Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

St Vincent College

June 2010

SR104/2009

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 St Vincent College carried out in June 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 newly developed Higher Education Self-assessment Report and action plan is both evaluative and developmental, and makes an effective addition to the College's quality assurance cycle
- all levels of staff, including members of the governing body, senior management, programme leaders and teaching staff are fully engaged in the process of quality assurance
- the close working relationship with both awarding bodies underpins the security of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience
- the involvement of staff in assessment standardisation with other colleges underpins the rigorous assessment practice evident on the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education
- students make valuable contributions to the enhancement of their programmes, making effective use of the many feedback opportunities that are available to them.

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 **desirable** for the College to:

- continue the process of embedding the Academic Infrastructure within higher education policy and practice
- consolidate the role of the Higher Education Managers' Committee as a forum for maintaining and enhancing the quality and the profile of the provision
- continue to encourage staff to liaise with colleagues at other colleges and at the awarding bodies in order to enhance levels of professional activity and scholarship
- keep under review the level of resource support for the provision, with particular reference to electronic and printed materials.

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 St Vincent 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 the University of Greenwich and the University of Portsmouth. The review was carried out by Ms Clare Davison and Mr Alan Weale (reviewers), and Dr Richard Wheeler (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, 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. As the total number of full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the review was conducted as a desk-based study. 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 programme delivered at the College.

4   The College was established as an open access community sixth-form college in September 1987. The main college campus is a 32-acre site situated on the tidal Forton Creek in Gosport. The College also offers programmes at a number of other locations in the community. As a peninsula, the Gosport area does not have a good transport infrastructure and this discourages many adults from travelling outside their immediate residential area. St Vincent has a strong commitment to widening participation in post-16 education and its mission is to inspire all its students to achieve their full potential. The College offers an open access opportunity for adults to participate in a range of adult education programmes, including a limited offer at higher education level.

5   The College has held the contract for the management of the Essential Skills Support Unit since December 2003. The Unit is a centre of excellence for professional development and quality improvement for organisations, managers and practitioners involved in Skills for Life teaching, including literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. It is also a resource for businesses and other organisations seeking to improve the skills of their workforces or the communities in which they operate.

6   In 2009-10, the College has 1,043 full-time and 697 part-time Learning and Skills Council funded learners, including 29 Access to higher education students. There are a further 486 personal and community development learning adults enrolled at the College. The College has a total of 82 HEFCE-funded learners. These comprise 54 part-time learners on the two established higher education programmes based at the main college campus, and an additional 28 learners enrolled on the new level 5 Diploma, delivered through the Essential Skills Support Unit. A total of eight full-time and six part-time staff contribute to the teaching of the HEFCE-funded programmes.

Integrated quality and enhancement review

7   The higher education awards that are funded by HEFCE are listed below, beneath their awarding bodies.

University of Greenwich	Students (full-time equivalents)
Part-time	
Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education	17
Additional Diploma in teaching Literacy/English for speakers of other languages	6
Additional Diploma in teaching Numeracy	3
University of Portsmouth	
Part-time	
FdA Early Years Care & Education	15.5

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

8   The College has signed two partnership agreements with the University of Greenwich. The first refers to the delivery of the University's Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education, which is a distance learning programme. The University accepts formal responsibility for the approval and review of programmes, and for the mechanisms of quality assurance developed and approved within the University. However, it is made clear that, as far as possible, St Vincent College procedures for quality assurance will be utilised, day-to-day delivery of the programme will be delegated to the College, and annual programme monitoring reports will be prepared and scrutinised according to prevailing University of Greenwich requirements. The awards will be linked with the School of Education at the University. The recruitment, admission and registration of students are the responsibility of the College.

9   A separate memorandum of agreement between the University of Greenwich and the Essential Skills Support Unit sets out the framework for the delivery of the Diploma programmes. Responsibility for the day-to-day delivery of the programmes is vested in the Unit's programme leader, in consultation with the programme team and programme committee. Nationally, there are four Essential Skills Support Units, which includes the one managed by the College. Arrangements for the delivery, management and quality assurance of the programmes are similar to those indicated in paragraph 8. The Essential Skills Support Unit is responsible for marketing and recruitment.

10   The agreement with the University of Portsmouth refers to the delivery of the University's three-year part-time Foundation Degree in Early Years Care & Education. It makes clear that the University is fully accountable to HEFCE for its franchise students, and for the oversight and maintenance of all aspects of finance, administration and quality. The University is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

11   In September 2009, the College introduced the level 5 subject Additional Diplomas in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, funded through the University of Greenwich. These are designed to support Skills for Life practitioners across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and are offered flexibly at a time and place to suit the practitioners. The College is exploring the development of a Year 0 programme in Graphical Design and Photography, in conjunction with Southampton Solent University, and a

Foundation Degree in learning support through the University of Portsmouth. However, both are subject to funding constraints.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

12   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. Because of the small size of the provision, and the lack of a common time when the higher education students from different programmes and different years are available, it was not feasible to prepare a common students' written submission. However, representatives from different programmes and years were able to attend a meeting with the review coordinator. A formal note of this meeting was taken by the review support officer and the views of students were made available to members of the team. Overall, students are strongly supportive of the provision and confirm that full account of their views is taken by the College.

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?

13   There are clear responsibilities and reporting arrangements for managing and delivering higher education standards. The Principal has overall responsibility for academic standards. The Assistant Principal (Adult and Community) is responsible for all adult learning which includes the higher education provision and reports to the senior management team on higher education issues on a weekly basis. An Adult Curriculum Manager and a college Quality Manager report to the Assistant Principal. They play key roles in the delivery and quality assurance of the provision. Higher education course coordinators have responsibility for the organisational aspects of programmes. They produce self-assessment reports and action plans for college quality assurance, and annual monitoring reports for the awarding bodies.

14   A clear quality assurance policy statement is incorporated in a comprehensive Quality Manual that takes account of IQER processes as well as those that apply to the further education programmes. Together with a published quality cycle document, this provides a rigorous and transparent framework for the assurance of standards. The key elements of the framework are the annual self-assessment reports for all curriculum areas, lesson observation, internal quality review, external quality review and newly qualified teacher induction. The team notes that the annual quality cycle is effectively implemented for the higher education provision.

15   Regular monitoring and programme review takes place throughout the academic year. Since the Developmental engagement, the College has introduced an overarching self-assessment report, specifically for the higher education provision, mapped to the IQER Core themes. The Higher Education Self-assessment Report for 2008-09 is appropriately reflective and evaluative and includes a comprehensive and well-structured action plan. The team considers the report to be good practice, as it provides an important addition to the College's quality assurance framework and cycle.

16   The self-assessment report is validated by a panel consisting of the Quality Manager, members of the senior management team and a representative of the governing body. Course coordinators complete individual end-of-course reviews on an annual basis. The findings of these reviews are incorporated in a Higher Education Self-assessment Report which is subject to scrutiny by the panel. The implementation of the action plan is monitored and there is a formal mid-year review in the spring term. It is good practice that all levels of staff, including members of the governing body, senior management, course coordinators and teaching staff are fully engaged in the process of quality assurance.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

17   The College is engaging increasingly with the Academic Infrastructure in its management of standards and quality. Programme specifications are considered and approved at validation and periodic review by the awarding bodies, and are communicated to students in an appropriate format in student handbooks. However, the College recognises that staff awareness and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure needs to be improved. The team is pleased to note a recent staff development event, organised jointly with another college, in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth, focusing on the Academic Infrastructure. A scrutiny of college documentation revealed references to various elements of the Academic Infrastructure, for example in the Quality Assurance policy, Quality Manual and self-assessment reports. The references tend to be implicit rather than explicit and the College should consider giving greater prominence to the Academic Infrastructure in its quality assurance policies, procedures, guidelines and reporting. It would be desirable for the College to continue the process of embedding the Academic Infrastructure within higher education policy and practice.

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   Each programme has a coordinator and partner contact who liaises with the relevant awarding body. Each of the awarding bodies also appoints a link tutor who is responsible for monitoring the provision. The awarding bodies each receive an annual report from the College. The University of Portsmouth receives an Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review that requires the College to cite evidence in support of the maintenance of academic standards. It also carries out 3-yearly periodic reviews of its Foundation Degree provision. The University of Greenwich requires an annual Programme Monitoring Report that includes explicit reporting on academic standards. There are good working relationships between the College and its awarding body partners, and the link tutor arrangements are effective. A close working relationship with both awarding bodies underpins the security of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. This constitutes good practice.

19   The assessment of student work is undertaken by college staff and is internally moderated prior to university moderation. The awarding bodies provide guidelines for moderation which the College implements effectively. Decisions about assessment, progression and final awards are the responsibility of the University Examination or Assessment Boards. Staff attend University of Portsmouth Assessment Board Meetings where unit evaluations are considered. The College sends samples of assessed work to be moderated by the University and receives feedback on the quality of assessment.

20   For the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education, there are local cluster meetings where staff from a number of network colleges undertake assessment standardisation. Samples from the cluster meetings are then subject to further moderation by University of Greenwich staff. Minutes of the cluster meetings demonstrate that assessment decisions are given careful consideration with particular attention paid to establishing consistency across partners. The team concludes that staff involvement in this

standardisation process is an area of good practice in that it underpins the rigorous assessment practice for the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education.

21   External examiners are appointed by and report to the awarding bodies. Copies of their annual reports are forwarded by both partner universities to the College. Responses to external examiner reports and relevant actions arising from them are evident in the Higher Education Self-assessment Report for 2008-09. The external examiner for the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education visits the College once a year to meet with staff. Programme teams discuss external examiner reports at team meetings. External examiners confirm that students are achieving the intended learning outcomes and that the standards and quality of the provision are comparable with those elsewhere. The team concludes that the College reflects seriously on the issues raised by external examiners and responds appropriately.

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

22   The College has a staff development policy that applies to all full-time and part-time staff. A wide-ranging programme of in-service training is provided, with a small but appropriate number of the sessions relating directly to the delivery of higher education provision. All staff teaching on higher education programmes are graduates and teacher-trained. Staff are also able to access external staff development opportunities, including attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars. College staff who teach on University of Portsmouth programmes attend university organised staff development events. Examples of these in 2008-09 include 'The role of assessment and feedback in supporting achievement' and 'Developing HE level Assessment and Marking Processes'.
The collaborative conference on the Academic Infrastructure, to which reference is made in paragraph 17, is intended to be the forerunner of planned inter-collegiate staff development in 2010-11.

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?

23   The College delegates the management of the quality of learning opportunities through the same structure and reporting arrangements as described in paragraphs 13-16. Additionally, there is a newly established Higher Education Managers' Committee, consisting of the Assistant Principal for Adult Provision; the Quality Manager; the Curriculum Manager for Vocational Provision, who is also the University of Portsmouth partner contact; the Curriculum Manager for Adult Provision; and the Course Coordinator for the University of Greenwich teacher training programme. The inclusion of senior management in this group raises the profile of the higher education provision in the College. It would now be desirable for the College to consolidate the work of the Higher Education Managers' Committee as a forum for maintaining and enhancing the quality and profile of the provision.

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

24   The arrangements described in paragraphs 19-20 make a significant contribution to maintaining the quality of learning opportunities as well as fulfilling the College's obligations to the awarding bodies for the maintenance of academic standards. The link tutor arrangements work effectively to enhance the provision. The self-assessment and monitoring reports at various levels and various stages in the process of quality assurance give due attention and significance to the quality of learning opportunities.

25   Curriculum development is the responsibility of the awarding bodies but both university partners encourage college staff to be involved and to contribute. Changes to University of Portsmouth courses are disseminated through partnership meetings such as the Board of Tutors or Unit Assessment Boards. The University of Greenwich has update meetings with college coordinators and other interested staff where feedback on curriculum developments is discussed. Learning opportunities, including resources, are kept under review by course coordinators and figure prominently in annual monitoring and end of course reviews.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26   The College has a clear commitment to staff development to enhance awareness and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure. The *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* has been influential in the assessment process, and it would now be desirable for the Academic Infrastructure to be reflected explicitly in quality assurance policy and practice across the higher education provision.

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

27   The staff, who are well qualified and teacher-trained, are supported by the College to enhance their qualifications and professional experience. The University of Portsmouth scrutinises the curricula vitae of all proposed tutors and approves their engagement with the programme. In addition to the two tutors who are mainly responsible for delivering the programme, other staff contribute on specific topics, for example the use of spreadsheets, the use and interpretation of data, and preparing a literature review. For the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education and for the Additional Diploma provision, staff draw on the work experience of students who are already in teaching and training posts. For the distance learning provision, while the production of teaching materials is the responsibility of the University of Greenwich, the delivery of the programme is carefully monitored and evaluated by both partners. For example, the evaluations of the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education Saturday study workshops are used to inform future training.

28   The key document for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning is the Higher Education Self-assessment Report, as indicated in paragraph 15. This gives due attention to teaching and learning. A higher education assessment for learning policy is now in place. This supplements the assessment policies of the two universities and the generic college policy and practice set out in the Quality Manual. Staff have access to the respective virtual learning environments of both awarding bodies as well as the University of Portsmouth library resources to support their teaching and individual development.

29   A variety of mechanisms is used to gather student feedback. These include student year representatives and a focus group for the Foundation Degree, regular surveys conducted by the College and its university partners, and informal personal and tutorial contact. The feedback from students is generally positive. They commend the support they

get from the teaching staff. A 'You said: We did' board has enhanced communication since being set up in the student refectory in response to student views. Overall, students make valuable contributions to the enhancement of their programmes, making effective use of the many feedback opportunities that are available to them. This represents good practice.

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

30   There is a well established tutorial system which offers good academic support for students. The regular tutorials are appreciated by students, although Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education students would welcome more time devoted to these on their distance learning programme. Students greatly value the fact that tutors communicate by electronic mail as well as face-to-face. The Developmental engagement identified as good practice the strong tutorial support for students and the use of positive critical feedback in oral, written and electronic form on student assignments and teaching practice.

31   Students recognise the importance of the contribution of Foundation Direct, a study skills support programme at the University of Portsmouth. Following the end of funding for this project in autumn 2010, the College will identify other ways to provide additional support to students. It plans to introduce improved induction materials, in particular an academic writing exercise; greater encouragement for students to self-refer at interview; and enhanced access to the Learndirect portal at the College.

32   Workplace mentors for the Foundation Degree provide a valuable addition to the support provided for students in the workplace. The mentors are able to access training and development opportunities at the College.

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

33   As indicated in paragraph 22, the College supports staff development across the College. In the summer term, at least a full day is spent with a programme of activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This then feeds into work over several days and weeks in curriculum teams on reviewing programmes and planning for the next academic year.

34   The University of Greenwich organises quarterly conferences for staff teaching on the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education and Additional Diploma programmes. These cover both subject content and relevant aspects of pedagogy. Members of the Essential Skills Support Unit complete at least 30 hours of continuing professional development annually, including activities relevant to their teaching on the Additional Diplomas.

35   For individual staff, continuing professional development needs are identified at mid and end-of year reviews. The College operates a programme of lesson observation for all staff and is seeking to adopt a peer-review profile for staff teaching on the higher education provision.

36   The College has responded to a Developmental engagement desirable recommendation to strengthen links between staff teaching on programmes of the Universities of Greenwich and Portsmouth and, where appropriate, with staff involved in programme delivery at partner institutions. Progress has been made in sharing good practice with staff at another Hampshire college, and this has led to specific plans for inter-collegiate staff development on the Foundation Degree in 2010-11. Staff will be encouraged to share induction ideas by email, consider the development of a preparatory course for new students and feed ideas into further higher education conferences. At present, College staff have limited engagement with scholarship and there is no tradition of research activity. It would

therefore be desirable for the College to continue its encouragement for staff to engage with colleagues at other colleges and at the awarding bodies in order to enhance levels of professional activity and scholarship.

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?

37   Resource issues figure appropriately in documents at various stages in the College's quality cycle, including the end of course reviews and the Higher Education Self-assessment Report for 2008-09. The College is fully aware of student views, which draw attention to the need to strengthen the resource provision for both printed and electronic materials. Students cite problems of access to computers at the College, while University of Greenwich students point to similar difficulties with regard to the University's virtual learning environment portal. However, students acknowledge the help that staff have given them in overcoming these difficulties. While the team was reassured to learn of action being taken on these issues, it is desirable for the College to keep under review the level of resource support for the provision, with particular reference to electronic and printed materials.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities as required by the awarding bodies to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Core theme 3: Public information

What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?

38   The College's responsibilities for publishing information relating to its three HEFCE-funded programmes are limited by those set out in the partnership agreements with the awarding bodies. All programmes operate in the context of collaborative networks with other colleges and are coordinated centrally by the awarding bodies, who have prime responsibility for publicity, recruitment and programme information. Both awarding bodies publish their own publicity and recruitment information. Where this is supplemented in the college prospectus or in college leaflets, published information is the responsibility of the college course manager, in conjunction with University staff.

39   The College has acted within its remit on the Developmental engagement desirable recommendation to 'consolidate and improve the provision of printed and web-based material for prospective students, including information related to assessment'. The team noted that both printed and web-based publicity gave a much higher profile to the higher education provision than previously.

40   The college website provides clear information on the programmes of both awarding bodies, including a summary of the award, the application process and an online application form. The College does not produce any resources of its own apart from tracking sheets and materials used in workshop sessions. When the College receives enquiries about the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education, it forwards a general University of Greenwich teaching pack to prospective teacher trainees. Details of the Additional Diploma programmes are made available for recruitment purposes on the Essential Skills Support Unit website and in electronic and hard copy. These may be emailed in response to enquiries or distributed at network meetings and conferences.

41   The students indicate that many find out about the programmes by word of mouth through, for example, the local Early Years community for the Foundation Degree and

through strong teacher training links between the College and Royal Navy training establishments in the locality for the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education. Recruitment to the Diploma programmes also benefits from informal local networking.

42   The awarding bodies provide the College with comprehensive programme handbooks for students as part of the arrangements for collaborative provision with partner colleges. The handbooks contain details of assessment, moderation, appeals and complaints, equal opportunities policy, health and safety policy, and programme administrative arrangements. The University of Portsmouth produces a student yearbook for each year of the programme. This provides a wide range of information, including the details of units of study and the range of support mechanisms available to students.

43   College policy documents such as the Higher Education Strategy Statement, the Higher Education Assessment for Learning policy, the Staff Development policy and the comprehensive Quality Manual are fit for purpose. The College is subject to awarding body regulations in all programmes but there are also appropriate internal policy statements for complaints, appeals, representations and for equality and diversity.

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?

44   As indicated in paragraph 38, the awarding bodies produce and monitor the quality of much of the published information relating to the provision. Internally, within the College, public information is checked for accuracy and completeness on an annual basis by programme managers, in collaboration with the Marketing and Liaison Manager. Subsequently, it is scrutinised by the awarding body staff to ensure that it is in line with consortium practice.

45   The Essential Skills Support Unit is responsible for advertising and recruiting to the Additional Diplomas. The University provides guidelines for accuracy, while it is the responsibility of the host School within the University to monitor compliance. The College works within these parameters in relation to any published information that appears in its own publicity material and programme 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 programmes it delivers.

C   Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

46   The Developmental engagement took place in April 2009. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College, as follows. How is formative and summative assessment used in raising the standard of students' work? How effective are internal moderation systems in ensuring consistency in marking, feedback and assessment? Is information provided about assessment clear, and are assessment instructions and guidelines fully understood by staff delivering courses and by students?

47   The Developmental engagement team reported areas of good practice that included: the close working relationship with the awarding bodies that underpins the strength of assessment practice; the strong tutorial support for students, and the use of oral, written and electronic feedback on student assignments and teaching practice. The close relationship between formative and summative assessment and the professional and vocational practice of students were also identified as good practice.

48   The Developmental engagement team recommended that it would be advisable for the College to address issues raised by external examiners about students' academic writing skills and the appropriate referencing of their work. The report included a number of desirable recommendations, including the need for the College to develop a higher education assessment for learning policy to reflect the Academic Infrastructure and the specific needs of the programmes. The desirable recommendations also asked the College to consider the monitoring of assessment and student achievement within its existing quality assurance framework, giving a more distinctive focus on the higher education programmes. The Developmental engagement team indicated that it would be desirable for the College to enhance the opportunities for sharing good practice by strengthening the links between staff on both programmes and, where appropriate, with staff involved in programme delivery at partner institutions. It reported the desirability of consolidating and improving the provision of printed and web-based material for prospective students, including information relating to assessment.

D   Foundation Degrees

49   The College currently offers a Foundation Degree in Early Years Care & Education. The self-evaluation indicates that the College is looking to extend its higher education provision, subject to funding constraints and student number projections.

50   The Foundation Degree in Early Years Care & Education serves local needs and is oversubscribed. It makes an important contribution to widening participation in higher education in the Gosport area and represents effective professional development for mature students who are all employed in the Early Years sector of care and education. There is effective networking with the University of Portsmouth and another college in Hampshire, both of whom have students on the programme.

51   All the areas of good practice listed in paragraph 53, with the exception of the fourth bullet point relating to assessment practice, and all the recommendations under paragraph 54 in Section E of the report refer to the Foundation Degree as well as to the other provision.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

52   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in St Vincent 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, the University of Greenwich and the University of Portsmouth.

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

- the newly developed Higher Education Self-assessment Report and action plan is both evaluative and developmental and makes an effective addition to the College's quality assurance cycle (paragraph 15)
- all levels of staff, including members of the governing body, senior management, programme leaders and teaching staff are fully engaged in the process of quality assurance (paragraph 16)
- the close working relationship with both awarding bodies underpins the security of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience (paragraph 18)

- the involvement of staff in assessment standardisation with other colleges underpins the rigorous assessment practice evident on the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education (paragraph 20)
- students make valuable contributions to the enhancement of their programmes, making effective use of the many feedback opportunities that are available to them (paragraph 29).

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

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

- continue the process of embedding the Academic Infrastructure within higher education policy and practice (paragraphs 17, 26)
- consolidate the role of the Higher Education Managers' Committee as a forum for maintaining and enhancing the quality and profile of the provision (paragraph 23)
- continue to encourage staff to liaise with colleagues at other colleges and at the awarding bodies in order to enhance levels of professional activity and scholarship (paragraph 36)
- keep under review the level of resource support for the provision, with particular reference to electronic and printed materials (paragraph 37).

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

56   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.

57   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 programmes it delivers.

St Vincent College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 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 newly developed Higher Education Self-assessment Report and action plan is both evaluative and developmental and makes an effective addition to the College's quality assurance cycle (paragraph 15)	Fully establish HE evaluation within Quality Cycle by promptly completing HE Self Assessment Report (SAR) Incorporate within the full college SAR Include Essential Skills Support Unit (ESSU) teacher training courses in HE SAR, including Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) and Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS)	November 2010	HE course managers, Assistant Principal for Adult Provision (AP), Quality Manager (QM)	Monitoring procedures and achievement clear for analysis and evaluation	Senior Management Team (SMT) Governing body Partner HEIs	SAR Validation committee Internal Quality Review (IQR) report on HE provision (scheduled for February 2010)

• all levels of staff, including members of the governing body, senior management, programme leaders and teaching staff are fully engaged in the process of quality assurance (paragraph 16)	Produce end of course reviews, including action points as part of SAR cycle Distil end of course reviews into HE SAR Ensure SMT and governing body representative sit on SAR validation panel Carry out IQR of HE provision within the college	Annually in June September 2010 November 2010 February 2011	All HE tutors HE course co-ordinators QM Quality Team including QM and AP	Whole staff ownership of quality assurance within HE provision reported in IQR	SMT Governing body	IQR report
• the close working relationship with both awarding bodies underpins the security of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience (paragraph 18)	Further develop good practice and enhance links where possible Ensure that all staff are aware of this strength and play their part in sustaining the good practice Monitor St Vincent staff attendance and contributions to network meetings Extend sharing good practice and other collaborative work with Alton College (provider	Good practice shared internally in HE team meetings during 2010-11 Alton College meeting (date tbc)	Curriculum Managers, course co-ordinators, all tutors	Good practice recognised in SAR Co-ordinators further develop relationships with HE colleagues to enhance quality Good student feedback	SMT, partner institutions	HE SAR HE team meetings Student surveys and focus groups Network meetings between the college and HE colleagues

20

	of the Portsmouth University FdA)					
• the involvement of staff in assessment standardisation with other colleges underpins the rigorous assessment practice evident on the Professional (Graduate) Certificate in Education (paragraph 20)	Ensure that good practice is maintained through regular analysis of assessments Share good practice across the two programmes internally	Strength still recognised in IQR HE forum meeting to share good practice and prepare for IQR in autumn term 2010	Curriculum Managers, course co-ordinators, all tutors	Good practice recognised in IQR Tutors recognise good practice and seek to enhance the quality of assignments in relation to professional practice	SMT, partner institutions	IQR & HE SAR
• students make valuable contributions to the enhancement of their programmes, making effective use of the many feedback opportunities that are available to them (paragraph 29)	Establish student focus group discussions for all HE courses in addition to written surveys to ascertain and address satisfaction Update 'You said… We did' board regularly and highlight to students	December 2010 Updated half-termly	Managed by QM, facilitated by HE tutors and analysed and responded to by HE course co-ordinators QM	Improved student satisfaction reported	Course co-ordinators, QM, SMT	HE SAR

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desirable to take action:						
• continue the process of embedding the Academic Infrastructure within higher education policy and practice (paragraphs 17, 26)	Continue to discuss AI at team, network and HE managers' meetings Plan and deliver further training on AI Review content of CTLLS course to enhance progression to HE courses	Termly meetings By June 2011 September 2011	All HE staff and managers Quality Manager CTLLS course tutor	Improved staff understanding of AI	Assistant Principal ESSU Director	Team meeting minutes, IQR, HE SAR
• consolidate the role of the Higher Education Managers' Committee as a forum for maintaining and enhancing the quality and the profile of the provision (paragraph 23)	Embed the college HE Managers' committee into the meetings' pattern	Termly committee meetings	Curriculum Managers, Course co-ordinators, AP and QM	Improvements in practice within and across programmes	Senior Management and partner Universities' representatives	Minutes of the HE Managers' Committee, and evidenced in HE SAR

• continue to encourage staff to liaise with colleagues at other colleges and at the awarding bodies in order to enhance levels of professional activity and scholarship (paragraph 36)	Develop the sharing of good practice initiated in June 2010 by bringing together the staff on HE courses within St Vincent College with HE staff at Alton College electronically as well as meeting in person FdA staff to contribute to university delivery and vice versa	October 2010 January 2011	FdA Course tutors	Improvement in knowledge and practice witnessed during lesson observations and reported in student satisfaction surveys	SMT	IQR lesson observation feedback
• keep under review the level of resource support for the provision, with particular reference to electronic and printed materials (paragraph 37).	Contact and meet with university staff to set up access to local university resources - electronic and physical Timetable FdA course to enable adequate access to printed materials and teaching technologies Distribute Greenwich study guides and handbooks prior to the commencement of the course	September 2010 September 2010 September 2010	Greenwich PGCE co-ordinator Curriculum Manager for FdA Greenwich course co-ordinators	Improved student satisfaction reported in focus groups and surveys	Assistant Principal and QM	IQR report and SAR

	Integrate Moodle to provide more flexible learning opportunities for ESSU-enrolled students	December 2010	ESSU Director			
	Review and amend FdA workbooks	September 2010	FdA tutors and Curriculum Manager			