Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Hull College

December 2011

SR 023/11

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 Hull College carried out in December 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 agreements, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

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

- the establishment of management and staffing structures specific to higher education, which provide a clear focus for the further development of the provision
- the College's Recognised Teacher Status processes, which support the continuing professional development of staff and thereby enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities
- the flexible delivery methods and well defined progression routes into and through higher education programmes, which meet the needs of a diverse student population and local employers
- the extensive contributions of employers, including provision of live projects, work placements, and inputs to the curriculum, which provide excellent vocational experiences for students
- the high quality specialist learning resources specifically for higher education students, which enhance their 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:

- continue to monitor assessment practices to ensure that they fully reflect the College's published procedures
- continue to develop the provision of learning mentors to ensure that all students benefit from their support
- ensure that the revised higher education publicity procedures cover all forms of published information, including the website.

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

- monitor the effectiveness of measures aimed at addressing issues relating to student retention
- introduce more timely training of student representatives to enable them to make a

- full contribution in their role
- develop wider and more consistent use of the virtual learning environment across the programmes to enhance student learning.

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 Hull 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 Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Lincoln, the University of Huddersfield, and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Professor Jenny Anderson, Mr Wayne Isaac, Mr David Knowles (reviewers), and Mr Peter Clarke (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 its awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers, and partner institutions, and 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*, subject and award benchmark statements*,* the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4   Hull College is one of the largest general further education colleges in the United Kingdom, with campuses in Hull, Harrogate and Goole. It has a large higher education provision, with 1,600 full-time equivalent students on more than 60 programmes. In addition, it has 25,400 further education students. The College mission is to 'inspire and enable outstanding, life-changing education and training leading to social and economic fulfilment'.

5   The College was awarded Beacon status in 2009 by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, an outstanding rating in all areas by Ofsted in 2008, and 5* recognition by the European Framework for Quality Management in November 2009. Its higher education provision covers a wide range of subjects including art and design, performing arts, teacher education, construction, engineering, health, and applied sciences. In recent years, the expansion of the College's higher education portfolio has been achieved through a combination of planned organic growth and the acquisition of additional student numbers and staff resources. These transfers came from the University of Lincoln and Leeds Metropolitan University when the Hull School of Art and Design and Harrogate College were transferred to the College. During this period the majority of the College's Higher National Diploma and Higher National Certificate programmes were replaced by Foundation Degrees.

6   The College offers the following programmes, which are listed by awarding body with full-time equivalent numbers shown in parentheses.

Leeds Metropolitan University

- FdA Business and Management (115)
- BA (Hons) Business and Management (42)
- FdA Express Logistics (26)

- FdSc Computing - Business Information Technology (20)
- FdSc Computer Network Management (21)
- BSc (Hons) Computing (22)
- FdA Fashion Design and Interpretation (33)
- FdA Fashion Design and Production (16)
- FdA Fashion Marketing and Retail (18)
- FdA Textile Design (16)
- FdA Lens Based Photo Media (47)
- BA (Hons) Lens Based Photo Media (18)
- FdA Digital Media Journalism (17)
- BA (Hons) Applied Creative Design (26)
- BA (Hons) Applied Creative Design (Public Realm) (6)
- BA (Hons) Applied Creative Design (Textiles) (10)
- BA (Hons) Applied Creative Design (Costume & Fashion) (19)
- FdA Graphic Design (5)
- FdA 3 Dimensional Design Crafts (8)
- BA 3 Dimensional Design Crafts (8)
- BA (Hons) Animation (10)
- BA (Hons) Contemporary Fine Art Practice (50)
- BA (Hons) Architectural Design (42)
- FdA Art and Design for the Public Realm (11)
- FdA Visual Arts (9)
- FdA Interior Architectural Design (22)
- Certificate in Education (36)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (42)
- FdA Acting (25)
- FdA Stage Management and Technical Theatre (18)
- FdA Dance (35)
- FdA Musical Theatre (37)
- FdA Music - Production (27)
- FdA Music - Performance (26)
- FdA Broadcast Media (21)
- BA (Hons) Broadcast Media (3)
- BA (Hons) Dance (13)
- BA (Hons) Acting (8)
- BA (Hons) Music - Production (6)
- BA (Hons) Music - Performance (12)
- BA (Hons) Musical Theatre (18)
- BA (Hons) Stage Management and Technical Theatre (7)
- FdA Sports Studies (30)
- FdA Travel and Tourism Management (23)
- FdA Crime and Community Safety (25)
- FdSc Construction Management (17)
- FdSc Engineering Technology (37)
- BEng (Hons) Engineering Technology (8)
- FdSc Automotive Technology (3)
- FdA Criminology with Applied Social Science (21)
- BA (Hons) Criminology (18)
- FdA Young Children's Learning and Development (80)
- BA Young Children's Learning and Development (30)
- MA Design (2)

- MA Media and Communications (1)
- MA Visual Arts (3)

University of Lincoln

- BA (Hons) Games Design (30)
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design (67)
- BA (Hons) Illustration (46)
- BA (Hons) Interactive Multimedia (5)
- BA (Hons) Web Design (27)
- BA (Hons) TV and Film Design (31)

University of Huddersfield

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (16)
- Certificate in Education (17)
- BA Education and Training (22)
- BA (Hons) Education and Professional Development (15)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (indirect funding) (15)
- Certificate in Education (indirect funding) (15)

Edexcel

- HNC Construction (11)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   The College is a member of a consortium for the University of Huddersfield programmes. Assessment instruments are produced at the University following consultation, and are common across the consortia. The programmes awarded by Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Lincoln were developed by the College and validated by the Universities. The College has responsibility for assessment on these programmes within the parameters set at validation and subject to approval by external examiners. Overall, the memoranda of agreement clearly define the responsibilities of the College and the validating Universities at institutional level.

8   The College has approval from Edexcel to deliver the Higher National Certificate in Construction. The College determines the nature of this programme through its choice of standard Edexcel modules according to Edexcel rules. Day-to-day maintenance of quality and standards in the delivery of the provision is the responsibility of the College. Edexcel appoints external examiners.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9   Most Leeds Metropolitan University programmes are scheduled for review during the next two to three years. The College intends to use this process to renew the curriculum and integrate the Hull and Harrogate provision further. The College's Strategic Plan includes, as a priority, the development of vocational higher education through expansion of its portfolio of Foundation Degrees.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. This was produced from responses to a questionnaire devised and administered by the Students' Union, supplemented by a series of focus groups. The final report was written by the Students' Union President and Executive Committee. Reviewers also met students from a wide range of programmes during the visit. The written submission informed the agenda for the visit and, along with the meetings, made a helpful contribution to the review.

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?

11   The College has recently made significant changes to the management structures relating to its higher education provision. During the 2010-11 academic year, several policies have been reviewed to bring them into closer alignment with the *Code of practice*. The changes reflect the need to manage and rationalise a large portfolio of programmes distributed over three campuses. The Vice Principal for Higher Education and the two recently appointed deans have overall responsibility for higher education provision. The new management structures and strategy are bedding down, however managers are aware of the issues identified by the team during the visit and have systems in place to address them.

12   The Higher Education Academic Board has overall responsibility for the management of academic standards. It is supported by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and other newly created subcommittees with student representation. Faculty boards are responsible for providing overall academic direction and strategy. Within each faculty, the Dean's Annual Report is an important instrument for communicating key performance indicators, good practice and issues to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, including those relating to academic standards. Annual programme monitoring and peer observation processes also support the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards. The team considers that the establishment of management and staffing structures specific to higher education, which provide a clear focus for the further development of the provision, represents good practice.

13   The Higher Education Planning and Resources Committee is responsible for higher education infrastructure provision and the planning cycle of higher education programmes. It scrutinises proposals for outline planning approval for new programmes before submission to the relevant awarding body. The College has an internal validation process which scrutinises all new course proposals prior to submission for validation by the relevant awarding body. An external subject specialist has recently been added to the membership of such panels. Clear roles are allocated in this process to ensure the requirements of the FHEQ are met.

14   The College's new structure was introduced at the start of the 2011-12 academic year and any potential gaps or overlaps between committees have yet to be identified. The College has recognised the need to keep the working of the committee system under

review. The team confirms the need for such review, to ensure, for example, that the issue of student retention is subject to appropriate scrutiny within the subcommittees.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15   All college policies have been mapped to the Academic Infrastructure. Standard templates, as required by awarding bodies, are used for presenting programme specifications. The College has developed its own set of procedures and guidance in quality which are understood by staff. Annual and periodic review processes ensure that the curriculum is current. The College has identified several areas where further consideration is required, for example to ensure that its admissions processes take due account of the *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education.* The Higher Education Tutors' Handbook, available through the staff portal, and staff development sessions ensure that staff are kept up to date with the Academic Infrastructure, standard college documentation, and procedures.

16   In all major respects, college assessment practices reflect the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students.* The majority of external examiners confirm the appropriateness of effective assessment practices and the variety of tasks, and praise academic standards. While happy overall with the standards and rigour of assessment, external examiners raised issues in several cases relating to such matters as the consistency of assessment briefs, marking styles, and moderation and mark recording. In the case of the FdA Young Children's Learning and Development, which is taught on all campuses, the external examiner raised concerns regarding the marking and moderation processes in one of the centres. This was resolved in discussions with the staff concerned. These issues were noted in the external examiners' overview and the Dean's reports. Furthermore, the need for greater consistency in internal quality monitoring across all subject areas and better support for course teams is recognised in the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy. The team considers it advisable that the College continues to monitor assessment practices to ensure that they fully reflect the College's published procedures.

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?

17   The College offers a comprehensive, wide-ranging higher education curriculum. This includes Foundation Degrees, honours degrees and master's degrees in areas such as the creative arts, construction, automotive technology, business and management, children's care and development, and teacher education. Awarding body staff maintain strong links across all of these curricular areas. The relationship between the College and each of the partner universities is governed by a Memorandum of Agreement. The College has produced a matrix to highlight the differences in partner responsibilities in areas such as claims for extenuating circumstances, use of unfair means in assessment, appeals against decisions of examination boards, procedures for second marking and moderation, external examiners, publication of student results, and annual programme monitoring. The academic regulations of partner universities are published on the College intranet. Course reporting is conducted according to the requirements of the relevant awarding body. Module reviews feed into the Annual Programme Report, and programme-related issues are considered at programme team meetings. These generate a rolling action plan which is updated twice a year.

18   Good working relationships with the awarding bodies help to ensure that actions can be taken where necessary to ensure that College provision meets academic requirements. For example, following an unsatisfactory external examiner report, the FdA

Acting provision at Harrogate (with a very small cohort) was suspended and then closed. This was initiated formally by the awarding body working closely with College staff. The students were fully consulted and transferred to the same programme at Hull.

19   Staff are aware of declining retention rates over a four-year period to 2010-11. These have impacted on success rates, which have fallen from an overall rate of 88 per cent in 2007-08 to 72 per cent in 2010-11. In a few cases, as identified in annual programme monitoring course reports and the Dean's reports, retention is poor. For example, retention rates were 62 per cent on the FdA Travel and Tourism and 50 per cent on the BA Television and Film Design. The College aspires to meet a retention target of 88 per cent in 2014 and is introducing measures to try and achieve this. While reviews of retention and achievement data have been carried out termly for several years, higher education data have not been separated from further education data. From 2011-12, higher education data are being handled separately to ensure a more focused identification of issues. Students employed through the Students' Union and course leaders are now contacting non-completing students routinely to discover why they withdrew and to see if any particular issues can be addressed. Programme teams on programmes with low retention are being supported by Quality Improvement and Student Support Managers to identify problem areas. The team considers it desirable that the College monitors the effectiveness of measures aimed at addressing issues relating to student retention.

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

20   A Learning and Teaching and Research Strategy has recently been developed and is supported by an effective staff appraisal and staff development system. All staff teaching on a higher education programme have to achieve the College's Recognised Teacher Status. For this they have to present their curriculum vitae with an outline of their experience, qualifications and continuous professional development. Once granted, staff are then approved to teach on the College's higher education programmes. This process is highly regarded by the College's validating partners. The College's Recognised Teacher Status processes, which support the continuing professional development of staff and thereby enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities, represent good practice.

21   Staff are encouraged to take higher degrees, attend the College's annual Higher Education Conference, and participate in the Research Journal which the College publishes to disseminate the outcomes of research and share innovations in practice. Joint staff development initiatives are available through university partners. Staff also maintain currency of their professional knowledge by retaining close links with professional practitioners and employers, including Northern Ballet, Imitating the Dog Theatre Company, and the Built Environment Best Practice Network. Many are practitioners working part-time at the College. The effectiveness of staff development is monitored through staff surveys.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

22   Arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those relating to academic standards detailed in paragraphs 11 to 14.

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

23   The College has developed flexible delivery models for many of its higher education programmes, including examples of blended learning approaches which help meet employer, student and awarding body needs. For example, much of the BA (Hons) Education and Professional Development is planned to be delivered online from September 2012. The MA Image and Time Based Media has flexible drop-in sessions, and the Foundation Degree in Construction employs an online forum which is accessed through the College's virtual learning environment.

24   Students are also provided with a wide range of progression routes from level 3 further education programmes, such as national diplomas and GCE A levels, through to Foundation Degrees, honours degrees, and postgraduate study. Students also receive comprehensive guidance towards the end of their degree programme relating to further study and employment opportunities. Students speak very positively about the opportunities the College provides to enable them to progress in their careers without having to move away from the area. The flexible delivery methods and well defined progression routes into and through higher education programmes, which meet the needs of a diverse student population and local employers, represents good practice.

25   Students provide feedback on the quality of their programme through the completion of evaluations at the end of each module. This allows them to highlight the positive aspects of the individual module as well as any potential areas for improvement. The feedback is analysed by the relevant programme leader who can then discuss any issues raised with the students and, where appropriate, take remedial action. The feedback is also sampled by the relevant Quality Improvement and Student Support Manager. Any major issues arising from the module evaluations are communicated to the Dean of Faculty who, if necessary, will refer them to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Further evidence relating to the quality of learning opportunities is provided by the routine observation of teaching and learning and through the positive feedback received from regular contact with employers. External examiners have also reported favourably on the quality of teaching and learning and on the level of support offered to students.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26   The College ensures that staff have a good understanding of the Academic Infrastructure and are kept up to date with any changes. Staff development sessions, including events for staff new to higher education teaching, are held to raise staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure including the *Code of practice*. Procedural guidance such as the Higher Education Tutors' Handbook also includes specific reference to various aspects of the *Code of practice,* particularly in relation to assessment. All programmes take due note of the relevant qualification or subject benchmark statements. For example, the delivery of work-related tasks on Foundation Degrees closely reflects the *Foundation Degree*

qualification benchmark, where effective links with employers allows them to contribute appropriately to the assessment process.

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

27   The College has developed an effective observation process designed specifically for higher education teaching and learning. The observations are carried out by a team of trained higher education practitioners/observers. They apply observation criteria specific to the needs of the higher education curriculum. Any new member of staff receives an introductory observation as well as the standard annual observation. Any member of staff who receives a judgement of satisfactory or below will receive a programme of support and a second observation. The results of the observations also feed into the staff performance review process. The profile of teaching observations for 2010-11 reflects the continuing improvement in quality seen in previous years. Feedback from both full-time and part-time students indicates that the quality of teaching and learning across the programmes is good. Staff use a variety of teaching approaches within their sessions and are responsive to feedback from their students on possible areas for improvement. The College's Teaching Squares system of mutual support also helps enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

28   Student representatives are elected for each higher education programme. They have the opportunity to attend weekly meetings with the College Students' Union to discuss any key issues raised by students. They also attend programme committee meetings and meetings of the Student Experience Committee. A three-day training programme has been arranged for student representatives in February 2012 and this will consist of a number of elements including customer service, the College committee structure, and student expectations. This is designed to enhance the consistency of approach by programme representatives. However, it is taking place too late in the academic year given that they will have taken part in many relevant meetings by that date. The team considers it desirable that the College introduces more timely training of student representatives to enable them to make a full contribution in their role.

29   The use of the virtual learning environment varies between programmes. In some cases its use is limited, providing little more than access to lecture notes and other programme documents. On other programmes, such as the BSc in Construction Management, the virtual learning environment is used as an integral part of the programme delivery and enhances the overall learning experience. This flexible access tool is valued by the students on this programme, many of whom are part-time and working in the industry with pressures on their time affecting their ability to attend all lectures. The virtual learning environment allows them to participate fully in the programme and have good contact with their tutors. The team considers it desirable that the College develops wider and more consistent use of the virtual learning environment across the programmes to enhance student learning.

30   Teaching staff are well qualified, with many having higher level qualifications including master's degrees and PhDs. Significant numbers of staff have relevant and current industrial experience, including those who are practising professionals teaching on a part-time basis. Many employers are very supportive, regularly taking students on placement, contributing as guest lecturers, providing workshop sessions, and advising on validation panels. One local media employer uses design students regularly on live projects within the company and recruits graduates from the College as its main source of skilled employees. Students on the FdA Architectural Design work with the local authority on the Hull City Plan and give practical input to the College Estates Department. All these activities add to the excellent vocational experience enjoyed by students. The extensive contributions of employers, including provision of live projects, work placements and inputs to the

curriculum, provide excellent vocational experiences for students and represent good practice.

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

31   Student support is effective. When students commence their programme they receive a comprehensive induction covering general College matters such as the use of the library, College support services, key policies and procedures, and access to information and communications technology, including use of the virtual learning environment. They also receive a programme-specific induction which includes information on programme structure, assessment arrangements, and study and research skills.

32   The College provides an appropriate range of pastoral support including professional counselling, health and wellbeing, finance, pre-programme guidance, and guidance on becoming self-employed. There is also a network of agencies who work with the College to provide specialist advice and support. There is appropriate support for disabled students, who are contacted by the College before they start to help ascertain their individual needs. They are also allocated a learning adviser when they commence their programme.

33   Overall, students receive appropriate academic support. Tutorials are available for all students. For full-time students, the frequency of tutorials varies between programmes, although students can arrange additional tutorial time as and when required. On part-time programmes, tutorial time is not automatically built into the timetable. However, individual tutorials can be requested by the students at any time. Progress reviews are also carried out between the students and their tutors on a regular basis. The Developmental engagement highlighted the need to apply a more consistent approach to the role of learning mentors across the College. The learning mentor role is designed to support students with their academic studies, including the planning and organisation of their assignment work. The learning mentor process is now working reasonably effectively at the Harrogate campus. However, developments at Hull have been slower and the learning mentor team there has not been fully established. As a result, students have not yet been able to take advantage of this important facility. The team considers it advisable that the College continues to develop the provision of learning mentors to ensure that all students benefit from their support.

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

34   Staff teaching on higher education programmes are encouraged to take part in continuous professional development. Some staff have recently completed master's degrees and others are practitioners in their field. This helps enhance the quality of teaching and adds currency and vocational relevance. A successful Learning and Teaching Conference was held in Harrogate in July 2011. This provided an opportunity for the higher education teams to focus and build upon the good practice identified by the Developmental engagement. The event also focused upon areas of staff expertise and research in effective methods of learning and teaching.

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?

35   Over the last two years, the College has increased the facilities dedicated to the use of higher education students, often after detailed discussion with students and in response to feedback from the Developmental engagement. The new Higher Education Centre on the

Hull campus is a well resourced flexible space and well used by students. The computer equipment and software in this area is of high quality and industry standard. For example, students are able to link images from their mobile telephones and other handheld devices to a large screen to bring a professional edge to presentations. A series of small rooms within the centre can be booked by students for purposes such as team meetings, tutorials, project groups and editing groups, to help enhance the overall learning experience.

36   The Learning Centres are well equipped to support the wide range of programmes offered. For example, the centre at Hull campus has specialist zoned areas for the use of higher education students, a quiet study area, and a higher education research room. These are supported by designated higher education librarians. Learning centre staff at all sites link well with tutors to ensure the currency and comprehensiveness of reading lists, journals, and e-books. Learning centre staff also provide effective support for students on library research, referencing, and other study skills.

37   Teaching accommodation is generally of a high standard and well equipped with specialist facilities and software, for example in construction, web design, and art and design. These are usually of industry standard. Many areas have benefited from significant investment over recent years. Students value and benefit from these facilities, regularly winning prestigious awards in competitions run by relevant industrial bodies. The high quality specialist learning resources specifically for higher education students enhances the students' learning and represents good practice.

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

Core theme 3: Public information

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

38   The College is responsible for publishing a range of information for prospective and current higher education students. This includes the higher education prospectus; the international prospectus which covers both further and higher education; the student welcome brochure; advertisements; web-based programme related information; programme handbooks; programme and module specifications and related documentation; and student application and induction materials. Many of these publications are also available as electronic downloads on the College website. Scrutiny of the publications showed the information in printed documents to be current, accurate and accessible. Students who had used these publications for research into the programmes at the College commented that the content had been accurate and helpful when making their higher education choices.

39   The College has extensive and effective communications with employers. To further strengthen these links the College is currently developing an employer handbook. This is designed to provide employers with information and guidance on how to engage with students and support their learning. Employers are very positive about the wide range of links with Hull College and welcome the development of this handbook.

40   All students undertake an induction process, at which information concerning the College and their programme is provided. On enrolment, all students receive a Higher Education Student Handbook containing key information on how to access policies and

procedures, internal service departments, and key information relating to health and wellbeing services. Programme handbooks have been revised in response to feedback from the Developmental engagement and now include additional information on academic matters. Programme information originates from the programme teams and the programme leader is responsible for the accuracy of the curriculum content of the handbooks. The College produces an induction checklist to ensure that all students across the wide range of programmes receive the necessary information at induction. In the main, students found this information helpful, accurate, consistent, and current. For example, the very detailed handbooks used on the Initial Teacher Training programmes link well with the materials published by Huddersfield University.

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?

41   The Higher Education Registry at Hull College has overall responsibility for the accuracy of the prospectus and other key printed documents. Registry staff closely monitor the internal production process of printed documents leading to final copy, which is then passed to the University partner for final check and authorisation. The Marketing Department has final responsibility for ensuring that any images and logos used have the appropriate permission, according to agreements with awarding bodies. Faculties are responsible initially for ensuring the accuracy of curriculum information with various checks at that level, prior to passing to the Registry for higher level checks. Within this process, deans are required to obtain the relevant permissions from awarding bodies for the accurate use of logos and other images which are included in any publications. The procedures for ensuring the accuracy of paper-based documents are now included in the Higher Education Publicity Procedure, ensuring that certain documents are reviewed and checked for accuracy prior to their publication.

42   The programme information published on the website is generally accurate but there are occasionally variations between web-based information and that published in the prospectus. The programme information accessed through the course finder on the website sometimes fails to acknowledge the awarding body associated with the programmes. The awarding bodies were not aware of this omission at the time of the visit. The procedures for checking the accuracy of public information published on the College website have been limited and little mention of checks for web-based information is included in the new procedure. The College is now in the process of updating and relaunching its website to correct this omission. The team consider it advisable that the College ensures that the revised higher education publicity procedures cover all forms of published information including the website.

> **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

43   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in December 2010. The lines of enquiry were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: To what extent are academic standards assured through the consistent application of procedures and documentation?

Line of enquiry 2: How does guidance, feedback and documentation support students throughout the process of assessment?

Line of enquiry 3: To what extent does the employment context inform assessment tasks and activities?

44   The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. The Teaching Squares arrangement was found to provide mutual support and opportunities to share good practice among staff, while the College's Recognised Teacher Status processes provided strong support for assessment practices and continuous professional development. Students' assessment performance was found to be aided by contextualised grading criteria within business and computing programmes, and through their good understanding and awareness of the intended learning outcomes. In addition, the extensive and developmental feedback to students was found to enhance their learning. Good communications with employers enabled them to contribute to assessment and supports an emphasis on realistic, vocationally relevant assessment. Protocols for the assessment of live performances enabled such work to be assessed in an equivalent manner to written work and in line with the Academic Infrastructure.

45   The team also made several recommendations. The College was advised to ensure that all students receive their tutorial entitlement and that this was facilitated through the College's auditing procedures. The team also advised that the College should provide more differentiated study space for higher education students at Hull and more dedicated computer resources. The team considered it desirable that the College continue to develop and review the role of Learning Mentors, improve the consistency of module handbooks and the module pages of the virtual learning environment, and continue the processes of reviewing and improving the student diary and handbook in consultation with students.

D   Foundation Degrees

46   The College offers a wide range of Foundation Degrees validated by Leeds Metropolitan University. Over recent years the College has replaced many Higher National programmes with Foundation Degrees, developed in consultation with employers. For example, a Foundation Degree in Express Logistics was developed by the College in conjunction with a national logistics company. The College's Strategic Plan includes, as a priority, the development of vocational higher education through expansion of its portfolio of Foundation Degrees. The two new higher education faculties are in the process of identifying potential areas for this development.

47   The conclusions and judgements in Section E apply equally to the Foundation Degree provision.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

48   The 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 it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, Leeds Metropolitan University, Edexcel, the University of Lincoln, and the University of Huddersfield.

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

- the establishment of management and staffing structures specific to higher education, which provide a clear focus for the further development of the provision (paragraph 12)
- the College's Recognised Teacher Status processes, which support the continuing professional development of staff and thereby enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities (paragraph 20)
- the flexible delivery methods and well defined progression routes into and through higher education programmes, which meet the needs of a diverse student population and local employers (paragraphs 23 and 24)
- the extensive contributions of employers, including provision of live projects, work placements, and inputs to the curriculum, which provide excellent vocational experiences for students (paragraph 30)
- the high quality specialist learning resources specifically for higher education students, which enhance their learning (paragraphs 35 to 37).

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

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

- continue to monitor assessment practices to ensure that they fully reflect the College's published procedures (paragraph 16)
- continue to develop the provision of learning mentors to ensure that all students benefit from their support (paragraph 33)
- ensure that the revised higher education publicity procedures cover all forms of published information, including the website (paragraph 42).

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

- monitor the effectiveness of measures aimed at addressing issues relating to student retention (paragraph 19)
- introduce more timely training of student representatives to enable them to make a full contribution in their role (paragraph 28)
- develop wider and more consistent use of the virtual learning environment across the programmes to enhance student learning (paragraph 29).

53   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 bodies.

54   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.

55   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 programmes it delivers.

Hull College action plan relating to the Summative review: December 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:						
• the establishment of management and staffing structures specific to higher education, which provide a clear focus for the further development of the provision (paragraph 12)	Review effectiveness of higher education academic governance structures	August 2012	Vice Principal for Higher Education/ Registrar	Fulfilment of key performance indicators within higher education strategy; positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders	Governors/ Higher Education Academic Board	Interim review report document
	Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of staffing structures	August 2012	Deans at faculty level; Vice Principal for Higher Education; divisional level	Fulfilment of key performance indicators, supporting strategies and improved student experience and feedback	Business reviews for key performance indicators; interim review of academic structures Dean's reports student feedback via Annual Programme Reviews	Reports from business and service reviews
• the College's Recognised Teacher Status processes,	Establishment of regular annual reporting and monitoring	September 2012	The Chair of Higher Education Learning and	Contribution to scholarly activity including conferences	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Committee and	Annual monitoring report

which support the continuing professional development of staff and thereby enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities (paragraph 20)	Aligned with outcomes from annual staff development and review process	October 2012	Teaching Committee Higher Education Strategic Development Manager; Higher Education Planning and Resources Committee	Peer review and student feedback Teaching observation profile	Research and Scholarly Activity Committee Higher Education Planning and Resources Committee; Higher Education Learning and Teaching Committee	Outcomes from Annual Staff Development Report
• the flexible delivery methods and well defined progression routes into and through higher education programmes, which meet the needs of a diverse student population and local employers (paragraphs 23 and 24)	Seek feedback from employers on impact, currency and relevance of programmes and delivery methods	March 2013	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Committee; Higher Education Strategic Development Manager	Key performance indicators: Progression Strategy and Higher Education Strategy	Higher Education Academic Board	Feedback from employers including conference participants; data gathered through College processes
	Involve stakeholders in Higher Education Learning and Teaching and Research and Scholarly Activity Conferences	July 2013	Higher Education Strategic Development Manager			
	Review alignment of key information set	September 2012	Higher Education			

			Strategic Development Manager			
• the extensive contributions of employers, including provision of live projects, work placements, and inputs to the curriculum, which provide excellent vocational experiences for students (paragraph 30)	Review, develop and disseminate Employers' Handbook including consultation with stakeholders	July 2012	Deans; Higher Education Strategic Development Manager	Higher Education Academic Board; increased number of employers and wider engagement with existing employers	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Committee	Employer feedback
	Faculty Boards to consider models of engagement including employer/industrial panels	February 2012	Deans of Faculties	Employer presentation/participation at conference; case studies of workplace learning	Faculty Boards/Deans to report to Higher Education Academic Board	Conference contributions and findings
	Further dissemination of good practice at Higher Education Learning and Teaching Conference	July 2012	Higher Education Strategic Development Manager		Higher Education Academic Board	
• the high quality specialist learning resources specifically for higher education students, which enhance their learning (paragraphs 35 to 37).	Monitor and review existing resources	August 2012	Vice Principal for Higher Education/ Strategic Development Manager	Improved student feedback and achievement profiles	Higher Education Planning and Resources Committee; Senior Leadership Team	Consultation with student body
	Transparency in resource allocation within planning and budgeting models	August 2012	Director of Finance	Improved student feedback and achievement profiles	Higher Education Student Experience Committee for	

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
					consultation with students	
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• continue to monitor assessment practices to ensure that they fully reflect the College's published procedures (paragraph 16)	Monitor compliance via outcomes of annual programme	September 2012	Deans and Higher Education Quality Manager	Improved feedback from external examiners reports and annual programme review outcomes; external examiner reports; feedback from participants	Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Faculty Boards at faculty level	Academic Quality and Standards Committee; Annual Report on Programme Reviews
	Additional briefing and staff development particular focus on identified areas as well as regular training to provide enhancement	June 2012 and annually thereafter	Higher Education Quality Manager		Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee	No adverse comments in outcome from Dean's Report
• continue to develop the provision of learning mentors to ensure that all students benefit from their support (paragraph 33)	Appointment of Learning Mentors Increase awareness of Learning Mentors among tutors and students	March 2012 March 2012	Director of Student Services and Higher Education Student Experience Committee; Deans of Faculties	Use of Learning Mentors by students	Higher Education Student Experience Committee for recommendation to Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee	Student feedback reports for service users and service self-assessment

	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• ensure that the revised higher education publicity procedures cover all forms of published information, including the website (paragraph 42).	Review and develop procedures and identify clear ownership of web pages	April 2012	Higher Education Registrar	Improved compliance	Higher Education Academic Board	Utilise key information set framework to check accuracy, completeness and standardisation of published information
	Audit compliance	September 2012 and at least annually thereafter	Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee; Higher Education Quality Manager to coordinate audit	Evidence of compliance and ownership of process	Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee	Audit reports; student feedback
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:						
• monitor the effectiveness of measures aimed at addressing issues relating to student retention (paragraph 19)	Robust analysis, evaluation and monitoring through business planning review and annual programme review	June 2012 for business review	Higher Education Strategic Development Manager; potentially Higher Education	Improved retention rates	Higher Education Academic Board	Management Information System data and reporting

			Planning and Resources Committee			
	Investigation and action planning for student retention and programme quality and standards issues	Annual programme review (September 2012)	Higher Education Quality Improvement and Student Support Managers for individual reporting via Faculty Boards	Improved retention rates	Higher Education Faculty Boards and Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee	Annual Programme Review including Dean's reports.
	Review and develop guidance on annual programme review process and requirements	May 2012	Higher Education Quality Manager	Improved compliance and annual programme review reporting	Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee	Higher Education Academic Quality and Standards Committee; Annual Report on annual programme review exercise
• introduce more timely training of student representatives to enable them to make a full contribution in their role (paragraph 28)	Schedule earlier training	Early October 2012	Director of Student Services and President of Students' Union	Improved student engagement	Higher Education Student Experience Committee	Higher education students

• develop wider and more consistent use of the virtual learning environment across the programmes to enhance student learning (paragraph 29).	Develop policy and guidelines regarding higher education students' entitlement to virtual learning environment Institutional expectations/ protocols to reflect recognised good practice within higher education sector including consulting with awarding bodies and Joint Information System Committee (JISC)	July 2012	Higher Education Teaching and Learning Committee	Increased use by students and staff of virtual learning environment Positive feedback by students	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Committee for approval by Higher Education Academic Board	Audit practice against policy criteria Student feedback