Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

The Sheffield College

July 2010

SR004/2010

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 The Sheffield College carried out in July 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 **cannot** 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.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the College's response to the essential recommendation on assessment emerging from the Developmental engagement, where it has completed everything expected of it in the action plan, which has resulted in the creation of a robust system of new, standardised documentation for identifying and monitoring assessment procedures, which also ensures compliance with awarding body requirements in relation to students passing a module.

Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **essential** for the College to:

- finalise the current draft listing of the public information it is responsible for publishing and obtain awarding body endorsement
- finalise, approve and implement the draft policy for checking and approving the accuracy and completeness of the public information it is responsible for publishing, at both the course level and in the broad college context
- review the draft Summative review action plan arising from the first visit to ensure that improvements in the accuracy and completeness of public information relevant to key stakeholders are implemented as a matter of urgency to meet the requirements of the forthcoming academic year.

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

- ensure future meetings of the Higher Education Strategy Group include full representation of appropriate senior staff
- improve the broad awareness and consistent understanding of and training in the Academic Infrastructure among relevant staff and ensure that alignment with the Academic Infrastructure is embedded in the new suite of emerging higher education policies and procedures
- actively pursue plans to introduce an annual higher education self-assessment report to help ensure higher education is embedded in the College's management procedures and good practice can be shared across the entire College

- address as soon as possible the need to ensure a comprehensive and definitive overview of the plans and progress on establishing the College's new suite of higher education policies and procedures
- develop more effective ways of ensuring formal student representation on all courses across all delivery sites and to ensure that the outcomes of course meetings are fed back to students
- actively pursue plans to consolidate the various documents currently available on the management of learning resources into a separate policy for the management of learning resources in higher education.

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

- review and clarify the names and terms of reference of the two groups dealing with operational level management issues in higher education and sharing of good practices across the College
- ensure the higher education teaching observation policy is embedded throughout the College and that consideration is given to moving this fully to the new higher education peer review process, to facilitate the dissemination of best practice and further nurture a higher education ethos and culture among staff
- pursue plans to develop a higher education student support and guidance policy to consolidate existing systems and embed the revised tutorial policy
- explore ways of increasing staff understanding of the opportunities available for the use of the virtual learning environment to develop a more consistent approach and parity of experience across all courses.

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 The Sheffield College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield. The review was carried out by Ms Claire Blanchard, Mr Maldwyn Buckland, Mr Tom Cantwell (reviewers) and Dr Gordon Edwards (coordinator).

2   The Summative review team (the team) conducted the initial visit in March 2010 and returned to the College for a second visit in July 2010. The team conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institution and reports of reviews by QAA. 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. On the second visit, the team also explored evidence of the College's progress since the first visit.

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

4   The Sheffield College is a large, general, federal further education college based on three sites within the city: Hillsborough, Norton, and Sheffield City Colleges. All three sites provide a wide range of courses in all vocational sectors from levels 1 to 3, together with higher education programmes. Higher education participation rates in Sheffield are below the national average, as are achievement rates at levels 2 and 3. Within the city, there are wide ranges of achievement and progression within a very small geographical area. In total, the College has around 25,000 learners, of whom 26 per cent are full-time and 74 per cent part-time. The College has 641 HEFCE-funded higher education students, of whom 217 are part-time.

5   The College provides its higher education in collaboration with Edexcel, Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield. This ensures opportunities for progression for local students from a wide range of backgrounds and aspirations. The following programmes are offered by the College in conjunction with its higher education partners.

Edexcel

- HNC Civil Engineering (20 FTE)
- HNC Manufacturing Engineering (6 FTE)
- HNC Construction (5 FTE)
- HND Animal Management (16.7 FTE)
- HND Design Fashion (8 FTE)
- HND Fine Art (3 FTE)

Sheffield Hallam University

- FdA Managing Health and Care Services (11.4 FTE)
- FdA Health and Social Care (16.7 FTE)
- FdA Creative Art Practice (16.4 FTE)
- FdA Fashion Design and Manufacture (18 FTE)
- FdSc Public Services; Policing Studies (23 FTE)
- FdSc Sports Coaching and Exercise (35 FTE)
- FdA Tourism and Events Management (24 FTE)
- FdA Graphic Design (52 FTE)
- FdA Media Production (25 FTE)
- FdA Performing Arts (26 FTE)
- FdA Photography (23 FTE)
- FdA e-Communications (41.5 FTE)
- FdA e-Communications in the Public Sector (11.4 FTE)
- FdA Business and Management/Finance/Marketing (14 FTE)
- Certificate of Education; Learning and Skills sector (6.7 FTE)
- Extended Engineering Degree Preparatory Year (78 FTE)

The University of Sheffield

- Foundation year in Medicine (18 FTE)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6   The Higher National programmes are validated directly by Edexcel. The Foundation year in Medicine is provided in partnership with The University of Sheffield for students with non-standard entry qualifications for a medical degree. Sheffield Hallam University is, out of strategic choice, the validation body for the Foundation Degrees. This partnership is intended to ensure access to higher education for learners from all backgrounds within the city of Sheffield and its surrounding region. There are close collaborative links with Sheffield Hallam University both at course level and between managers. These involve link tutor support and expertise which facilitates the development of a shared understanding of partner responsibilities. Course definitive documents and programme specifications give additional information on responsibilities delegated to the College on all programmes.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7   The programmes on offer at the time of the review are indicated above. Recently, Foundation Degrees in Internet & Business Technologies and Retail Management have been closed. This is due to reductions in applications to these courses, within what had otherwise been a buoyant market in 2009. Following three years of low demand, 2009 has brought a generally high level of applications, which led to the provision being full.

8   At the time of the Developmental engagement in March 2009, the College had a new Principal and Chief Executive. Since then the College has had changes to its management structure. The new management team seeks to move the College towards becoming excellent. This requires some cultural change, as well as an increased focus on developing more formal, explicit and learner-responsive policies and procedures for managing higher education.

9   At the time of the review, the College was in a period of rapid change and organisational flux, with few formal written policies for managing the higher education provision. Some strategic plans outlined in the self-evaluation, particularly the development of an Online College, had been suspended.

10   In this context of change, there have been two new appointments which are of particular importance to the current and future management of the College's higher education provision. These posts are an Executive Director of Planning and Performance, and a Manager of Higher Education and Level 3 Progression. There have also been changes below Curriculum Manager level, which have entailed the re-configuration of curriculum teams into Departments.

11   This process of change has contributed to a longer than anticipated timescale for actions from the Developmental engagement to be implemented. The College acknowledged this fact in its self-evaluation for the Summative review.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

12   Higher education students at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The document was developed by eight higher education student representatives from across the College. It was made available before the first visit. Unfortunately, attempts to include and involve all higher education representatives from all College sites were unsuccessful. The College's self-evaluation indicates that, because of the low numbers involved, the reliability of the findings in the student submission is limited. The team agrees with this view. However, a representative group of students who met reviewers during the first visit was able to help contextualise and generalise points in the written submission. Students were not available at the time of the second 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?

13   The College's self-evaluation contained some information on recent structural changes, new management appointments and new working groups and committees. However, it did not describe the overall structure, responsibilities and accountabilities at all levels for the management of higher education across the three college sites. It did not evaluate its effectiveness in managing higher education standards nor the situation with regard to documented higher education policies (see paragraphs 23 and 31).

14   The Sheffield College is managed by a senior executive team that consists of the Principal and Chief Executive and five Executive Directors, three of whom lead the constituent colleges. The Principal and Chief Executive initiated a cross-College restructure which was completed in 2009. Its aim is to ensure a greater strategic focus on the management and delivery of higher education. The Executive Director of Planning and Performance assumes overall responsibility for the management of higher education standards and quality. He directly line manages the Quality Manager and the Higher

Education and Level 3 Progression Manager to assure the quality and standards of all higher education awards.

15   The appointment of the full-time post of Manager of Higher Education and Level 3 Progression is an indication of the College's commitment to the continued expansion and strategic management of its higher education. This manager has responsibility for the coordination, monitoring and implementation of higher education curriculum and quality policies and procedures. In addition, the Planning and Quality Managers, based across the three sites, are responsible for leading local college planning and quality assurance in conjunction with curriculum managers.

16   The College is organised into 10 curriculum departments, each managed by a Curriculum Manager. The responsibility for quality and management of the higher education curriculum resides with the Curriculum Managers and Course Leaders. At the time of the review, Heads of Department were newly appointed and had not yet taken responsibility for higher education provision. This new approach to the management of higher education is intended to ensure ownership at course level. Its impact will need to be evaluated in the light of experience.

17   The College has developed good relations with all its awarding bodies. A particularly strong and productive relationship exists with Sheffield Hallam University. The supportive and productive collaboration between College staff and the University link tutors facilitates the development of a shared understanding of partner responsibilities. This relationship was particularly evident in the College's response to the essential recommendation on assessment, resulting from the previous Developmental engagement. The College has completed everything expected of it in the action plan, with strong support from its awarding bodies. This has resulted in the creation of a robust system of new, standardised documentation for identifying and monitoring assessment procedures. It also ensures compliance with awarding body requirements that students achieve all key learning outcomes when passing a module. In addition, the College and Sheffield Hallam University have worked closely together in the development of the Annual Quality Review process. This is intended to meet the needs of the partnership and the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students.* Policies and procedures are maintained and developed through the Joint Quality Liaison Group, providing a focus for joint quality improvement.

18   The College's recently introduced reporting mechanism and committee structure includes a range of strategic, operational, planning and quality assurance groups. As a result of the recent restructuring process, two key committees have been implemented: the Curriculum Planning and Quality Group and the Higher Education Strategy Group. Both of these are chaired by the Executive Director of Planning and Performance. The Curriculum Planning and Quality Group takes overall responsibility for the standardisation of higher education management and reports to the Higher Education Strategy Group. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the new structure and confirmed the team's view that this represents a welcome change of ethos and culture, in line with the Higher Education Strategic Plan 2009-14.

19   The Higher Education Strategy Group takes overall responsibility for receiving, considering and making judgements on higher education matters, and reports to governors. This facilitates communications from course delivery teams to all levels of management within the College. While the new Higher Education Strategy Group has only met once, minutes from the group confirm its remit and function. However, key senior staff were absent from the inaugural meeting of this key committee at a pivotal stage in the re-organisation of management systems in the College. Senior management and staff confirmed this to the

team. The College is advised to ensure future meetings of the Higher Education Strategy Group include a full representation of appropriate senior staff.

20   The Higher Education Cross College Operational Group and the Higher Education Forum provide additional opportunities for course leaders and staff to contribute to the identification and dissemination of higher education issues. However, the lack of terms of reference for these two groups leads to a duplication of responsibilities for the identification and dissemination of good practice. This may contribute to the lack of attendance by higher education staff. In addition, the team found a lack of clarity in the identification of the new groups in some college documentation. For example, the Higher Education Forum is referred to as the Cross College Staff Forum and the Higher Education Staff Forum in separate documents. It is desirable for the College to review and clarify the names and terms of reference of these two groups which deal with operational management and the sharing of good practices across the College.

21   The team found that the reporting and committee structure for the consideration of higher education matters constitutes a potentially robust and effective mechanism for managing and assuring higher education standards. However, the team have concerns relating to early engagement with the revised committee structure by some staff.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

22   There have been training and briefings in the College on the Academic Infrastructure over a number of years; for example as part of the Annual Quality Review process at Sheffield Hallam University. The College's Higher Education Unit circulates copies of the QAA *Code of practice* booklets and links to QAA's website. The Quality Manager has built the QAA *Code of practice* precepts into the Annual Quality Review template, which ensures self-assessment against the precepts. University link tutors at both Universities are another source of guidance and support for College staff in relation to the University's regulations and use of the Academic Infrastructure.

23   The self-evaluation acknowledges that staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure is not consistent across the whole provision. Some tutors are less clear of the precepts than others. Staff meetings confirmed that there is variability and inconsistency in understanding among staff. For example, staff were unable to demonstrate awareness of the key precepts in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. Other staff, however, were able to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the key components of the Academic Infrastructure. Following the Developmental engagement, the College embarked on an initiative to encourage a better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among all staff. The College has also audited its procedures against the Academic Infrastructure. A new suite of policies and procedures planned for higher education will align with and embed the Academic Infrastructure. The team advises the College to improve the broad awareness and consistent understanding of and training in the Academic Infrastructure among relevant staff. The College should also ensure that alignment with the Academic Infrastructure is embedded in the new suite of emerging higher education policies and procedures.

24   During the second visit, the team found evidence that the College had made some progress with implementing a draft Summative review action plan resulting from the first visit. This plan confirms actions to produce templates to standardise information, advice and guidance given to employers and students about work-based learning. The team found, however, that actions to update staff's knowledge and understanding of the Academic Infrastructure had timescales that conflicted with deadlines in place to update the College's Employer Information Packs. Currently, the College's action planning requires the

information packs to be updated before staff will have received relevant and appropriate training on *Section 9* of the *Code of 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?

25   The College's ability to manage and maintain the standards of its higher education is reflected in its responses to the awarding bodies through outcomes of the Annual Quality Review process. The Developmental engagement confirmed that the Annual Quality Review process is well understood and implemented by staff at all levels. This process continues to provide an effective vehicle for demonstrating how the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies.

26   However, the way the College considers and progresses actions relating to higher education quality and standards arising from an overview of annual quality reviews and external examiners' reports across all courses is less clear. The College has not yet implemented its plans to introduce an annual higher education self-assessment report for this purpose. This means, for example, that a comprehensive understanding of the quality of academic assessment practice across the entire provision is not available. The College is advised to actively pursue its plans to introduce such a report. This will help ensure that higher education is embedded in the management procedures and that good practice can be shared across the entire college.

27   The timing and impact of the re-structuring process has limited the College's progress on a number of issues in the action plan from the Developmental engagement. However, the College confirmed that it had undertaken extensive development work in addressing the requirements of the essential recommendation from the Developmental engagement. It had received continuous support from its awarding bodies, and in particular Sheffield Hallam University, through the work of the Joint Liaison Group and individual link tutors.

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

28   The College does not have a formally documented higher education staff development policy, but it is planning to produce one. A number of new groups have been convened to support the development of higher education delivery and staff development in relation to academic standards. A Course Leaders' Forum is planned to meet twice yearly. One meeting each year will have a specific focus on assessment and the other on sharing good practice. Teacher Forums will also meet four times a year. Two of these meetings will have a specific focus on assessment matters.

29   Course teams have identified development needs for higher education staff. For programmes validated by Sheffield Hallam University, regular interaction between link tutors and academic staff takes place. Supporting staff development is offered by both the College and the University. This is further enhanced by the Joint Quality Liaison Group, which promotes continuous improvement in support of student assessment.

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?

30   Responsibilities and arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities in higher education and delegation of these within the new management structure are broadly the same as those for academic standards that are outlined in paragraphs 13 to 19.

31   The College has very few written policies and procedures to support and guide the management of the quality of learning opportunities in its higher education provision. At the time of the first visit, however, the College presented an initial plan to develop such a suite of policies and procedures. Senior managers consider this their top priority to ensure consistency in the management of quality across the federal college structure. The suite of policies and procedures are intended to provide a common basis for regular review and sharing of good practice and for an improved understanding among all stakeholders. Staff are aware of and are positive about these initiatives. The team supports the overall concept of developing a suite of policies and procedures. The team advises the College to address as soon as possible the need to ensure a comprehensive and definitive overview of plans and progress. This would lead to enhanced understanding among students and other parties and give staff access to a common reference source.

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

32   Arrangements for quality assurance in relation to learning opportunities are centred on the course-level Annual Quality Review process, as outlined in paragraphs 23 to 25. Quality improvement is devolved to local college level.

33   Students' responses to the quality of learning opportunities are collected through course-level meetings and the annual student survey. From autumn 2009 a new system of student forums, both for individual sites and covering the whole College, has been introduced. Staff are made available to support this. This new development is in response to the recognition that the current methods of collecting student opinions are largely one-way and retrospective. Regular student forums will potentially provide a dialogue that can effect changes within the academic year.

34   The most recent annual student survey identified that 87 per cent of learners were satisfied with their course. Specific strengths are that staff are enthusiastic, give good explanations, advice and support, and assessment is fair. Prompt and clear feedback is also rated highly. Not all students know who their course representative is. Course representatives are not always informed of the outcomes of any course meetings which have been held. The College is advised to develop more effective ways of ensuring formal student representation on all courses across all delivery sites and to ensure that the outcomes of course meetings are fed back to students.

35   The College has made arrangements to release one member of the higher education teaching staff from each centre for 100 contracted hours. This is to assist in developing a peer review system and student forums. This will support the process of sharing good practice and provide further impetus for improvement in the College's provision of appropriate learning opportunities.

36   Applications for accreditation of prior certificated or experiential learning on Foundation Degrees are considered by Sheffield Hallam University according to the University's regulations and procedures. The College makes students aware of these opportunities and supports them appropriately.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

37   This is described in paragraphs 22 to 24.

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

38   Information on teaching and learning is currently found in definitive course documents and on the College intranet. The College intends to produce a written teaching and learning strategy. This will assist in putting the current arrangements into context and support the sharing of best practice.

39   Graded teaching observations, undertaken by a specially trained team, provide a measure of the quality of teaching and learning and support those staff receiving judgements of satisfactory or inadequate. Both graded and ungraded teaching observations are intended to support continuous improvement. Effective practice is identified and shared through the development of individual action plans. This process applies to both further and higher education programmes. However, it is not yet fully embedded and effective in the higher education provision. The College has recently introduced a separate peer review process for higher education. This new peer review process has potential to increase the continuous improvement of higher education teaching and identify aspects of particular relevance at this level. It is desirable that the higher education teaching observation policy is used throughout the College. It is also desirable that consideration should be given to moving this fully to the new higher education peer review process. This will assist the sharing of best practice and further nurture a higher education culture among staff.

40   Students are generally pleased with the quality and delivery of higher education teaching. They reported that lecturers represent a good mix of both academics and practitioners. Although the student written submission stated that the quality of teaching was variable depending on the department, many students who met the team referred to outstanding teaching. They confirmed that teachers fostered independent learning, with part-time staff offering students opportunities to contact them when not in college. Where students have expressed concerns about teaching quality or commitment of teaching staff, these concerns have been acted upon to make the overall experience good. The higher education survey also asks questions on teaching and learning. Feedback from this is used in the Annual Quality Review process.

41   The quality of learning and support provided by employers for Foundation Degree students in work-based settings are of central importance. The College has carried out a work-based learning audit of Foundation Degrees from definitive documents. The findings indicate that some consideration is being given to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* in the work-based learning arrangements. The team found good engagement with employers on some Foundation Degrees. An example is the Foundation Degree in Public Service and Policing Studies, which is involved directly with the South Yorkshire Police Force in providing training to special constables. There is no overarching work-based learning or work placement strategy to guide all Foundation Degrees and form a basis for maintenance and enhancement of the quality of work-based learning. The team was reassured that the College is planning to produce such a strategy.

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

42   The College did not evaluate its management of student support in its self-evaluation. The team came to its conclusions and findings through closely scrutinising documentation and from its meetings with both staff and students during the visit.

43   The College is responsible for providing student support and the learning infrastructure for its higher education students. All students receive initial assessment at induction and those who need it are provided with learning support. This is managed through local college student support teams. There is a student support team at every main centre and it has a central administration team dedicated to higher education within the College. The support team gives advice on courses and is on hand to support the students with any concerns about financial, accommodation or other matters.

44   Support for students moving into higher education within the College concentrates on widening participation and promoting non-traditional entry routes. The Manager of Higher Education and Level 3 Progression coordinates the work of the Aim Higher coordinators. This coordination results in a coherent cross-college approach to widening participation and progression from level 3 to higher education within the College.

45   All students are entitled to group and individual tutorial support. However, students indicate that there is variability and inconsistency in tutorial support and that not all students receive it. This was also highlighted in the student written submission. The College has plans to develop a revised higher education student support and guidance policy, including tutorial support. It is desirable for the college to pursue these plans to consolidate existing systems and embed the revised tutorial policy. This will help to ensure that course teams and students become more aware of the learner entitlement and a more consistent approach to tutorial support is developed.

46   The College offers excellent careers guidance, which has been independently recognised through achieving accreditation to the Matrix Standard quality mark. This is delivered by a dedicated Careers Guidance Team and from the associated Connexions service. The College also offers all students an effective counselling service with qualified staff available to assist those who have any concerns relating to their home or college life. There is also a range of additional services for students with learning difficulties.

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

47   The College operates a multi-strand approach to continuous professional development for higher education teaching staff. The aim is to ensure that staff continuously upgrade and enhance their skills and knowledge in order that they can deliver positive learning experiences for the higher education students. Staff have access to short and long external courses, in-house specialist events, industrial updating, work shadowing and collaborative events in higher education. To underpin this and to ensure that staff reflect best practice, all staff participate in sessions which are aligned with the strategic objectives of the College during development days. Support is also provided for staff teaching in higher education to update skills and qualifications and access relevant industrial experience, funded from general College training and development allocations.

48   Wider staff development to ensure staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to develop and deliver higher education is coordinated and monitored through the Training and Development Unit. This is reviewed through curriculum team annual quality reviews. There is evidence of effective use of the opportunities created through this process,

for example specialist training, teacher training, industrial updating and attendance at specialist groups and conferences. However, these opportunities are not consistently available across all subjects. The Higher Education Strategic Plan 2008 gave a commitment to provide industrial updating for all higher education staff over a three-year period. Few staff have taken up this opportunity so far.

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?

49   The College does not have an overarching learning resources policy or strategy that covers physical and staffing resources for higher education. However, it plans to develop one. Prior to validation of its awards, Sheffield Hallam University reviews the physical resources available and assures itself that the College has the minimum acceptable threshold level of resources. Other awarding bodies have similar arrangements. The quality of learning resources is also addressed in the Annual Quality Review and monitored annually through the Higher Education Survey. Course leaders are able to request materials directly from the Learner Resource Centre and the Higher Education Unit is able to provide additional funding. The College acknowledges that there has been some confusion among staff about student entitlement to learning resources. In view of these matters, the team supports the College's plan to develop a dedicated policy on the management of learning resources for higher education. This will encourage strategic considerations in the College on the level of resource allocation in relation to minimum threshold levels. It will also facilitate future discussions with students, staff and the universities. The team advises that the College actively pursue its plans to consolidate various documents currently available into a separate policy for the management of learning resources in higher education.

50   The prior approval of the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University is required for all staff involved in teaching, supervision or marking assignments on their validated programmes of study. The College is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate quality of teaching is provided for students and that teaching staff have qualifications that are satisfactory to the universities.

51   Each of the main College sites has a fully equipped learning resource centre where students are able to get help and support, access to computers, multi-media and printed resources. Learner resource centres also provide spaces for private study or group work. Student representatives reported that the libraries at Norton and Hillsborough often did not have enough copies of key texts. Student representatives also explained how difficult it was to access a computer in College time due to the number of others needing these resources. Students on programmes leading to Sheffield Hallam University awards do not have full access to University resources.

52   During the second visit, both the University and the College acknowledged that some resourcing matters still need resolution, particularly the clarification of student access to Sheffield Hallam University resources. This had also been identified in previous years in the joint monitoring involved in the Annual Quality Review process. Following completion of these discussions, arrangements will be made explicit in updated course handbooks in order to ensure correct and realistic student expectations.

53   Since the College's higher education provision is strongly vocational, the availability of suitable specialist resources is important. Performing Arts students confirmed that they had good access to rehearsal spaces. Sports students reported that their fitness suite was limited and did not contain industry standard specialist equipment. Graphic Design students have a suite of computers specifically for higher education. Other learning resource centre

computers do not have relevant software, so work cannot be done outside the graphic design suite. HND Fashion students reported that the technical facilities available to them at the Hillsborough site were not promoted adequately and they need to be made more aware of specialist resources and facilities that could aid their work. The team notes that discussions are underway with Sheffield Hallam University to look at ways of extending the use of their specialist resources to the College's students.

54   Students indicated that use of the virtual learning environment by staff is sporadic across the provision. Some course teams make extensive use of the virtual learning environment by posting notes and using it to communicate with students, for example, in the Foundation Degree in Police Studies. Other courses, such as the Foundation Degree in Performing Arts, make little or no use of the virtual learning facility. Currently, the College does not have an e-learning policy but is in the process of producing one. It is desirable for the College to explore ways of increasing staff understanding of the opportunities available for the use of the virtual learning environment. This is in order to develop a more consistent approach and parity of experience across all courses.

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?

55   At the first visit, the College was not able to articulate clearly its overall responsibilities for public information nor the processes in place to ensure its accuracy and completeness. During the second visit, the College provided a draft policy for checking and approving public information. Appendices within this policy provided a preliminary list of written information the College is responsible for publishing, either independently or jointly with awarding bodies. The team considers the development of the preliminary list to be an important step forward. Discussions with Sheffield Hallam University are ongoing to finalise which publications are the sole responsibility of the College and which are a joint responsibility. It is essential that the College finalise this draft listing and obtain awarding body endorsement.

56   The College produces substantial amounts of public information at both overall College and course level in printed and electronic forms. Examples range from electronic material on the website with pages devoted to student opinions, minutes of management meetings, and policy statements as well as course and College information. Paper-based examples include prospectuses, fact sheets and handbooks. The College has a clear focus on widening participation and seeks to reflect this in its public information. Its admissions policy ensures that all higher education courses have non-standard access statements. The College's mission statement is published in the prospectus and on the College website.

57   Web content is the responsibility of the College and various systems exist for the checking of this information against partner requirements, including liaison with link tutors at Sheffield Hallam University. Most of these systems reside at course or department level.

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?

58   The College's agreements with awarding bodies include descriptions of the arrangements for checking the accuracy and completeness of public information. For Sheffield Hallam University, this involves the sending of fact sheets and other course-level information to the link tutor at the University before publication. The team found on the first visit that some courses followed this procedure while others did not. College senior managers confirmed that there is no College system to ensure that relevant public information is shared with link tutors at Sheffield Hallam University before publication.

59   During the second visit, the team found evidence that the College had responded positively to the first visit findings in the area of public information. This response, however, was mainly at a strategic level and included the completion of internal audits to help assess the scale of the problem, for example in relation to course handbooks and work-based learning information for employers. A policy on the management of the accuracy and completeness of public information had been drafted, and is currently under discussion with Sheffield Hallam University. The team was informed by University representatives that modifications to the Partnership Agreement may be necessary as part of finalising and implementing this policy. As a result of its work since the first visit, the College now clearly recognises the enormity and urgency of the task before it in relation to public information. This is also reflected in the College's self-evaluation of Core Theme 3. It is essential, that the College should finalise, approve and implement the draft policy for checking and approval of the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing, both at course level and in the broad College context (see also paragraph 68).

60   The College publishes course-level website materials through its Publicity Unit. On the first visit, the team found various errors in a number of fact sheets published on the College website. For example, some fact sheets identified incorrectly the academic level of courses. Also, there were numerous occurrences of incomplete or inconsistent information. For example, in the description in the online courses prospectus of progression to BA (Hons) top-up study from the FdA eCommunications, the words 'guaranteed' and 'possible' are both used in relation to progression. The College website referred to this same Foundation Degree as offering 'the opportunity to progress'. Students were unclear about the implications of these different words. The College senior managers agreed that a central approval system for the checking of public information on higher education quality and standards would provide a means by which such errors might be avoided in future.

61   By the time of the second visit, the majority of the issues identified above were still present. This confirmed to the team that operational measures to improve accuracy and completeness had still to be taken. Some inaccuracies, including those found in handbooks, had yet to be addressed. The College is in the process of developing a new handbook template. This will include standardised entries and prompts that would steer course leaders toward accuracy and completeness in all future versions of their handbooks. It is essential for the College to ensure that improvements in the accuracy and completeness of public information relevant to key stakeholders are implemented as a matter of urgency, to meet the requirements of the forthcoming academic year (see also paragraphs 62, 65, 67). The adequacy of resources available to complete this task also needs careful consideration.

62   The information currently provided for employers on work-based learning is neither complete nor accurate for all courses. College senior managers acknowledged that improving work-based learning packs for employers remained a work in progress. The lack of tangible progress on work-based learning packs since the first visit was explained as

being due to financial issues at College level having taken priority. Sheffield Hallam representatives indicated that the University would be able to provide example employer packs from their own Foundation Degrees, which may help the College.

63   During the second visit, the team met with a group of five employers from Health and Social Care, Environmental and Police Services. In general, all employers were complimentary about the engagement of students undertaking a variety of work-based activities. However, they expressed some concerns with the overall lines of communication with the College itself. Employers generally agree that communication is mixed as a result of dealing with too many College staff. The employers were largely unfamiliar with higher education and demonstrated a lack of understanding of the nature and status of the students engaging in work-based learning on Foundation Degrees.

64   Programme specifications for Foundation Degrees are produced using a template provided by Sheffield Hallam University at validation. Other Higher National programmes use the guidance provided by QAA, which is distributed by the Quality Unit as part of the Annual Quality Review. The Foundation year in medicine provided in conjunction with The University of Sheffield does not have a full programme specification. Programme specifications generally contain accurate and complete information but in different formats. The College plans to liaise with its awarding bodies with a view to reviewing the programme specification templates to ensure information is in consistent format and student friendly.

65   An annual audit of course handbooks was set up two years ago by the Higher Education Manager and Quality Manager. The audit for the 2009-10 handbooks showed a significant improvement in both accuracy and completeness of information compared with the previous year. However, the overall level of compliance with the College's stated requirements for handbooks is around 50 per cent. For example, only three of the 17 handbooks audited currently include an assessment schedule. Also, only one handbook gives information on the course committee and how students are involved in this. Referencing and plagiarism are addressed in less than half of the handbooks. The team learnt that all course handbooks would be revised in time for the start of the 2010-11 academic year, following a template to be developed in August.

66   Progression opportunities to further study are clearly defined in the definitive documents and programme specifications. Support for students' understanding and awareness of these opportunities varies within the provision. This is primarily because course handbooks and website material do not always replicate the information accurately. For example, in Business and Finance, students were not aware of agreed progression opportunities to the University. On the second visit, the team was informed that improved information to support students' understanding of progression opportunities will be addressed in updates to course handbooks and website material.

67   While the College recognises that it does not have a central system for the checking and final approval of materials for which it is responsible, the team found many examples of useful information being published. These included sections on the College website, dealing with, for example, access for students with disabilities, accommodation and student views. The team also found evidence of much useful information at course level, including standardised entries for handbooks that dealt with plagiarism and appeals procedures.

68   The College has published two policy-level documents giving details of links and relationships with employers. Each document gives an outline of how the College will develop its business plan through a relationship with employers. The documents do not cover detailed employer engagement in Foundation Degree curriculum design, delivery, assessment and course review. It is necessary for the College to consider the means by which public information on employer engagement in the various detailed aspects of

Foundation Degrees, can be structured and disseminated. This is in order to inform all stakeholders and further develop the substantial Foundation Degree portfolio in line with the *QAA Code of practice, Section 9*.

69   The review team was provided with two strategic plans for the College. One of these was a plan for the period 2008-2011 and the other was for 2009 -2012. However, the college confirmed that the older plan was no longer in use. A strategy for developing an online college was no longer being pursued, despite featuring heavily in the 2009-2012 plan (produced in 2010) and being referred to frequently in the self-evaluation. It is clear that the College is in a dynamic situation. However, these examples indicate a weakness in systems for managing the accuracy and completeness of broad strategic information. Also, they indicate a weakness in contextualising it to ensure it meets its intended purpose in relation to external recipients and stakeholders.

The team considers that reliance cannot 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

70   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in March 2009. The scope of the provision at that time included 14 Foundation Degrees, validated by Sheffield Hallam University, seven HNC/D awards, validated by Edexcel and a Medical Foundation year for students progressing to The University of Sheffield. The lines of enquiry were:

Line of enquiry 1: The operation of internal standardisation practice and assessment board verification, how it ensures that programme modular standards are appropriate and how good practice is developed and maintained across all programmes.

Line of enquiry 2: The provision of assessment feedback for students and how programme teams provide fair, timely, developmental, formative and summative feedback for all students on all programmes.

Line of enquiry 3: The provision of information for students, how it ensures understanding of assessment requirements, standards, regulations and processes, and how good practice is developed and maintained in all programmes.

71   A number of good practices were identified. These included staff taking responsibility for quality improvement, uptake of staff development opportunities, the extensive use of regular progress reviews, a recently developed higher education forum and some high quality examples of accessible online student handbooks.

72   The reviewers reported that it was essential for the College to review its management procedures to ensure students awarded a pass on a module demonstrably achieve all relevant learning outcomes, and ensure procedures are in place to fully clarify awarding body requirements. The team considered this a very important matter which, at the time of the Developmental engagement, was putting academic standards at risk and needed urgent corrective action. There was clear evidence from weaknesses in assessment procedures of standards being at risk and also, from scrutiny of assessed student work, that this risk had actually materialised. Defined standards were not being met by some students because they were being awarded module passes without achieving the validated module outcomes defined by the awarding body. Advisable recommendations included the need to

ensure a clearer overall understanding of assessment procedures, that final examination boards always comply with awarding body requirements, and the need to address inconsistencies in the timeliness and quality of assessment feedback.

73   As reported earlier in this report, the College has taken urgent and effective action to deal with this essential recommendation.

D   Foundation Degrees

74   The College offers the following Foundation Degrees, all validated by Sheffield Hallam University. Current full-time equivalent student numbers in each case are indicated in brackets:

- FdA Managing Health and Care Services (11.4 FTE)
- FdA Health and Social Care (16.7 FTE)
- FdA Creative Art Practice (16.4 FTE)
- FdA Fashion Design and Manufacture (18 FTE)
- FdSc Public Services; Policing Studies (23 FTE)
- FdSc Sports Coaching and Exercise (35 FTE)
- FdA Tourism and Events Management (24 FTE)
- FdA Graphic Design (52 FTE)
- FdA Media Production (25 FTE)
- FdA Performing Arts (26 FTE)
- FdA Photography (23 FTE)
- FdA e-Communications (41.5 FTE)
- FdA e-Communications in the Public Sector (11.4 FTE)
- FdA Business and Management/Finance/Marketing (14 FTE)

75   All conclusions and summaries of judgements in Section E below relate to the Foundation Degree provision, the HND provision and to the Foundation year in medicine.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

76   The Summative review team has identified a feature of good practice in The Sheffield College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, Edexcel, Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield.

77   In the course of the review, the team identified the following area of **good practice**:

- the College's response to the essential recommendation on assessment emerging from the Developmental engagement, where it has completed everything expected of it in the action plan, which resulted in the creation of a robust system for ensuring compliance with awarding body requirements in relation to students passing a module (paragraphs 17, 27).

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

79   The team considers that it is **essential** for the College to:

- finalise the current draft listing of the public information it is responsible for publishing and obtain awarding body endorsement (paragraph 55)
- finalise, approve and implement the draft policy for checking and approving the accuracy and completeness of the public information it is responsible for publishing, at both the course level and in the broad college context (paragraphs 59, 69)
- review the draft Summative review action plan arising from the first visit to ensure that improvements in the accuracy and completeness of public information relevant to key stakeholders are implemented as a matter of urgency to meet the requirements of the forthcoming academic year (paragraphs 61, 62, 65, 68).

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

- ensure future meetings of the Higher Education Strategy Group include full representation of appropriate senior staff (paragraph 19)
- improve the broad awareness and consistent understanding of and training in the Academic Infrastructure among relevant staff and ensure that alignment with the Academic Infrastructure is embedded in the new suite of emerging higher education policies and procedures (paragraphs 23, 24)
- actively pursue plans to introduce an annual higher education self assessment report to help ensure higher education is embedded in the college's management procedures and good practice can be shared across the entire college (paragraph 26)
- address as soon as possible the need to ensure a comprehensive and definitive overview of the plans and progress on establishing the College's new suite of higher education policies and procedures (paragraph 31)
- develop more effective ways of ensuring formal student representation on all courses across all delivery sites and to ensure that the outcomes of course meetings are fed back to students (paragraph 34)
- actively pursue plans to consolidate the various documents currently available on the management of learning resources into a separate policy for the management of learning resources in higher education (paragraph 49).

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

- review and clarify the names and terms of reference of the two groups dealing with operational level management issues in higher education and sharing of good practices across the College (paragraph 20)
- ensure the higher education teaching observation policy is embedded throughout the College and that consideration is given to moving this fully to the new higher education peer review process, to facilitate the dissemination of best practice and further nurture a higher education ethos and culture among staff (paragraph 39)
- pursue plans to develop a higher education student support and guidance policy to consolidate existing systems and embed the revised tutorial policy (paragraph 45)
- explore ways of increasing staff understanding of the opportunities available for the use of the virtual learning environment to develop a more consistent approach and parity of experience across all courses (paragraph 54).

82   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.

83   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.

84   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 **cannot** be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the courses it delivers.

The Sheffield College action plan relating to the Summative review: July 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 area of **good practice** worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
1. The College's response to the essential recommendation on assessment emerging from the Developmental engagement, where it has completed everything expected of it in the action plan, which resulted in the creation of a robust system for ensuring compliance with awarding body requirements in relation to students passing a module (paragraphs 17, 27).	1.1 Revise Assessment Board (AB) Policy to include use of new spreadsheet, for Curriculum Managers to attend ABs, and for the HE Manager to attend at least a sample of FD ABs each year, and chair Edexcel ABs.	End Sept 2010	Quality Manager	Annual Assessment Board Report shows Revised Policy implemented and process standards maintained.	HE Strategy Group	Annual Assessment Board Report EE reports HE SAR
	1.2 Compile an annual report to HE Strategy Group, on the conduct and standards of ABs across the College.	End Sept 2010	HE Manager		CPQ Group	

Essential	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
2. Finalise the current draft listing of the public information it is responsible for publishing and obtain awarding body endorsement (paragraph 55)	2.1 Create list of all public information which the College is responsible for publishing both at a programme level and in the broad college context [DONE] (See 3.2 below)	End June 2010	HE Manager	PI list (part of PI policy)	HE Strategy Group	HE Strategy Group minutes
	2.2 Establish checking method for maintaining accurate and complete PI list eg. At each HE Strategy Group meeting	March 2011	HE Manager	Minutes of HE Strategy Group meeting	Executive Team	HE Strategy Group minutes
	2.3 Submit list of public information the college is responsible for publishing to Joint Quality Liaison Group for Awarding Body approval	Jan 2011	HE Manager	PI Audit report	JQLG	JQLG minutes
	2.4 Statement with overview of PI such as should have been in the original S.E.D. [DONE]	05 July 2010	HE Manager & Quality Manager	PI SED	CPQ Group	HE SAR
	2.5 Review annually the listing of PI and submit to HE Strategy Group. If any changes are made to the listing, present new list to JQLG	October 2011 then annually	HE Manager & CMs	Minutes of HE Strategy Group and JQLG	HE Strategy Group and JQLG	

3. Finalise, approve and implement the draft policy for checking and approving the accuracy and completeness of the public information it is responsible for publishing, at both the course level and in the broad College context (paragraphs 59, 69)	3.1 Ensure formal system for checking PI includes programme level information [DONE]	End Oct 2010	Executive Director Planning & Performance	Agreed Policy and Procedure Audit to demonstrate information is accurate and complete in 95%+ of cases. Errors able to be traced to accountable individual.	HE Strategy Group, Govs, CPQ	PI policy
	3.2 Create policy for accuracy and Completeness of PI [DONE]					
	3.3 Implement policy throughout 2010/11 academic year	July 2011				
	3.4 Use staff briefings and workshops to ensure all staff are familiar with the policy and what it means for them	End Dec 2010	Quality Manager/HE Manager	CPD and guidance material	HE Strategy Group, CPQ	Staff feedback on policy and on briefings
	3.5 Produce templates to standardise information, advice and guidance given to employers about work based learning (see 4.2 below)	End Nov 2010	HE Manager	Employer Handbook template	HE Strategy Group	Template returns
	3.6 Standardise all FD course handbooks given to students, including the WBL section, through the use of templates	End Sept 2010	HE Manager	Course Handbook template (DE action plan)	HE Strategy Group	HE SAR

4. Review the draft Summative review action plan arising from the first visit to ensure that improvements in the accuracy and completeness of public information relevant to key stakeholders are implemented as a matter of urgency to meet the requirements of the forthcoming academic year (paragraphs 61, 62, 65, 68).	4.1 Go through draft Summative review action plan and Developmental engagement action plan and draw through PI actions that affect the 2010/11 cohort of students	End June 2010	HE Manager	Subactions in current sections	Executive Director Planning & Performance	PI Audit
	4.2 Transfer above actions into current plan checking dates are sufficiently timely for 2010/11 cohort of students	July 2010				
	4.3 Cross-reference actions where they are included elsewhere in this plan, and include here where they are not [DONE]	Sept 2010				

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
5. Ensure future meetings of the Higher Education Strategy Group include full representation of appropriate senior staff (paragraph 19)	5.1 Schedule HE Strategy Group Meetings for 2010/11 in the Cross College Meeting Schedule [DONE]	End June 2010	ED of Planning & Performance	Meeting schedule in place	Executive Director Team meeting	HE Strategy Group minutes - regularity, agenda items, attendance
	5.2 Manage attendance via standing item on HE Strategy Group agenda, linked to this recommendation	End June 2011	ED of Planning & Performance	Attendance shows full representation	Executive Director Team meeting	HE SAR
6. Improve the broad awareness and consistent understanding of and training in the Academic Infrastructure among relevant staff and ensure that alignment with the Academic Infrastructure is embedded in the new suite of emerging higher education policies and procedures (paragraphs 23, 24)	6.1 Organise joint staff training workshops with Awarding Body, covering AI and key elements of respective agreements	Jan 2011	HE Manager	Workshop programmes and materials	HE Strategy Group	Staff feedback
	6.2 Organise training covering AI and key elements of respective agreements	Feb 2011	HE Manager	Workshop programmes and materials	HE Strategy Group	HE SAR
	6.3 Distribute folders containing AI including QAA *Codes of practice* to Course Teams [DONE]	End July 2010	HE Manager	Attendance list	HE Strategy Group	HE SAR
	6.4 Map new suite of higher education policies against Academic Infrastructure	End Dec 2011	ED of Planning & Performance and HE Manager	Annual audit of policies against AI	HE Strategy Group	HE SAR

						Integrated quality and enhancement review
7. Actively pursue plans to introduce an annual higher education self-assessment report to help ensure higher education is embedded in the College's management procedures and good practice can be shared across the entire College (paragraph 26)	7.1 HE SAR to be written 2010/11 and annually thereafter	Dec 2010	HE Manager	HE SAR provides overview	HE Strategy Group	HE SAR
	7.2 Actions from the SAR input in web Actions	Dec 2010	HE Manager	HE SAR QIP easy to isolate and monitor	CPQ Group	Web Actions monitoring reports
	7.3 Monitored through Curriculum Planning and Quality Group	July 2011	Quality Manager	HE SAR QIP actions completed		CPQ minutes
	7.4 Share SAR with HE course Leaders at Cross College Operational Meeting	Feb 2011	HE Manager			Cross College Operational Group Minutes
8. Address as soon as possible the need to ensure a comprehensive and definitive overview of the plans and progress on establishing the College's new suite of higher education policies and procedures (paragraph 31)	8.1 Compile a table of the policies and procedures to include who is responsible for writing them, by when, and linking them to the Academic Infrastructure	Nov 2010	Executive Director Planning and Performance With HE Manager	Actions completed to planned timescale	CPQ Group HE Strategy Group Executive Director Team Meetings	CPG and HE Strategy Group and ET Minutes
	8.2 Check progress on a monthly basis	Monthly thereafter	HE Manager			

9. Develop more effective ways of ensuring formal student representation on all courses across all delivery sites and to ensure that the outcomes of course meetings are fed back to students (paragraph 34)	9.1 Devise a means of involving students in formal College processes and procedures at course level, to include effective use of Course Committees, involvement in AQR & the production of annual HE SAR	End Dec 2010	HE Manager	Student present at Course Committees, AQR and voice evident in SAR	HE Strategy Group & CPQ Group	Student feedback AQR documents AQR annual monitoring report HE SAR
	9.2 Brief staff at Staff Forums on requirements to involve students in Course Committees (DONE)	Oct 2010	Quality Manager			
	9.3 Involve students in AQR	July 2011	HE Course Leaders			
10. Actively pursue plans to consolidate the various documents currently available on the management of learning resources into a separate policy for the management of learning resources in higher education (paragraph 49).	10.1 Policy on Management of Learning Resources to be on the table referred to in 8.1 above	End Dec 2010	HE Manager	Completed Policy on the Management of Learning Resources for Higher Education	HE Strategy Group	Student feedback Staff feedback HE SAR
	10.2 Develop policy as part of the HE Quality Manual	End May 2011				

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
11. Review and clarify the names and terms of reference of the two groups dealing with operational level management issues in higher education and sharing of good practices across the College (paragraph 20)	11.1 Review and revise the committee structure and reporting procedures to eliminate duplication and ambiguity [DONE]	July 2010	HE Manager	Committee structure document and remits	HE Strategy Group	Minutes of meetings HE SAR
12. Ensure the higher education teaching observation policy is further embedded throughout the College and that consideration is given to moving this fully to the new higher education peer review process, to facilitate the dissemination of best practice and further nurture a higher education ethos and culture among staff (paragraph 39)	12.1 Implement a peer observation process across the HE programmes, that incorporates action research via teaching triangles or similar, to complement the College's formal graded observation process and ensure a proportion of the College's scholarly activity focuses on teaching and learning	Dec 2011	Quality Manager working with HE Manager	New peer observation process, linked to scholarly activity	HE Strategy Group CPQ Group	Staff feedback HE SAR

13. Pursue plans to develop a higher education student support and guidance policy to consolidate existing systems and embed the revised tutorial policy (paragraph 45)	13.1 Work with Student Support Service to clearly articulate current system to form distinct HE Policy	End Feb 2011	HE Manager working with Student Support Managers	New Student Support Policy	HE Strategy Group	PI Audit
	13.2 Disseminate to course teams	April 2011	HE Manager	Minutes of HE Staff Forums	HE Strategy Group	
	13.3 Include student entitlement in pre- populated Course Handbook template	May 2011	HE Manager	Revised Course Guide template	HE Strategy Group	
14. Explore ways of increasing staff understanding of the opportunities available for the use of the virtual learning environment to develop a more consistent approach and parity of experience across all courses (paragraph 54).	14.1 Audit the use of VLE across HE programmes.	May 2011	HE Manager with ILT Gateway team	Increased use of the VLE	HE Strategy Group	Staff feedback\n\nHE SAR
	14.2 Use outcomes to develop a staff development programme that makes maximum use of sharing good practice, and of College's ILT Gateway team.	Delivery July 2011				
	14.3 Require all course infrastructure materials, eg course handbooks, module guides, schemes of work, to be placed on VLE before start of 2011/12 Academic Year	September 2011	HE Course Leaders			