



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Bicton College

May 2011

SR 56/2010

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2011

ISBN 978 1 84979 348 3

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

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 Bicton College carried out in May 2011

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and 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 effective way in which the College responds to the strategic and operational level of guidance provided by the University assures higher education standards
- the Quality Review Audits support the overall quality assurance processes and provide a robust evaluation of higher education programmes
- the College's well-established and very close working relationship with the University is mutually supportive and engenders confidence that the partnership is effective at institutional and programme levels
- the College's broad approach to capturing and discussing students' views then taking action ensures that the learner voice is appropriately and comprehensively taken into account
- the effective links with employers across many programmes facilitate the acquisition by students of work-related skills and knowledge
- the policy of enabling level 3 students to progress to the higher education programmes, coupled with the Step-up to HE programme, greatly assists students in understanding some of the demands of higher education-level study
- the active and effective leadership provided by the College Learning Resource Centre Manager, including the excellent liaison with the library staff at the University of Plymouth, enhances higher education students' access to wide-ranging resources
- the quality of the Higher Education Course Guide, in terms of its content, presentation and comprehensiveness, provides intending students with a clear and accessible portrayal of all that the College offers in higher education
- the student handbooks for all programmes include the programme specification, with appropriate references to QAA benchmark statements, detailed admissions criteria and arrangements for the accreditation of prior and experiential learning.

Recommendations

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

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

- ensure that the concerns of external examiners are addressed rigorously in action plans.

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

- consider establishing a higher education strategy development group, with a wider membership than the Senior Leadership Team, that has a remit for the development of college higher education provision, strategies and quality assurance policies
- ensure that further training is provided for staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes in all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, including relevant sections of the *Code of practice*
- consider how the lesson observation reporting process might better reflect higher education learning and teaching
- consider a central, coherent process for enhancing staff development activities, with the College taking a more strategic overview of higher education staff development so that scholarly activity has a high priority
- manage the strategic development of the virtual learning environment and monitor it in order to ensure that the information it holds is comprehensive and accurate
- continue to monitor the information provided in the module packs to ensure that it is comprehensive and of a consistent standard
- publish placement guidance for students and employers that defines their role and responsibilities with respect to work placements.

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 Bicton College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Plymouth. The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Ms Maggie Carroll and Mr Chris Davies (reviewers) and Mr Alan Nisbett (coordinator).

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

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

4 The College was originally established in 1947 by Devon County Council as the Bicton Farm Institute, later becoming Bicton College of Agriculture. In 1993, the College was taken out of the control of the Council following the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 and became a Further Education Corporation and an Exempt Charity. In October 2002 Bicton College of Agriculture was renamed Bicton College to reflect the changing needs of both the agriculture industry and the countryside and to place itself in the position of being able to respond to the future education and training needs of young people and adults in Devon. The College has recently been through a turbulent period as a result of a funding deficit and an abortive merger with a local college. The College has successfully resolved its funding difficulties and returned a surplus in the last financial year. Nonetheless, staff have had to face a number of challenges, including a tightening of resource constraints, some staff redundancies and a reorganisation of the College's management structure. It is to the credit of staff that, despite all these difficulties, their main concern has continued to be for the quality of the students' learning experience.

5 The College provides a range of land-based programmes that are available from entry level to higher education in agriculture, animal care, arboriculture, countryside management, engineering and mechanisation, equine studies, floristry, horticulture, outdoor leisure, sports studies and veterinary nursing. The College recruits over 1,000 full-time students annually, plus 3,500 part-time and short-course students. The programmes currently approved by the University of Plymouth and offered by Bicton College are:

- FdSc Agricultural Management
- FdSc Animal Science (Management and Welfare)
- FdA Environment Education
- FdSc Equine Studies

- FdSc Horticulture
- FdA Outdoor Leisure Management.

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

6 The College works solely with the University of Plymouth (the University) as its awarding body. This relationship was originally established in March 2002, as an Academic Co-operation Agreement, with the University directly approving and awarding Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) across a range of land-based disciplines delivered by the College. These were superseded in 2003 by FDs validated by the University. The planning, delivery and quality of all university higher education programmes offered by south-west colleges, including Bicton is now overseen by a discrete faculty of the University: the University of Plymouth College's Faculty (UPC). The relationship is now regarded as one of academic partnership, and revised agreements are currently being drafted by the University which better reflect this arrangement. As a full UPC member, the College is represented on the Faculty Board and has its own Joint Board of Studies, which acts as a formal subcommittee of the Faculty Board.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 Higher education has been part of the College's provision for over 10 years. It is complementary to the further education provision and provides progression routes for most level 3 programmes. Originally, higher education provision was through a number of HNC and HND programmes, but in 2003 they were replaced by FDs. Since 2003, a number of new programmes have been added to the higher education portfolio, while others have been withdrawn due to changes in demand. The College continues to look for opportunities to widen its higher education provision, focusing on its key areas of expertise and the progression needs of its students.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A meeting was held with course representatives from the range of FD programmes, in which the process of the Summative review was discussed. The College provided support for the process through engaging a representative from the University of Plymouth Students' Union, who supported the writing of the student submission. The resulting submission, which was focused on the Summative review core themes, was very helpful to the team, as was the meeting with students held during the review visit.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

9 Oversight of the provision is through the College's Senior Leadership Team, the College's Academic Board and the University's Faculty Joint Board of Studies, which is a

subcommittee of the UPC Faculty Board. The management structure of the College, which was revised during a difficult period of change and implemented in July 2009, includes Academy Heads, who manage the programmes within their curriculum areas. While the Deputy Principal (Academies) has overall responsibility for all college higher education provision, one Academy Head has a cross-college higher education role and line manages the Higher Education Coordinator. The Higher Education Coordinator represents the College at cross-college and Joint Board of Studies meetings for all FD programmes.

10 The Higher Education Coordinator role includes chairing college assessment and awards boards and the organisation and oversight of standardisation activities, quality assurance procedures and sharing good practice. However, these important roles are not yet reflected overtly within the management structure that relates to higher education. The College management structure, designed to support all aspects of programme planning, delivery and assessment, reflects strongly the requirements of the university policies and procedures for ensuring appropriate academic standards. The team saw many examples of the consistency with which the College uses standard UPC processes and templates to support programme delivery. However, the College does not have a central oversight of, for example, external examiner reports to inform it of common themes for future development and good practice that might be shared across all programmes. The team believes that such oversight could be vested in a higher education strategy development group, with a wider membership than the Senior Leadership Team, which has a remit for the development of college higher education provision, strategies and quality assurance policies. Ultimately, such a central group should form a forum for discussion that would enable the College to develop its teaching, learning and assessment strategies to underpin current and future programmes, linked clearly to staff development needs. The team concludes that this would be a desirable, logical development, and result in enhancing the College's sense of ownership of its higher education provision.

11 At programme level, there is an appointed Programme Manager who is the link to the relevant academic subject area at the University and carries the day-to-day management responsibility for programme delivery. Additional responsibilities include marketing and admissions; timetabling, assessment and examination arrangements; collating results and chairing the Subject Assessment Panel; and liaising with the university-appointed external examiner. The Programme Manager acts as the link person to both the University and employers and chairs the twice-yearly Programme Committee meetings, which include student and other representatives as required by the University.

12 Programme committees report to the Joint Boards of Studies, which have clear and appropriate terms of reference and play a pivotal role in ensuring that the University is fully informed about programme delivery on a regular basis. They are required to report on the performance and progress of individual programmes; respond to issues raised by external examiners; address student concerns, including college, university and National Student Surveys; prepare annual programme monitoring reports and action plans; and make proposals for module changes.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13 The college quality assurance processes and the maintenance of appropriate academic standards are based on the use of the Academic Infrastructure underpinning the University's awards. The team found evidence of good alignment with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant subject benchmark statements in programme specifications and student handbooks. FDs are subject to the requirements of the UPC, which ensures parity of qualifications across its college partners, for example through arrangements for cross-college moderation and external examining. However, the team found only partial evidence of how programme teams had engaged effectively with the *Code*

of practice, or that staff development activities include appropriate training on the Academic Infrastructure. The team considers it to be desirable for the College to ensure that further training is provided for staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes in all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, including relevant sections 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?

14 The University ensures that the College has appropriate management, quality assurance procedures and resources to deliver its awards through a site approval document, and conducts institutional reviews on a five-yearly cycle. The College is guided by the current UPC Cross-College Action Plan, which sets out the key objectives for developments at both college and programme level. The team found that the College responds to this strategic and operational level of guidance in an effective manner to deliver higher education standards, and this is good practice as it ensures that the standards expected by the awarding body are clearly articulated, understood by all staff and promoted appropriately.

15 The College participates in university institutional reviews undertaken by the university Learning and Teaching Committee, with external academic representation. The most recent review report confirmed that the quality and standards of the University's awards were being maintained, as evidenced by the College's use of the external examiner system and the role of the Joint Board of Studies. The College submits an Annual Programme Monitoring Report for each programme to the Joint Board of Studies, following the process set out in a detailed flowchart template, with accompanying action plans.

16 Curriculum development, new programme proposals and module changes are subject to guidelines and templates provided by the University. The approval of a new programme requires the College and the University to identify appropriate articulated progression routes. A central feature of curriculum development is the engagement of employers in discussions with the College to ensure subject relevance and the acquisition of work-related skills. The team discussed the work-based learning aspects of FD curricula with staff, students and employers, and considers that this aspect is making a developing contribution to the preparation of students for a wide range of employment opportunities.

17 The programme validation process is used appropriately to review the programme and update modules and their assessments, and incorporates verification and moderation recommendations from external examiners. Student assessment strategy is conducted according to the University assessment policy, supported by guidelines and regulations that are made clear in student handbooks. Across the programmes there are appropriate ranges of assessment types, including examinations. In the majority of cases, written assessments are internally verified for consistency and academic rigour, with final scrutiny by external examiners. The programme manager and programme internal verifier ensure that assessment briefs, including assessment criteria and intended learning outcomes, are fit for purpose for each award level.

18 External examiners have provided generally positive feedback on the college assessment processes, although an examiner (for the FdSc Animal Science) commented that not all module examinations had been approved before issue and internal verification. The same examiner was also concerned about the bunching of assignments, as had been the case in the previous year. The team believes it to be advisable for the College to ensure that both of these concerns are addressed rigorously in its action plans and responses to the external examiner.

19 The College undertakes a detailed analysis of student retention, progression and achievement statistics. Retention statistics are generally satisfactory, and the College has taken steps successfully to improve retention in the current session. Many students progress directly into industry on completion of the FD programme, while others proceed to the articulated university honours programme or to other institutions.

20 Students receive support from programme managers, as well as careers advice, when considering progression to the University. Students who met the team confirmed their appreciation of the programmes available at the College, and the accessibility of further study in their chosen fields. They also commented that they valued the standards of their awards and the opportunities afforded to them for direct employment.

21 Annual programme monitoring and evaluation is the central feature of ensuring that the College is meeting the requirements of the academic standards of the University's awards. The process is dependent upon a range of meetings and representations, which culminate in the formal annual report to the Joint Board of Studies. The College conducts subject assessment panels, resit panels and boards, and consultations at a meeting with employers. Final boards, with external examiner input, and faculty meetings with the University form the basis for the review of academic standards. Where appropriate, college meetings involve student representatives and consideration of the results of student surveys and questionnaires. These processes, which are well understood by college staff and are long-standing arrangements, respond to UPC requirements for programme monitoring and evaluation.

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

22 The University provides a range of staff development opportunities to college higher education staff. There are also some internal and external activities to enable staff to engage with continuing professional development and professional practice. Staff identify potential developmental needs through appraisal and in consultation with fellow teaching team members and external examiners.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body.

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

23 As explained in paragraphs 9-11, overall responsibility for the quality of the higher education provision rests with the college Senior Leadership Team. Delegation of this responsibility for the higher education programmes to the Deputy Principal (Academies), and the five academy heads who report directly to her, helps to ensure that the quality of learning opportunities are managed, monitored and enhanced within the overall approach to higher education quality assurance.

24 Within this structure, the programme managers, the programme teams and the Higher Education Coordinator all have clearly designated roles for the management of the quality of learning opportunities for the students, and are effective in this respect. While the Higher Education Coordinator, herself a Programme Manager, does not directly manage staff, her role is significant in coordinating the implementation of the higher education strategy and its current and future developments. The team found evidence of the importance and effectiveness of this coordinating responsibility, and the College might wish to consider how the role might be placed more formally within the management and committee structures to promote the continuing development of the higher education provision, and within the context of the recommendation for a higher education group outlined in paragraph 10.

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

25 A strong feature of the College's quality assurance processes relates to the Quality Review Audits held for each of the Academies for one week each year, which cover higher as well as further education. An aim of the process is to evaluate learning and teaching, and the subsequent outcomes inform and support the development of the Self-Assessment process and the Quality Improvement Plan. The process is clearly structured and includes observing teaching, evaluating student work, analysing student achievement data, and engaging in subject team meetings which result in feedback and report to the Academy Head. The most recent audit focused on higher education programmes and resulted in a document clearly setting out strengths and areas for improvement. The Quality Review Audits which support the overall quality assurance processes are considered an aspect of good practice.

26 The programme managers for each of the higher education programmes have direct responsibility for the programme's quality, and in so doing ensure the coordination of the college and the university quality processes. They chair the subject assessment panels, liaise with the university-appointed external examiners, chair programme committees and the Joint Board of Studies. Programme managers have day-to-day responsibility for their teams of programme tutors.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

27 Paragraph 13 identifies the way in which the programmes are developed with reference to appropriate sections of the Academic Infrastructure. The quality of learning opportunities is supported by this approach, as evidenced in programme handbooks and module programmes. External examiners' acknowledgement of appropriate and comparable standards of achievement in the students' work indicate, for example, how the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* has been addressed across the provision in respect of teaching, learning and assessment. Through the Professional Practice module, common to each of the programmes, attention has been paid to the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. The learning outcomes for the module are clearly identified; they contribute effectively to the characteristics of and requirement for FDs, and the work is assessed appropriately.

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

28 College academic programme management links into the University of Plymouth Joint Board of Studies, which ensures that teaching and learning quality is maintained and that assessment procedures are consistently applied. The team observed good practice in

the College's well-established and very close working relationship with the University, which is mutually supportive and engenders confidence that the partnership is effective at institutional and programme levels.

29 Currently, teaching, learning and assessment at the College sit within the frameworks of the University of Plymouth Teaching and Learning Strategy and its Assessment Policy. The College is in the process of establishing its own strategy for teaching and learning which will frame the higher education provision.

30 The quality of teaching and learning is monitored comprehensively and enhanced effectively through the College's Performance Review Policy; lesson observation, peer observation and mentoring; module review, external examiner reporting, regular meetings with UPC, some feedback from employers and, significantly, through student feedback. Lesson observations are undertaken through the week-long Quality Review Audits, when outcomes are considered and action plans formulated. Training for higher education-focused observations has been carried out with the observation team. From reviewing the lesson observation feedback to staff, these reports, while thorough, do not directly address specific skills required in developing higher education learning. The team considers it to be desirable for the College to consider how the lesson observation reporting process might better reflect higher education learning and teaching.

31 All teaching staff undertake peer observations with colleagues, which in part is seen as an opportunity for professional development. Teaching staff review their module teaching systematically, the outcomes of which are included in both the college and university quality processes. For the College, module reviews are coordinated by programme managers, who incorporate them within the subject Self-Assessment leading to the Quality Improvement Plan for their subject area.

32 Students have a range of means of giving feedback to the College on the quality of teaching, which is noted and acted upon diligently. Their views provide evidence that the staff have good subject knowledge, that they are approachable and accessible, and that they respond to students' learning needs swiftly. Students are unanimous in noting the effectiveness of the informal, day-to-day links they have with their tutors, which support opportunities they have for optimising their learning. Students are represented formally on their relevant Joint Board of Studies and on the programme committees. These are considered important conduits for linking staff and students, so that issues on quality can be promptly and appropriately addressed. In addition, the College has a higher education student representative, and is making effective contact with the higher education student body, informing all the students of decisions by email. The College's broad approach to capturing students' views, discussing these and then taking action is considered an aspect of good practice.

33 A common element across all programmes is the Professional Practice module in which placement learning is located. Students not only gain relevant experience in their chosen field, but they also develop reflective practice skills and learn to work independently. The quality of this experience is managed by the Professional Practice module leaders and monitored by programme managers. Tutorial support for each student enables staff to assess the quality of the placements and to take action as appropriate mentors.

34 Employers engage in different and appropriate ways with the higher education provision, and this is important in supporting and enhancing not only the student experience, but also the College's Mission to 'strive for excellence in the delivery of land-based and environmental education to Devon's rural businesses, individuals and communities'.

35 The University requires an industry adviser to be nominated for a new programme's approval. An advisable recommendation from the Development engagement was that the

mechanisms for maintaining engagement with employers at programme and institutional level should be strengthened. Programme managers have now formally nominated one or more link employers, with the exception of the FdSc Agricultural Management, where the immediate focus has been on developing a range of links for this new programme. The link employers act as a point of contact for module tutors and programme managers, meet students, and ensure the currency and vocational relevance of the programmes in content and delivery. In addition to this, further links with employers facilitate students' learning opportunities. These include practical off-site training, as in the case of the FdSc Horticulture, where the students learn off-site at the Eden Project in Cornwall; employers delivering lectures and specialist advice to students at the College; providing research and work-placement opportunities for the students; and as critical friends to programme teams. The team noted several examples of good practice in this context, including examples cited during its discussion with employers across all the higher education programmes. Employers were positive about the relationships they have with the College, and underlined the importance of these to the support for the students and the industry in the region.

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

36 The College has extensive and appropriate ways of supporting students from admission through to programme completion. Its policy of enabling level 3 students to progress to the higher education programmes, together with the Step-up to HE programme, assists students in understanding some of the demands of higher education-level study and is regarded by the team as good practice. The two-day Step-up programme is fully evaluated after completion and then six months on by the students, and the outcomes of the evaluation reveal substantial satisfaction on all the key themes of the programme. All students have a well-planned induction programme at the start of the course which includes an introduction to facilities both at the College and at the University, the expectations of studying at levels 4 and 5, developing independence and ideas for achieving success. Student feedback indicates that the programme meets these objectives. Once on their programmes, students receive wide-ranging and appropriate support for higher education-level study. This includes academic tutoring; specific learner support, where identified and disclosed; Student Services provision and support from the Learning Resource Centre. Additionally, to complement this, students can access relevant support at the University through its portal.

37 All students are allocated a personal tutor, who reviews their progress once each term. This entitlement is often supplemented by additional tutorials, as requested by the students. Group tutorials are also held to facilitate specific learning matters related to assignments. Students attest to the helpfulness of such support and the ready accessibility of tutors. External examiners concur with this view from their meetings with students.

38 Additional learning needs are met by the Skills for Life Department and its Additional Learning Support service. The Learning Support Coordinator, managed by an Academy Head, liaises closely with teaching staff and Learning Resource Centre staff at the College and with her equivalent colleague at the University to ensure continuity of support. Through course advice days, disclosure during interview and the admissions process students with additional needs are identified and appropriate support ensured.

39 The Student Services Department offers careers, counselling, and other welfare support, about which students are advised prior to enrolment, during induction, and by their student handbooks. Strong academic support is also provided by staff in the Learning Resource Centre, who during induction, and then as required throughout the course, facilitate students' access to both the college and university library systems. There are useful leaflets and booklets, in hard copy and online, signposting where support may be found and offering specific guidance on learning approaches.

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

40 The arrangements for staff development in maintaining and enhancing the quality of learning experiences are managed and monitored by both the Deputy Principal (Academies), and by the Human Resources Manager. All staff are required to record staff development and continuing professional development. The Staff Development Policy provides a framework which ensures that individual needs are planned and evaluated, so that individual and college-wide objectives are met. It states that it will 'require and support all higher education teaching staff to pursue research and scholarly activity to support their positions in delivering education programmes of study'.

41 Staff development activity ranges from generic training workshops, which reference education-specific themes such as the Academic Infrastructure, and Transferring Good Practice from Business Enterprise and Work-based Learning, to professional updating, to postgraduate award courses. Staff report that, despite having high teaching loads, they feel well supported in having their development requests met and that the Deputy Principal is active in facilitating such development. Examples are a programme tutor who gained six weeks' release from teaching to pursue professional updating in Finland, and another who has funding to travel to tutorials for her PhD study.

42 The self-evaluation suggested that there is scope to improve support for staff to facilitate study for higher degrees through a more systematic and proactive approach. The team agrees with this analysis and considers it to be desirable that the College should consider a central, coherent process for enhancing staff development activities, with the College taking a more strategic overview of higher education staff development so that scholarly activity has a high priority.

43 Following the recommendation in the Developmental engagement that the College should develop effective processes for the support of new teaching staff within higher education programmes, all new staff now have a specific higher education mentor who is their programme manager. They are also supported by the Higher Education Coordinator.

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?

44 Following the College's recent reorganisation and the acceptance of its recovery plan, the Skills Funding Agency recently confirmed major investment in the College which will impact positively on the quality of learning opportunities for higher education students. The College's Higher Education Strategy refers to the need to increase the use of Information and Learning Technologies. Work on upgrading the Information and Communication Technology infrastructure to improve reliability, increase internet speeds and connectivity is now complete. This will enhance students' access to learning resources and to interactive online learning. Provision of resources is initially assured at the point of validation, and the review and updating of the Definitive Module Record ensures that this is monitored annually.

45 Specialist resources for the higher education programmes are of high quality and meet the particular needs of the land-based provision. External examiners comment favourably on this, as do the employers who liaise with the College. The College has provided a higher education study room and a higher education common room for the students, and, in conjunction with the imminent plans to re-site dedicated higher education accommodation, these are all contributing to a more prominent higher education profile in the College.

46 There are strong links between the College and the UPC in supporting students' learning. The college Learning Resource Centre Manager is very active in liaising with students and with college and UPC staff. The Learning Resource Manager's annual review of Learning Resource Centre provision contributes to the College Quality cycle and is used to guide future provision and improvement in services. The College is currently considering how the Learning Resource Centre Manager might more formally contribute to higher education resource allocation decisions.

47 Teaching staff are asked to submit requests for library resources, and within the budget allocated to the library such requests are met. The Learning Resource Centre Manager checks reading lists and reviews the stock. When it became apparent that a core text was not available the Learning Resource Centre probed the reason for this and took appropriate action. Through the university portal, students have full access to electronic resources, and they also have a free inter-library loan system. The active and effective leadership provided by the college Learning Resource Centre Manager, including the excellent liaison with the library staff at the University, enhances higher education students' access to wide-ranging resources, and is an area of good practice.

48 The College's virtual learning environment is a vehicle for supporting students' access to key information. Students are inducted into accessing it early on in their programmes, and while some do not use it as fully as they might, others refer to it as a 'life-saver', especially for part-time and more distant students. Teaching staff use the virtual learning environment mainly as a repository for information on their modules and are not yet exploiting its potential for more interactive forms of teaching and learning. No minimum standards are laid down and the management of this resource is limited to periodic auditing of the contents. Technical problems have made it unreliable, the information on it is not always current and not all staff make use of it. The team recommends as desirable that the College manage the strategic development of the virtual learning environment and also monitor it in order to ensure that the information it holds is comprehensive and accurate.

49 The university portal provides additional sources of information on learning, access to electronic resources and confirms the university identity. Students make most use of it in their second year. There have been log-in problems to the university portal and students describe access to it as being intermittent.

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

Core theme 3: Public information

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

50 College information relating to the programme offer is provided via the Higher Education Course Guide, the website, course leaflets and student handbooks. The Higher Education Course Guide is an attractive document providing useful initial information to a potential student, including entry requirements, module titles, progression opportunities and generic information on assessment. The team considers that the quality of this guide represents good practice as its content, presentation and comprehensiveness provides intending students with a clear and accessible portrayal of all that the College offers in higher education.

51 The website has the same course information as the guide. The website is easy to navigate and includes all the information which a student might require at the initial research stage or signposts opportunities to obtain further information. It is attractive and student focused. In documents used internally to support student learning both the College and the University are identified. These help ensure that students are aware that their programmes lead to University of Plymouth awards.

52 Students use a variety of channels to access initial information relating to the programme offer. Enquiries are followed up by an interview with the course tutor. The induction week and Step-up to HE were well received by students. It gave them a good start and the process was both efficient and welcoming.

53 Students receive a hard copy of their Student Programme Handbook and they can access it on the virtual learning environment. The handbooks follow a university template with some college contextualisation. They are very comprehensive and include guidance on studying at higher education levels, general information on learning resources, practical information relating to how to access this at the University, progression to further higher education opportunities, programme specifications, assessment regulations, and information about complaints and discipline. Academic regulations and support for learning are extensively signposted. The handbooks also include appropriate references to benchmark statements, detailed admissions criteria and arrangements for the accreditation of prior and experiential learning. The team considers this to be good practice as it provides students with clear information to aid achievement and progression and is articulated against salient parts of the Academic Infrastructure.

54 While the handbooks include a useful summary of each module in the programme, much more detailed information is provided in the module packs. They contain a comprehensive overview of the module, including the aims, learning outcomes, an outline scheme of work, indicative reading lists, and the assignments listed with weightings and nearly all with dates on which student work had to be handed in. However, this practice is not universal. The team recommends as desirable that the College should continue to monitor the information provided in the module packs to ensure that it is comprehensive and of a consistent standard. The module packs include detailed information regarding the balance between theory and practical delivery. The Development engagement advised the College to make this more explicit in its public information. The College plans to make the necessary revisions to improve the prospectus, website and the advice and guidance offered to prospective students.

55 Students are provided with an information pack to guide them in securing a work placement, but the College has not yet produced a placement handbook that sets out learning outcomes and requirements for placement learning; nor do employers receive guidance on their obligations with respect to providing work placements. The team believes it to be desirable for the College to publish a placement handbook for students and employers that defines their role and responsibilities with respect to work placements.

**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?**

56 The agreement between the College and University places responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of publicity material with the College, while the University retains the right to audit reference to its programmes in that material. All external material referring to the University must be copied to its Marketing and Public Relations Department for approval before use. During validations, student handbooks are subjected to detailed scrutiny by the University, and they have to be updated and submitted to the University annually.

57 The responsibility for the accuracy of marketing information lies with programme managers, programme teams, the marketing team and the Higher Education Coordinator. Programme teams work with the marketing function to develop the information for publication. This is evaluated using student focus groups and the published information is reviewed annually. The University approves the information, including progression routes. Minor changes to the website can subsequently be undertaken to ensure that the website is kept up to date. On the whole, these checking mechanisms are robust, but there is scope to improve them in order to ensure that information is kept up to date.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

58 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in November 2009. The three lines of enquiry were:

Line of enquiry 1: How effectively does assessment help students develop skills and knowledge at an appropriate level and enhance their employability?

Line of enquiry 2: How effectively does assessment promote learning and facilitate improvement and progression?

Line of enquiry 3: To what extent does published information effectively prepare students for assessment?

59 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice, including the Major Integrated Assignment, which requires students to focus on an area of particular interest and to build and demonstrate knowledge that enhances their prospects of employment as well as developing skills in research; the assessment of work-based learning through professional practice in the FD Environmental Education and in the FdA Environmental Community Arts, as it enables students to develop realistic ideas and aspirations with regard to their future employment; and the systematic approach to ensuring the consistency and accuracy of published information on assessment.

60 The Developmental engagement team made a number of recommendations. For example, it reported that it was advisable for the College to strengthen the mechanisms for maintaining engagement with employers at programme and institutional level in order to enhance work-based assessment and professional practice opportunities, and to establish a policy on higher education assessment with explicit reference to relevant sections of the Academic Infrastructure. The team also advised the College to establish robust verification and moderation arrangements that assure and enhance the quality of assessment against clearly understood standards, and to provide systematic staff development on assessment within the framework of the Academic Infrastructure.

61 The Developmental engagement team also reported that it would be desirable for the College to incorporate into mechanisms for engaging with employers the opportunity for second-year students to feed back on professional practice experience and its assessment; extend the support activities for all students in the practice of preparing for and undertaking examinations; and make more explicit, earlier in the prospectus and virtual learning

environment, the detailed information currently within the definitive module record regarding the amount of theory to practical delivery and assessment.

D Foundation Degrees

62 The College currently offers FDs in Animal Science (Management and Welfare), Agricultural Management, Environmental Education, Equine Studies, Horticulture and Outdoor Leisure Management. There are no immediate plans to increase the range of FDs, though this is an avowed intention for the future.

63 As the Colleges currently only offers FDs, all the conclusions apply to these programmes.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

64 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Bicton College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, the University of Plymouth.

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

- the effective way in which the College responds to the strategic and operational level of guidance provided by the University assures higher education standards (paragraph 14)
- the Quality Review Audits support the overall quality assurance processes and provide a robust evaluation of higher education programmes (paragraph 25)
- the College's well-established and very close working relationship with the University is mutually supportive and engenders confidence that the partnership is effective at institutional and programme levels (paragraph 28)
- the College's broad approach to capturing and discussing students' views then taking action ensures that the learner voice is appropriately and comprehensively taken into account (paragraph 32)
- the effective links with employers across many programmes facilitate the acquisition by students of work-related skills and knowledge (paragraphs 34-35)
- the policy of enabling level 3 students to progress to the higher education programmes, coupled with the Step-up to HE programme, greatly assists students in understanding some of the demands of higher education-level study (paragraph 36)
- the active and effective leadership provided by the College Learning Resource Centre Manager, including the excellent liaison with the library staff at the University of Plymouth, enhances higher education students' access to wide-ranging resources (paragraph 47)
- the quality of the Higher Education Course Guide, in terms of its content, presentation and comprehensiveness, provides intending students with a clear and accessible portrayal of all that the College offers in higher education (paragraph 50)
- the student handbooks for all programmes include the programme specification, with appropriate references to QAA benchmark statements, detailed admissions criteria and arrangements for the accreditation of prior and experiential learning (paragraph 53).

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

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

- ensure that the concerns of external examiners are addressed rigorously in action plans (paragraph 18).

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

- consider establishing a higher education strategy development group, with a wider membership than the Senior Leadership Team, that has a remit for the development of college higher education provision, strategies and quality assurance policies (paragraph 10)
- ensure that further training is provided for staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes in all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, including relevant sections of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 13)
- consider how the lesson observation reporting process might better reflect higher education learning and teaching (paragraph 30)
- consider a central, coherent process for enhancing staff development activities, with the College taking a more strategic overview of higher education staff development so that scholarly activity has a high priority (paragraph 42)
- manage the strategic development of the virtual learning environment and monitor it in order to ensure that the information it holds is comprehensive and accurate (paragraph 48)
- continue to monitor the information provided in the module packs to ensure that it is comprehensive and of a consistent standard (paragraph 54)
- publish placement guidance for students and employers that defines their role and responsibilities with respect to work placements (paragraph 55).

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

70 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.

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

Bicton College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2011						
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective way in which the College responds to the strategic and operational level of guidance provided by the University assures higher education standards (paragraph 14) 	<p>Programme Review Meeting</p> <p>Annual Programme Monitoring - feeds into Joint Board of Studies (JBS) - UPC faculty board</p> <p>Incorporate the findings within the College's own HE Self Assessment Review (SAR) and Development Plan</p>	<p>Aug 2011</p> <p>Oct 2011</p> <p>Nov/Dec 2011</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Team</p> <p>HE Co-ordinator and HE Forum Committee</p>	Identified through an updated College HE Action and Development Plan		Annual Self Assessment for 2011-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Quality Review Audits support the overall quality assurance processes and provide a robust evaluation of higher education programmes 	Continue to undertake and review the process for evaluating HE within the Quality Review process, with a specific HE focus	Jan 2012	Quality Co-ordinator, Deputy Principal for Academies, HE Co-ordinator	Quality & Review (Q&R) reports for the area of HE demonstrate the continuing monitoring of HE from a college perspective	<p>Senior Leadership Team (SLT)</p> <p>Board of Governors</p>	Jan 2012 HE Q&R Report which will feed into the College's Self Assessment Report for HE for 2012

(paragraph 25)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's well-established and very close working relationship with the University is mutually supportive and engenders confidence that the partnership is effective at institutional and programme levels (paragraph 28) 	<p>Continue to work closely with the University of Plymouth (UoP) through a range of channels and opportunities to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the partnership</p> <p>Continue to review links and opportunities to possible continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and updates through the UoP and maintain links with external examiners</p>	June 2012	HE Quality Co-ordinator, HE programme managers and teams, HE administrator	<p>Feedback from external examiners and evaluations of the Panels and Boards</p> <p>HE Self Assessment Report and Quality improvement Plan</p>	SLT Board of Governors	SAR - 2011-12, external examiner (EE) Reports (Panels & Boards) - 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's broad approach to capturing and discussing students' views then taking action ensures that the learner voice is appropriately and comprehensively taken into account (paragraph 32) 	<p>Review and continuously monitor the means through which the students' views and voice is engaged within the development, support and delivery of HE learning at the college</p> <p>Internal questionnaires - look at timings</p>	June 2012	HE Programme team, HE Co-ordinator, QA Manager	Student feedback, reviews, JBS and programme committee meetings	SLT Board of Governors	SAR - 2011-12, Student questionnaires, EE reports, Programme committee meeting minutes

	<p>Student perception survey - Yr 1 UoP - continue to improve response rates</p> <p>National Student Survey - Yr 2 National - continue to improve response rates</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective links with employers across many programmes facilitate the acquisition by students of work-related skills and knowledge (paragraphs 34-35) 	<p>Continue to review and build upon the good practice in which employers can effectively continue to input into the HE programmes to confirm links to industry and the skill and knowledge requirements needed to prepare for employment</p>	June 2012	<p>HE teaching team, HE programme managers, HE Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Identified through the range of employer links, employer feedback, employer engagement within assignment activities and seminars, work experience reports and programme evaluation</p>	<p>SLT Board of Governors</p>	<p>EE feedback, Programme committee meetings, JBS, programme reviews, SAR and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), Student surveys and questionnaires</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the policy of enabling level 3 students to progress to the higher education programmes, coupled with the Step-up to HE programme, greatly assists students in understanding some of the demands of higher education- 	<p>Continue to review and ensure the quality of processes and support provided, to enable students to understand and make clear the progression from level 3 to HE both prior to starting a programme and as a part of induction</p>	June 2012	<p>HE Co-ordinator, HE programme managers and Team, Marketing team, College Careers Advisor</p>	<p>Student feedback, Induction process and programme</p>	<p>SLT Board of Governors</p>	<p>Student reviews</p>

level study (paragraph 36)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the active and effective leadership provided by the College Learning Resource Centre Manager, including the excellent liaison with the library staff at the University of Plymouth, enhances higher education students' access to wide-ranging resources (paragraph 47) 	<p>Continue to review and support the effective links between the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) Manager and Librarian and the UoP, and the support provided to students</p> <p>The development of a HE stand-alone budget for resources</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>Sep 2011</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator, HE programme managers and team, Librarian, LRC Manager and the UoP</p> <p>Deputy principals</p>	<p>Accessibility and support, links for all HE students to the UoP, Q&R reports, Student feedback</p>	<p>SLT</p> <p>Board of Governors</p>	<p>Student feedback, Q&R reports, Programme Meetings, SAR (2011-12)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the Higher Education Course Guide, in terms of its content, presentation and comprehensiveness, provides intending students with a clear and accessible portrayal of all that the College offers in higher education (paragraph 50) 	<p>Continue to review and maintain the standard of information relating to the HE Course Guide and support for students</p> <p>Continued development of the web-based information which can be updated instantly</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p>	<p>HE programme managers and teams, HE Co-ordinator and Marketing team</p>	<p>Review pre-publication of the HE Course Guide for students for 2012-13</p>	<p>SLT</p> <p>Board of Governors</p>	<p>Course Guide, Student feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student handbooks for all 	<p>Continue to follow the guidance and</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator, HE programme</p>	<p>Quality and Review Reports,</p>	<p>SLT</p>	<p>Student handbooks and</p>

programmes include the programme specification, with appropriate references to QAA benchmark statements, detailed admissions criteria and arrangements for the accreditation of prior and experiential learning (paragraph 53).	recommendations regarding the content and to ensure all changes are communicated effectively to staff		managers and team	Programme meetings, HE programme forum meetings	Board of Governors	pre-course information
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the concerns of external examiners are addressed rigorously in action plans (paragraph 18). 	Review and ensure planning for the setting of assignments is clearly timetabled to ensure no bunching of work is evident Review and ensure that all module examinations and assignments are both verified by the external examiner and internal verifier prior to issue QA Manager, HE	Sep 2011 Oct 2011 Sep 2011	HE programme managers, HE Co-ordinator HE programme managers	Assignment timetables for all modules	SLT Board of Governors	Student feedback, Programme planning, EE reports Review action plans and subsequent external examiners' reports

	<p>Co-ordinator and Academy Head to review all External Examiners' reports and feedback to QA Committee</p> <p>Review reports from the EEs following the subject panels and boards and ensure that these are considered within an action plan for HE</p>		HE Co-ordinator and HE programme managers			
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider establishing a higher education strategy development group, with a wider membership than the Senior Leadership Team, that has a remit for the development of college higher education provision, strategies and quality assurance 	Review the process of developing and ensuring the consistency and quality of HE within the College to include the development and membership of a specific HE focus group with responsibilities for both operational and strategic issues	Sep 2011	Deputy Principal (Academies), HE Co-ordinator, Quality Co-ordinator	Membership and minutes of the HE Forum/Strategy Group	SLT Board of Governors	Membership of the HE Forum and Strategy Group and minutes from meetings

<p>policies (paragraph 10)</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that further training is provided for staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes in all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, including relevant sections of the <i>Code of practice</i> (paragraph 13) 	<p>Review staff development for HE to include staff training on the subjects of the <i>Code of practice</i> and the Academic Infrastructure</p> <p>Create an annual HE training and CPD programme</p>	<p>Dec 2011</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator, UPC Training and Development Coordinator, HR</p>	<p>HE team clearly demonstrating clear and effective engagement and understanding of the <i>Code of practice</i> and Academic Infrastructure</p>	<p>SLT Board of Governors</p>	<p>Self Assessment Review and Quality Improvement Plan for HE 2011-12</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider how the lesson observation reporting process might better reflect higher education learning and teaching (paragraph 30) 	<p>Review the detail of the Quality & Review week relating to HE and lesson observation</p> <p>Review the detail of the criteria for observation and include detail that reflects the higher order skills for delivering teaching and facilitating learning at HE level</p> <p>Ensure that all observations should</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p> <p>Oct 2011</p> <p>Oct 2011</p>	<p>Quality Co-ordinator, Q&R team, Deputy Principle (Academies), HE teaching team</p>	<p>Within the process of Quality and Review for HE, the report emphasises and refers in greater detail to detail within lesson observation relating to academic rigour, levels of teaching and student achievement</p>	<p>SLT Board of Governors</p>	<p>Observation report and documents that reflect level of teaching and detail for delivering at this level of provision; Q&R report</p>

	<p>consider and cover the full range of teaching activities and include lectures, seminars, tutorials, practicals, and other relevant activities</p> <p>Review process through links with the UPC for observation at this level and develop HE moderation for teaching standards linking into their teaching and learning strategy which will develop into further development</p>	<p>Oct 2011</p> <p>Jan 2012</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider a central, coherent process for enhancing staff development activities, with the College taking a more strategic overview of higher education staff development so that scholarly activity has a high priority (paragraph 42) 	<p>Within the new appraisal system ensure clear links to the higher development and skills of the HE programme teams</p> <p>The identification and undertaking by the HE programme teams of relevant CPD vocational activities</p> <p>Links and input within</p>	<p>Sep 2011</p> <p>Nov 2011</p> <p>Nov 2011</p>	<p>HE programme teams, HE Co-ordinator, Staff development planning group, line managers and HR</p>	<p>CPD records for staff which clearly indicate updated and relevant opportunities have been sourced and undertaken</p>	<p>SLT</p> <p>Board of Governors</p>	<p>CPD records for all staff delivering on HE programmes</p> <p>Links to appraisal and development records</p>

	<p>the planning of staff development for HE programme and support teams</p> <p>Develop improved links to UPC and other HE institutions with regards to scholarly activity, including research communities</p> <p>Create an annual HE training and CPD programme</p>	<p>and ongoing throughout the academic year</p> <p>Feb 2012</p> <p>Sep 2011</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage the strategic development of the virtual learning environment and monitor it in order to ensure that the information it holds is comprehensive and accurate (paragraph 48) 	<p>Monitor and review the newly implemented virtual learning environment (VLE) for HE detail and accessibility in line with the development of a new ILT system</p>	Sep 2011	ILT Manager and team, HE programme teams	ILT review of VLE to indicate usage and support of system	SLT Board of Governors	Student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to monitor the information provided in the module packs to ensure that it is comprehensive and 	<p>Undertake a review of the module packs across the range of HE provision</p> <p>Audit and review the</p>	<p>Sep 2011</p> <p>Sep 2011</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator, Quality Co-ordinator and HE programme managers</p>	<p>Standardised Module packs</p> <p>Audit report</p>	<p>SLT</p> <p>Board of Governors</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator and HE programme managers' report</p>

of a consistent standard (paragraph 54)	<p>completeness and quality of information presented to students and the public within the support and assurance of correct public information</p> <p>Review module packs within the Q&R week for HE</p>	Jan 2012		HE Q&R report		Q&R report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> publish a placement guidance for students and employers that defines their role and responsibilities with respect to work placements (paragraph 55). 	<p>Prepare and publish information and responsibility provided to employers and students when undertaking work placement</p> <p>The provision of a new guidance for the academic year 2011-12</p>	Oct 2011	HE Co-ordinator, HE programme managers, HE teaching teams	Updated Handbook	SLT Board of Governors	Feedback from students and employers to confirm effectiveness

RG 776 08/11

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk