



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Strode's Sixth Form College

October 2011

SR 008/11

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 453 4

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 (FHEQ)*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*
- 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 Strode's Sixth Form College carried out in October 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 award it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programme it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice** for dissemination:

- the very close working relationship between College staff and Royal Holloway staff underpins the management and delivery of the programme, including prompt and effective responses to student concerns and to points raised by visiting examiners
- the College staff programme handbook constitutes a useful work of reference and makes a significant contribution to maintaining consistency of practice in teaching and learning across the provision
- there is high quality student support, including effective arrangements for monitoring student attendance and follow-up action by staff.

Recommendations

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

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

- consolidate the arrangements for its teaching staff to meet formally as a team to enhance their effectiveness in maintaining standards, addressing common problems, and sharing good practice
- devise a staff development programme specifically linked to the requirements of higher education
- encourage staff to upload existing and additional resources onto the Science Foundation Year section of the College's virtual learning environment.

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 Strode's Sixth Form 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 a substantial part of a single programme which the College delivers on behalf of Royal Holloway, University of London. The review was carried out by Ms Ann Kettle and Mr Andrew Lancaster (reviewers) and Dr Richard Wheeler (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated quality and enhancement review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding body, a meeting with students, and reports from inspections by Ofsted. The College had previously opted not to have a Developmental engagement. As the total number of full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE was less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the review was conducted by a desk-based study. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*, and programme specifications. There are no Foundation Degree awards on offer at the College.

3 Strode's College is a Sixth Form College with a history as an academic institution dating back over 300 years. The College became a Sixth Form College in 1975. It is located on a single campus that has been extended to provide for an increasing number of students and a broadening curriculum. There are currently 1,250 full-time students, most of whom are aged 16-18 and studying for level 3 qualifications within the *National Qualifications Framework (NQF)*. The College also provides a wide range of part-time programmes from entry level to level 5 on which the majority of students are 19 and above. The mission of Strode's College is to provide an education of quality and breadth within a supportive environment, enabling individuals to fulfil their potential and further their ambitions. The College is committed to encouraging more young people and adults into learning.

4 The College makes a major contribution to the delivery of one HEFCE-funded programme, validated by and in partnership with Royal Holloway, University of London:

- Science Foundation Year (68 students).

The programme is year 0 provision at level 3 of the NQF, taught over one year of full-time study. It is an integral part of a four-year undergraduate programme, leading to a wide range of single and joint degrees in science at Royal Holloway. Although the year 0 provision is largely delivered by Strode's College staff, with tutorial support from science subject staff at Royal Holloway, the students are full members of Royal Holloway from the start. Many are resident there on-campus. This review refers only to the management responsibilities and programme delivery undertaken by Strode's College.

5 The Science Foundation Year is located within the College's Faculty of Continuing Education. There are 68 full-time students enrolled on the programme. They are taught by 10 Strode's College staff.

Partnership agreement with the awarding body

6 The College has a formal partnership agreement with Royal Holloway, University of London. Under the terms of the agreement, Royal Holloway has full responsibility for the recruitment and enrolment of students and for all public information about the programme. Royal Holloway is responsible for assuring and monitoring academic standards, including arrangements for the assessment and examination of students and the management, moderation, monitoring, and reviewing of the programme. Strode's College has delegated responsibility for day-to-day management, teaching, and administration under the overall academic and quality assurance oversight of the Faculty of Science and the Academic Board of Royal Holloway. The College has responsibility for monitoring the proficiency of its staff teaching on the programme, using its established procedures for the assessment of teaching quality. Strode's College staff are represented on the programme management committee which is chaired by the Royal Holloway Science Foundation Year Programme Director. The Committee is serviced from the Registry at Royal Holloway. The team noted that external examiners at Royal Holloway are known as 'visiting examiners'.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7 In view of uncertainty concerning future funding arrangements for higher education and the allocation of student numbers, the College has suspended consideration of future higher education provision. The team was informed that a new strategic plan would, in due course, include a section on higher education.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8 Students on the programme were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. Students presented a submission which contributed helpfully to the evidence base for the review. Students who attended a meeting with the coordinator during the preparatory visit to the College confirmed that the student written submission was a fair and accurate representation of student views.

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 The College's responsibility for the day-to-day management, teaching, and administration of the programme includes staffing, timetabling, provision of learning resources, organising examinations, welfare of students, provision of physical resources for teaching, and the maintenance of academic quality to the standards required by Royal Holloway. In managing the programme, the College adheres to the framework established in the contract. The College's Director of Continuing Education is responsible for the management of the programme and for liaising with the Science Foundation Year Programme Director at Royal Holloway. Within the College, the Science Foundation Year Coordinator and the Science Foundation Year Lead Tutor are responsible for the day-to-day coordination of the programme. They report to the Director of Continuing Education who in

turn reports to the College's senior management team, the College governors and to the Continuing Education Committee, which has the programme as a standing item on its agenda. Higher education is one of the four strands within the Faculty of Continuing Education and, as such, is subject to the College's standard procedures for self-assessment and quality improvement planning.

10 The arrangements established by Royal Holloway to ensure that academic standards are managed and maintained effectively include the Programme Management Committee, which is chaired by Royal Holloway's Science Foundation Year Programme Director and comprises departmental tutors from Royal Holloway and the College Director of Continuing Education, the College Programme Coordinator, and the College Lead Tutor. The Committee meets once a term and reports to the Royal Holloway Science Faculty Board. Its terms of reference include receiving, discussing and making recommendations to the Royal Holloway Programme Director relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and proposals for new or revised course units. The same members of the College staff sit on the Staff-Student Committee and the Sub-Board of Examiners.

11 According to the self-evaluation, close liaison between the College staff and staff at Royal Holloway ensures that the programme is well managed and standards are maintained. The review team was provided with evidence of the nature, extent, and effectiveness of the regular formal and informal contact between staff at both programme management and tutorial levels. The minutes of the Programme Management Committee show that matters raised by students such as concerns about teaching, and by visiting examiners such as double-marking procedures and the timing of re-sit examinations, are dealt with promptly. Outside the regular formal contacts, there is frequent informal liaison between those involved with the programme to ensure the implementation of recommendations from management committee meetings and quality assurance procedures such as revalidation, periodic and annual reviews, and visiting examiner reports. The team identified as good practice the very close working relationship between college staff and Royal Holloway staff which underpins the management and delivery of the programme, including prompt and effective responses to student concerns and to points raised by visiting examiners.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

12 The Science Foundation Year is the first (year 0) of a four-year honours degree, and, as a level 3 programme, it is not aligned to the FHEQ. Royal Holloway is responsible for the academic content and standards of the programme and, as part of validation and revalidation, has approved a programme specification and individual course specifications. The principles of the Academic Infrastructure are incorporated into the programme as a whole, including arrangements for the assessment of students which reflect the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. No certificate or other qualification is given to students on completion of the Science Foundation Year, but Royal Holloway provides a transcript listing the courses taken and the marks awarded. The College has considerable expertise in delivering level 3 programmes and preparing its students for higher education. The College is responsive to the principles of the Academic Infrastructure insofar as they are implicit in the validated programme; it also reflects expectations in respect of GCE A level standards.

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

13 Assignments are set and double-marked by college staff. The timing of the review meant that the review team could not be shown examples of student work, but they were

able to see some copies of mark sheets and feedback to students. Examination papers are set by College staff and moderated by science subject staff at Royal Holloway and a visiting examiner; examination scripts are double-marked by College staff and moderated by subject staff. A visiting examiner, appointed by Royal Holloway, sees samples of marked assessments and reports on standards. In the reports seen by the team, visiting examiners commented on the high standards achieved, especially in the elective study, which is intended to provide students with the opportunity to experience some autonomous learning.

14 The content of the programme, assessment arrangements, and progression rates are monitored annually both by Royal Holloway in its annual review process and by the College in its self-assessment process. In order to progress from the Science Foundation Year to the first year of an honours degree at Royal Holloway, students are required to pass a core module and to achieve two distinctions and a merit in their chosen options. Progression rates to year one science programmes at Royal Holloway have varied between 52 and 66 per cent in the period from 2006-07 to 2010-11. Although neither the College nor Royal Holloway record progression from the Science Foundation Year to other higher education institutions, there is, according to the self-evaluation, anecdotal evidence that the majority of students completing the programme progress to some form of higher education.

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

15 Until recently there were no formal arrangements for College teaching staff from different subject departments to meet as a team, and this was identified in the self-evaluation as an area for development. However, this has been rectified and the team saw minutes of a College Science Foundation Year Meeting in September 2011. The team was informed that further termly meetings are planned. The team considers it desirable for the College to consolidate the arrangements for teaching staff to meet formally as a team which would enhance the effectiveness of staff in maintaining standards, addressing common problems, and sharing good practice.

16 One of the areas for development identified in the self-evaluation is the provision of staff training specifically focused on higher education. The team was provided with details of an in-house staff training programme focusing on a range of topics linked to raising standards of student achievement and external staff development activities attended by college staff, but neither was specific to higher education. Most staff development currently available relates to teaching at level 3 but there is an expectation that staff delivering the programme will be able to inculcate some level 4 skills in the students as preparation for university study. Although there are benefits in the practice of providing mentoring for staff new to teaching on the programme, and in the informal staff development afforded by frequent contacts of the College teaching staff with science subject specialists at Royal Holloway, the team considers it would be desirable for the College to devise a staff development programme specifically linked to the requirements of delivering higher education.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

17 The arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities, and the reporting arrangements, are the same as those for the maintenance of academic standards as set out in paragraphs 9-11.

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

18 College provision of appropriate learning opportunities is monitored through the Programme Management Committee and within the College by the Director of Continuing Education. The team noted that the Royal Holloway Science Foundation Year Programme Director acts both in a formal and informal capacity to ensure that the College provides students with appropriate learning opportunities, evidence for which is fed into Royal Holloway annual and periodic reviews. The College meets the requirements of the awarding body in these processes.

19 The programme is included in the College's annual Continuing Education Self-Assessment Report but this contains no specific comments on higher education provision, except essential statistical information on student numbers. This is because the ownership of the programme rests with Royal Holloway. If higher education provision is expanded, the College acknowledges that different reporting arrangements may be required.

20 The College receives copies of the visiting examiner's reports on the programme from Royal Holloway. The Director of Continuing Education makes these available to the College senior management team and the Board of Governors.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

21 As indicated in paragraph 12, the College is responsive to the principles of the Academic Infrastructure insofar as they are implicit in the validated programme while taking account of comparable GCE A level standards.

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

22 College subject staff are well qualified and have appropriate experience of level 3 teaching. They are used to teaching in the context of an established learning policy and learning strategy, although some arrangements differ for students on this programme as teaching and learning is a shared enterprise with Royal Holloway staff. The College follows Royal Holloway regulations and procedures which take precedence over those of the College.

23 The College has consolidated much of the information and guidance from Royal Holloway into an informative staff programme handbook, which sets out the responsibilities of teaching staff and provides guidance on course specifications, expected levels of attainment, and assessment matters, including the setting and marking of assignments.

It explains the significance of the elective study in which students select their own subjects and topics. The College sees this as a valuable opportunity for students to 'experience some autonomous learning'. The handbook also includes information about the monitoring of student attendance, arrangements for personal tutoring, and a calendar of the College's tutorial programme. The team concludes that the College staff programme handbook constitutes a useful work of reference and makes a significant contribution to maintaining consistency in teaching and learning across the provision. This represents good practice.

24 The College is responsible for monitoring the proficiency of its staff who deliver the programme and does so by means of established procedures of formal observation and peer review of teaching. Royal Holloway has reserved but not yet exercised the right to conduct a limited programme of teaching observation if there are concerns about quality. The team noted with approval that concerns about teaching in one subject area had been dealt with effectively under the College's own procedures. At the start of each academic year staff are briefed by the College Science Foundation Year Coordinator on any changes to the content of the programme. The Coordinator allocates a mentor to members of staff new to teaching on the programme. The mentor will already have experience of the programme and can help with the setting and marking of assignments.

25 The College is responsive to student feedback about teaching and learning. Issues may be raised in the Staff-Student Committee and in tutorials, as well as reflected in annual questionnaire returns. The student representatives are able to see the visiting examiner's report and Royal Holloway's response to this, as well as the report of the annual review when these are tabled at the Staff-Student Committee. Students are positive about this process and cite examples of change in response to their suggestions. Practical sessions and question-practice sessions are highly valued. Students are particularly appreciative of the way in which the Core Mathematics course is organised. Issues addressed by the College include the need for additional revision sessions for Biology and the timing of the assessment schedule.

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

26 The students receive a copy of the Royal Holloway-produced student handbook containing detailed information on the programme, including assessment and student support arrangements. This is highly valued by students. They also receive individual course specification guides, using a common template, containing information approved by Royal Holloway which includes details of content, delivery, assessment, and recommended reading. These documents, to which college staff may contribute, provide a secure overall framework which is used effectively in supporting students in all aspects of their work.

27 The College plays no part in the recruitment of students. It has a limited role in student induction, supplementing the information given at Royal Holloway with information about college facilities, staffing, subject content, option choice, and teaching and timetabling. Grade requirements for progression are made clear at initial induction at both the College and Royal Holloway.

28 Arrangements for academic and pastoral support are explained in the student handbook. All students are assigned to a tutorial group. They have an academic tutor at Royal Holloway and a personal tutor at the College. The weekly College tutorial process focuses primarily upon enhanced study skills through the core skills course. Students have requested more one-to-one meetings with tutors and the team was informed that the College is addressing this request. The College provides opportunities for tutorial support relating to student welfare and finance. A Royal Holloway tutor provides support in relation to academic matters and progress. Students confirm that these collaborative arrangements provide a wide range of effective support.

29 As part of the College's responsibilities for the day-to-day management and delivery of the programme, it monitors the attendance of students and provides Royal Holloway with reports of levels of attendance and punctuality. The report of the Royal Holloway periodic review conducted in 2009 commended the 'excellent student support available at Strode's College', including the supportive follow-up action by staff in cases where there was variability in student attendance. The team identified the high quality of the College's provision of student support, including the arrangements for monitoring attendance and subsequent follow-up action, as an example of good practice.

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

30 The arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities are the same as those relating to academic standards set out in paragraphs 15-16. Although staff are delivering the programme at level 3, Royal Holloway encourages them to give added value to their teaching by inculcating higher education attitudes, for example attributes relating to independent learning, information-seeking, and analytical skills which will prepare them for progression to undergraduate work at level 4. As indicated in paragraph 16, it is in this context that it would be desirable for the College to extend its staff development programme by focusing specifically on the needs of higher education teaching and learning, including assessment.

31 Staff profiles indicate a range of academic and professional activity, including membership of professional subject groups and associations. There is scope within the existing staff development policy to allow for scholarly activities and professional updating to be supported by the College, especially if higher education provision expands.

How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programme?

32 Students have access to the full range of learning resources offered, both by Royal Holloway and the College, including libraries, laboratory facilities, and specialist equipment. There is a high rate of student satisfaction with the resources available. The College has appropriate library resources to support level 3 teaching. There is a facility for staff to purchase additional stock mid-year and at the end of the year. The resource needs of the programme are kept under review by the Director of Continuing Education as a member of the management team of the College.

33 All science course teaching takes place in specialist laboratories. Elective studies are arranged so that students can have extended access to laboratory facilities for a week. Additional specialist resources can be provided through a discrete capitation budget managed by the Director of Continuing Education. Students carry out at least one practical exercise in the laboratories at Royal Holloway. Facilities are appropriate for students with disabilities.

34 The College has provided a dedicated common room, which contains computers, a printer, and wireless internet access. The self-evaluation notes that this has contributed to a positive learning and social atmosphere, distinct from the rest of the College. Students also use the College Learning Resource Centre with access to computers and printing facilities.

35 Staff use of the College's virtual learning environment is, at present, inconsistent. There is growing use in some subject areas, for example Biology, and students reported that

it was helpful to have mathematics material online. However, such use is not yet consistent across the provision. The College regards this as an area that would benefit from further development. The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to encourage staff to upload existing and additional resources onto a Science Foundation Year section of the College's virtual learning environment.

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?

36 The College's role in the production of promotional material is very limited as Royal Holloway has full responsibility for the recruitment and admission of students, including the production of promotional material and the production and/or oversight of other public information. The College advertises the programme in its Continuing Education Prospectus, in the press, and on its website.

37 Royal Holloway is responsible for producing the student handbook. College staff have sight of drafts of this key document and are able to make recommendations on a limited range of matters, for example with reference to student reading lists. Relevant extracts from Royal Holloway documentation are made available to College staff, including copies of the transcripts of achievement that students receive at the end of the programme.

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?

38 The responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of public information that is within the very limited remit of the College rests with the College's Director of Continuing Education. References to the programme in the Continuing Education prospectus, in the press, and on the College website are subject to scrutiny and approval by the Royal Holloway Science Foundation Year Programme Director. The effectiveness of these arrangements is closely monitored through Royal Holloway's own quality assurance systems.

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 programme it delivers.

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

39 As the total full-time equivalent HEFCE-funded students at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

D Foundation Degrees

40 There are no Foundation Degree awards on offer at the College.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

41 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in the 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, Royal Holloway, University of London.

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

- the very close working relationship between College staff and Royal Holloway staff underpins the management and delivery of the programme, including prompt and effective responses to student concerns and to points raised by visiting examiners (paragraphs 10 and 11)
- the College staff programme handbook constitutes a useful work of reference and makes a significant contribution to maintaining consistency of practice in teaching and learning across the provision (paragraph 23)
- there is high quality student support, including effective arrangements for monitoring student attendance and follow-up action by staff (paragraphs 28 and 29).

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

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

- consolidate the arrangements for its teaching staff to meet formally as a team to enhance their effectiveness in maintaining standards, addressing common problems, and sharing good practice (paragraph 15)
- devise a staff development programme specifically linked to the requirements of higher education (paragraphs 16 and 30)
- encourage staff to upload existing and additional resources onto the Science Foundation Year section of the College's virtual learning environment (paragraph 35).

44 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

Integrated quality and enhancement review

45 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

46 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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 programme it delivers.

| Strode's College action plan relating to the Summative review: October 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 very close working relationship between College staff and Royal Holloway staff underpins the management and delivery of the programme, including prompt and effective responses to student concerns and to points raised by visiting examiners (paragraphs 10 and 11) | Continue to maintain close working relationship through regular attendance at Science Foundation Year Management and Science Foundation Year Staff-Student committees at Royal Holloway, University of London | Ongoing | Director of Continuing Education and Science Foundation Year Coordinator | Strode's staff represented at all Science Foundation Year Management and Science Foundation Year Staff-Student committees | Strode's College Senior Management Team | Evaluation to be included in Continuing Education Self-Assessment Report |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College staff programme handbook constitutes a useful work of reference and makes a significant contribution to maintaining consistency of practice in teaching and learning across the provision (paragraph 23) | Review the content of the handbook and revise for 2012-13 | September 2012 | Science Foundation Year Coordinator | Revised handbook distributed to Science Foundation Year teaching staff by 14 September 2012 | Director of Continuing Education | Director of Continuing Education to gather feedback from Science Foundation Year staff on how useful they find the handbook |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is high quality student support, including effective arrangements for monitoring student attendance and follow-up action by staff (paragraphs 28 and 29) | <p>Continue to report on student attendance and follow up any concerns</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Science Foundation Year Coordinator and Science Foundation Year Administrator</p> | <p>Overall attendance rate to be over 80%</p> | <p>Director of Continuing Education</p> | <p>Director of Continuing Education to review attendance data and evaluate in Continuing Education Self-Assessment Report</p> |
|--|--|----------------|--|---|---|---|

| 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"> consolidate the arrangements for its teaching staff to meet formally as a team to enhance their effectiveness in maintaining standards, addressing common problems, and sharing good practice (paragraph 15) | Strode's Science Foundation Year Team to meet formally at least once a term to share good practice, ensure consistency of standards, and address any problems | Ongoing | Director of Continuing Education | Meetings held and minuted | Assistant Principal for Curriculum & Quality | Assistant Principal to check minutes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> devise a staff development programme specifically linked to the requirements of higher education (paragraphs 16 and 30) | As part of the College's INSET programme hold at least one staff development activity focused on higher education each year | Ongoing | Director of Continuing Education | Staff development records and evaluations | Assistant Director for Resources | Include in College's annual review of INSET |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage staff to upload existing and additional resources onto the Science Foundation Year section of the College's virtual learning environment (paragraph 35) | Revise structure of virtual learning environment to ensure one location for Science Foundation Year | December 2011 September 2012 | Director of Continuing Education Science Foundation Year | Substantial amounts of Science Foundation Year materials on the virtual learning environment | Director of Continuing Education | Include evaluation in Continuing Education Self-Assessment Report |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|
| | materials; include on agenda for the termly Science Foundation Year Team Meetings | | Teachers | | | |
|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|

RG 827 01/12

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