session to support literacy, reading, writing, speaking and listening in November 2010. The College has introduced a continuing professional development system that logs all staff development activity. This is supported by a new electronic system that records the staff development needs identified through performance review and integrates them with the continuing professional development system. Records show that the programme team has undertaken a wide range of activities both within the College and at the University to support the quality of learning opportunities, including equality and diversity training. The impact of these activities is assessed through performance review and annual monitoring.

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?

34   The Senior Management Team is responsible for resourcing the programme through the College budgetary process. Funding is received from the University and the programme team is given the opportunity to indicate priorities to the Senior Management Team to ensure that resources are adequate for the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

35   Students and staff have access to the University's virtual learning environment and library. The College's Learning Resource Centre coordinates the purchase of books and other media following recommendations from programme teams, and the provision of

e-books has increased. In response to student feedback there has been an extension of library hours, although the library still shuts early on a Thursday.

36   The College has a four-year plan for the implementation of its e-Learning Strategy including the use of the virtual learning environment. The College has had technical difficulties with the virtual learning environment system, email and the College website. The College has a detailed plan to improve this position in a timely manner and has engaged a developer to upgrade the website and launch it imminently. There are ongoing attempts to improve the quality of the materials and to increase the use of interactive functions, as well as remote access for students. New students had not yet received any induction on using the virtual learning environment and had not received the full logging-in facility. It is desirable that the programme develops further use of the virtual learning environment, in line with the e-Learning Strategy, and ensures that students are adequately briefed and supported in its use.

37   The programme has a dedicated teaching room, which is well equipped. The academic staff are appointed by the College and approved by the University. They are well qualified to meet the needs of the provision, and are supported by reduced contact hours. The College's support for staff through reduced contact hours enables the programme team to undertake the extensive assessment in practice, considerable external liaison and staff development to support and develop high-quality learning opportunities, and is good practice. Overall, the College ensures the sufficiency and accessibility of learning resources to enable students to achieve the programme's intended learning outcomes.

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 body 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?

38   The Academic Agreement with the University states that within University protocols the College is responsible for the publication of the materials used in the publicity for the programme. The University retains the right to approve and monitor all advertising and promotional materials. The College's Marketing Department, in liaison with the programme team, produces an entry to the part-time prospectus and a supplementary programme leaflet. The College's website describes briefly the programme. The students consider that the information available prior to application is adequate.

39   Students are provided, at induction, with material published by the University, including the Undergraduate Student Handbook, Abridged Assessment Regulations and Academic Regulations. In these documents no local information can be included. The University produces programme handbooks and module guides, which provide comprehensive information on the structure, delivery and assessment of the programme. The handbooks are discussed at the Discipline Network Group and the College is able to make appropriate additions to customise them for the students. A mentor handbook devised through the partnership provides guidance for mentors. The students confirmed that they receive comprehensive information about the teaching and assessment of the programme, although they are not given an annual assessment calendar.

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

40   The Marketing Department takes responsibility for producing, in College house style, the prospectus and programme leaflets, and for maintaining information on the College's external website. They use information provided by the programme tutors, who liaise closely with the University Pathway Leader to ensure that information is current. There is no formal contact between the Marketing Department and the University and no formal policies to direct the production of materials. The most recent programme leaflet advertising the programme makes no mention of any fees or the requirement to have a workplace mentor. The College intends to put in place more formal communications and procedures, which would ensure relevant information is included in all publicity materials.

41   The University approves the majority of programme documents, and the Head of Department has responsibility for the final checking of handbooks and other programme information at the College, including information for employers and mentors. This process had not yet taken place for the 2010-11 academic year. The existing College electronic media problems have meant that the updating of handbooks on the virtual learning environment has not taken place. The College is aware of the situation and imminent improvements to the electronic media will enable the updating problems to be addressed. The self-evaluation and staff indicated that the introduction of formal systems to protect the currency and integrity of information is a key area of improvement. The students and employers have up-to-date information in paper form. It is advisable that the College clarify and fully implement a quality assurance and monitoring system to ensure the accuracy of public information.

The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programme it delivers.

C   Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

42   The Developmental engagement in assessment was undertaken in January 2010. The lines of enquiry covered all the core themes and were as follows:

Line of enquiry 1: How does the College assure itself that it is fulfilling the requirements of the awarding body?

Line of enquiry 2: To what extent is feedback on assessment effective, rigorous and fair?

Line of enquiry 3: How far is information provided to students about the assessment process comprehensive, consistent, clear and accurate?

43   These lines of enquiry covered the implementation of the awarding body regulations on assessment across the programme and the responsibilities of the College in these processes.

44   The Developmental engagement identified two areas of good practice. Firstly, the programme team is actively involved in agreeing the assessment strategy, the design of assignment briefs and the dissemination of good assessment practice through the Discipline Network Group. Secondly, peer assessment enables students to exchange ideas and improve their assessment performance.

45   The team advised that the College should hold formal minuted programme team meetings, which will support further effective action planning and the assessment process. It was also advisable that the College review the quality assurance system to ensure a more effective oversight of higher education and the awarding body's assessment process. The team also recommended that it would be desirable that the College ensure that student representatives are in place to enable participation in the programme review processes; develop a more systematic approach to student assessment feedback through the tutorial processes; and review its provision of higher education staff development for assessment. It would also be desirable that the College continue the development of the virtual learning environment and encourage the students' use of it to support assessment; continue the development of the subject specialists to provide effective information and support for the students; and provide the students with information from the external examiner and other University meetings.

D   Foundation Degrees

46   The College does not offer any Foundation Degrees.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

47   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Epping Forest 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 body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, Anglia Ruskin University.

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

- the programme team's active involvement in the Discipline Network Group enables a significant College contribution to the design of the curriculum, the development of teaching and assessment strategies and the dissemination of good practice to maintain and enhance the quality of the provision (paragraph 11)
- the College's support for staff through reduced contact hours enables the programme team to undertake extensive assessment in practice, considerable external liaison, and staff development to support and develop high-quality learning opportunities (paragraph 37).

49   The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding body.

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

- fully implement the Curriculum Management Committee and Quality meetings, and clearly articulate the reporting lines at all levels of management, both within the College and with the University, to ensure the quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 12 to 14)
- identify the evidence that informs annual monitoring reports to ensure their rigorous completion and provide clear audit trails for action planning in order to support quality improvement (paragraph 16)

- clarify and fully implement a quality assurance and monitoring system to ensure the accuracy of public information (paragraph 41).

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

- develop a strategic approach to support the development of higher education staff (paragraph 20)
- implement systematic forms of evaluating the student experience to capture the specific issues of higher education students and inform the quality improvement process (paragraphs 26 and 27)
- review the delivery and recording of the induction programme (paragraph 29)
- develop further use of the virtual learning environment, in line with the e-Learning Strategy, and ensure that students are adequately briefed and supported in its use (paragraph 36).

52   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes 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 body.

53   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes 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.

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

Epping Forest College action plan relating to the Summative review: October 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 programme team's active involvement in the Discipline Network Group enables a significant College contribution to the design of the curriculum, the development of teaching and assessment strategies and the dissemination of good practice to maintain and enhance the quality of the provision (paragraph 11)	Active participation in the delivery of workshops for new Epping Forest College staff on alternative models of assessment	27 January (six-weekly)	Epping Forest College Quality and Learning and Teaching Manager, Initial Teacher Training Team	Observation of learning and teaching of new Epping Forest College staff evidences use of varied assessment strategies	Curriculum Management Committee/ Epping Forest College Quality Department	New to Epping Forest College staff evaluate the workshops and reflect on their impact on their practice; Quality Department reviews impact of sessions

• the College's support for staff through reduced contact hours enables the programme team to undertake extensive assessment in practice, considerable external liaison and staff development to support and develop high-quality learning opportunities (paragraph 37)	Initial Teacher Training team to contribute to Epping Forest College staff development by providing mentor training and supporting training of learning support workers One of the Teaching team to continue work as Qualified Teaching Status induction tutor for probationers	Mentor Training completed 26/11/10 & 3/12/10 More mentor training to take place in September 2011 Teacher trainer has undertaken probationer observations	Initial Teacher Training Team, Quality Department/Curriculum Heads/Additional Learning Support Coordinator, Human Resources Department	Epping Forest College staff development programme successfully deploys Teacher Training research and development work for the benefit of other staff All Qualified Teaching Status staff successfully complete their probationary period	Quality Department/ Monitoring Committee	Report on the impact of staff development activities will review the success of this and is to be presented to the monitoring committee at the end of the academic year Audit of probationer records

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:						
• fully implement the Curriculum Management Committee and Quality meetings, and clearly articulate the reporting lines at all levels of management, both within the College and with the University, to ensure the quality assurance and enhancement of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 12 to 14)	Agree terms of reference Hold half-termly meetings Include actions in Epping Forest College Quality Improvement Plan Share actions with Corporation and Monitoring Committee as appropriate New Course Review fit for Higher Education purposes devised. Reporting cycle agreed	First meeting held 26/11/10, terms of reference agreed and Annual Monitoring Report target set January 2011	Quality Department, Initial Teacher Training team, Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, Anglia Ruskin Pathway Leader	Terms of reference agreed. Meetings held and programmed for the rest of the academic year Reporting cycle contributes to action planning at all levels of the programme. Quality Improvement Plan for the following academic year includes details of partnership review processes	Anglia Ruskin Quality Department, Epping Forest College Monitoring Committee	End-of-year review on the effectiveness of the Curriculum Management Committee and its contribution to quality improvement to be produced for Anglia Ruskin and Epping Forest College's respective quality departments

• identify the evidence that informs annual monitoring reports to ensure their rigorous completion and provide clear audit trails for action planning in order to support quality improvement (paragraph 16)	Further Education Improvement Plan discussed at Curriculum Management Committee meeting and integrated into Epping Forest College action plan	Annual Monitoring Report completed 18/12/10 & sent to Anglia Ruskin University and monitored by Curriculum Management Committee	Initial Teacher Training team, Curriculum Management Committee	Action plan and Further Education Improvement Plan updated	Reported to Epping Forest College Senior Management Team, Curriculum Management Committee, Anglia Ruskin University Pathway Leader	Anglia Ruskin University Quality Audit
• clarify and fully implement a quality assurance and monitoring system to ensure the accuracy of public information (paragraph 41)	Course team to devise materials - quality checked by Epping Forest College Quality and Learning and Teaching Manager, Epping Forest College Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, Marketing Officer for the Faculty of Education at Anglia Ruskin University Inclusion of student handbook in externally accessible virtual learning environment to be discussed at Discipline Network Group	1 April 2011	Initial Teacher Training team, Anglia Ruskin University and Epping Forest College's Marketing Departments, Epping Forest College Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, Epping Forest College Quality and Learning and Teaching Manager	An audit trail ensuring the integrity of information is demonstrated	Epping Forest College Vice-Principal Curriculum, Operations, Resources and Efficiency	Learner Voice Audit

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:						
• develop a strategic approach to support the development of higher education staff (paragraph 20)	Appraisal meetings to be undertaken Epping Forest College Quality Department to receive information on Anglia Ruskin University staff development strategy and opportunities Institute for Learning action plan	By February 2011	Initial Teacher Training Team, Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, Epping Forest College Quality Department	Individual staff development plans integrate Anglia Ruskin University and Epping Forest College-led activity	Epping Forest College Quality Department	Reviewed at individual performance reviews
• implement systematic forms of evaluating the student experience to capture the specific issues of higher education students and inform the quality improvement process (paragraphs 26 and 27)	Liaise with Learner Engagement Manager to incorporate Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector course representatives into Epping Forest College reporting system Customise learner voice pro forma and module survey	January 2011 18 December 2010	Initial Teacher Training team, Learner Engagement Manager, Epping Forest College Quality Department	Learner voice informs Quality Improvement Plan with a minimum of 85% satisfaction rate	Epping Forest College Senior Management Team	College Self-evaluation Report

• review the delivery and recording of the induction programme (paragraph 29)	Create new induction pack and checklist. Agree format at Curriculum Management Committee

Evaluate Learner Survey data | March 2011

Feb 2011 | Initial Teacher Training Team, Curriculum Management Committee, Student Adviser | In-class mini survey at week four with 85% minimum satisfaction level | Epping Forest College Quality Department, Anglia Ruskin Pathway Leader | Course review for the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector programme |
| • develop further use of the virtual learning environment, in line with the e-Learning Strategy, and ensure that students are adequately briefed and supported in its use (paragraph 36) | Pathway Leader to arrange training for Initial Teacher Training staff with Anglia Ruskin University Technologist e-Learning Manager to support information learning technology delivery

e-Learning guide created to include guidance on how students can access Anglia Ruskin University digital library

e-Learning coach assigned to the area. | February 2011

January 2011 | Anglia Ruskin University Pathway Leader, Anglia Ruskin University Technologist, Head of e-Learning at Epping Forest College | Improved usage of all digital resources available through Epping Forest College and through Anglia Ruskin University

Institute for Learning continuing professional development action planning used

Students evidence use of e-learning in the classes they deliver | Curriculum Management Committee | Course review |