Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College

November 2011

SR 081/12

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 Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College carried out in November 2011

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **no confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the standards of the programme it offers on behalf of the University of Leicester. The team also considers that there can be **no 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 **cannot** be placed on the accuracy or 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 measures to obtain student views on the provision through the Staff-Student Committee and the course evaluation questionnaire, which was recently redesigned with student assistance
- the range of group and individual staff development activities available to staff which enhance the programme
- the longstanding and close links on the same campus between the College and the University of Leicester enable easy access to University resources for delivery of the programme
- the College tutorial system provides effective academic and personal support, which is highly regarded by students.

Recommendations

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

The team considers it **essential** that the College, together with its University partner, reviews and where necessary reforms the management of the programme to reflect the precepts and expectations of the Academic Infrastructure. In undertaking this work, particular attention should be paid to the need for:

- more effective communications between the two partners and their staff and students
- periodic review
- annual monitoring processes which explicitly interconnect to ensure clear and effective programme monitoring and dissemination of good practice
- appropriate externality in programme design, approval, monitoring, review and assessment
- a common understanding among staff of the scope and nature of public information in order to manage the accuracy and completeness of this.

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

- ensure all information on complaints and appeals procedures is made available in a timely fashion and is easily comprehensible to the students
- establish effective and systematic processes for checking the accuracy and completeness of public information provided to students.

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

- discuss with University colleagues specific actions to enhance the induction process and the contribution of all stakeholders to this
- develop its approach to the provision of learning materials and electronic resources in the programme, in particular to ensure an equitable learning experience across subjects.

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 Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I 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 that the College delivers on behalf of the University of Leicester (the University). The review was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite and Mr Mark Langley (reviewers), and Dr Gordon Edwards (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 the University of Leicester and meetings with staff and students. There had been no Developmental engagement. 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   There are no Foundation Degrees in the provision.

Background to the provision

4   Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College is a mixed sixth-form college. It is located about a mile south of Leicester city centre adjacent to the University of Leicester. The College has over 2,000 students, and the academic focus is almost exclusively on level 3 provision, with most students undertaking AS-level and/or A-level courses.

5   The College provides one programme funded by HEFCE via the University of Leicester: the University of Leicester Foundation Programme. The programme comprises a full-time one-year course, taught to A-level standard. Students who complete the programme successfully can progress directly to the first year of specified undergraduate degree programmes at the University of Leicester in engineering, mathematics or science. The number of students on the programme fluctuates from year to year. At the time of the review there were 56 students enrolled. In the previous four academic years the number of students starting the programme ranged from 135 to 50.

6   The programme was originally designed for mature students with inadequate or inappropriate qualifications, and overseas students whose qualifications did not entitle them to enrol directly onto undergraduate programmes at the University. More recently, more non-mature students from the UK whose performance at A-level is insufficient, or has been achieved in the wrong subject areas for them to progress to their chosen degree programmes, have chosen to undertake the programme.

7   The University regards the programme as a 'Level 0' foundation year and an integrated part of a recognised higher education programme, thus making it eligible for HEFCE support. HEFCE's expectations of all the provision it funds, including at level 0, is that it should accord with the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure.

8   The College, however, does not regard the programme as higher education, but rather as equivalent to a A-level. This was reflected in the College's management of the programme and in its failure to engage with the Academic Infrastructure. Indeed, at no time during the long history of the programme, and despite the existence of a joint

University/College Management Committee with the responsibility of setting the framework for running the programme and the arrangements for its quality assurance, had the College been given to understand that these frameworks and arrangements should align with the Academic Infrastructure. Thus, the IQER review team faced the fundamental problems of reviewing and making judgements about the provision using a set of reference points which the College itself did not recognise.

Partnership agreement with the awarding body

9   The University has overall responsibility for quality assurance, approval of the curriculum and admissions. The College is responsible for managing the delivery of curriculum, maintaining records of attendance, and grading, setting and marking all assessments and examinations. The College is also responsible for the quality of all teaching and the provision of appropriate learning accommodation and resources, including laboratories and library facilities. The University also provides accommodation for some mathematics teaching and access to their library facilities. The partnership agreement requires that all advertising and publicity is provided by the University. The College is responsible for developing the student handbook, which is reviewed and approved each year by the University, together with subject-level information and handbooks.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10   Students who had previously studied on the programme were invited to present a submission to the team. This was prepared and made available before the visit with the helpful assistance of a former student currently on a degree programme at the University. This proved very useful to the team. A representative group of present and former students met the team during the first visit. On a second visit, another group of students nearing the end of their programme met the team. A student representative was also briefed by the review coordinator at the preparatory meeting.

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 University of Leicester Foundation Programme Management Committee comprises College and University staff and meets each term to oversee the strategic and operational aspects of the programme. This Committee manages the programme and bridges University and College management systems. The College's Assistant Principal conveys information from the Committee to the College's Senior Management Team at meetings and through an end-of-year report. The terms of reference of the Committee include setting and monitoring frameworks for the organisation and running the programme, and being responsible for its overall quality assurance. However, as described in paragraph 8, the Committee has not expected or directed the management framework and quality assurance arrangements underlying the programme to align with the precepts of the Academic Infrastructure. It has therefore not fully met its terms of reference. The University acknowledges this.

12   The College's programme tutors communicate frequently and informally with their counterparts at the University about all aspects of the programme and consider this relationship effective. During both visits, however, students highlighted problems with the arrangements for the half-term activities they were given to believe would be on offer at the University, which they put down to poor communication between the partners. This echoed a recommendation in the University's last periodic review of the programme in 2001 that the Management Committee should consider the formality of communication between University departments and members of College staff. It is in part due to this example of poor communication that the team regards it as essential for the College to ensure that the systems of communication among University and College staff and students are operating effectively.

13   Notwithstanding the College's perception that the Foundation programme is not higher education, it has a Higher Education Strategy, although it does not have any other higher education-specific policies and procedures. Students receive a letter confirming their acceptance on the programme, which includes a link to general information on the University's website and access to University regulations about appeals, complaints and mitigating circumstances. The student handbook produced by the College indicates that, when necessary, personal tutors direct students towards the relevant University web pages. Students and staff confirm that students only receive copies of the mitigating circumstances process if they receive a failed mark. In contrast to students studying at the University, students studying at the College are not made aware of precisely how they might initiate complaints or mitigating circumstances processes; they are simply advised to talk to their tutor. It is advisable that the College ensures all information on complaints and appeals procedures is made available in a timely fashion and is easily comprehensible to the students, to reflect the expectations in the *Code of practice, Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters*.

14   Primary responsibility for programme delivery rests with the College. The College manages the delivery of curriculum, maintains records of attendance, and sets, marks and grades all assessments and examinations. The College's internal management systems and processes are therefore of major importance in managing academic standards. The experience of College staff in delivering A-levels enables them to set examination papers and assessment tasks which they regard as appropriate to the Foundation programme. University staff are formally asked to review and approve the assessments. However, the learning outcomes and assessments are not formally calibrated against any external reference points and there is no involvement of an external examiner or similar in commenting on standards.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15   The College has not engaged with the Academic Infrastructure, for reasons indicated above. It is essential for the College to engage with the Academic Infrastructure and its successor, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

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?

16   Paragraphs 11 to 14 describe how the responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards are delegated within the management structure and the reporting and communications arrangements in place between the College and University to help ensure standards are properly managed.

17   The Chair of the Programme Management Committee writes an Annual Monitoring Report, which the Committee verifies prior to issue. The College's Assistant Principal writes a separate Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report for the College's internal Curriculum and Guidance Committee (a subgroup of the College's Corporation). While both institutions carefully track their respective reports through their own systems, the two processes do not explicitly interconnect. Nor do they collectively demonstrate a coherent means of identifying, actioning and resolving issues for the programme. It is essential that the College consider with the University the need for annual monitoring processes that explicitly interconnect to ensure clear and effective programme monitoring as outlined in the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review.*

18   Both the Management Committee and College monitoring reports reflect student opinion gathered through ongoing contact between students and tutors, a Staff-Student Committee and end-of-course questionnaires. The format of the questionnaire has changed recently, at the suggestion of the students, leading to a format better suited to monitoring programme needs. Students and staff share the chairmanship of the Staff-Student Committee, confirming a clear focus on student opinion. This is good practice

19   The weakness in the annual monitoring process described in paragraph 17, the absence of an external examiner since 2007-08 or any formal calibration of the standards in the programme against external reference points, and the time that has elapsed since the last periodic review of the programme by the University to 2001 demonstrate that there has been insufficient externality in the programme's design, approval, monitoring, review and assessment by comparison with the expectations in the *Code of practice, Section 7*. It is essential that the College and the University consider how appropriate externality and periodic review can be included in the programme's management arrangements.

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

20   The College's annual performance management review process identifies staff development needs in relation to A-level teaching. The College focuses funding on training opportunities to support delivery, but partial funding is provided if training is not subject-specific, and it organises cross-college group training events for all staff each year. The University does not provide training for College staff, but does offer a reduced rate if they enrol on a University programme. Cited examples of staff development activities indicate high profile and unique opportunities, as well as clear dissemination of information to other colleagues. The College's staff development for its broad range of A-level provision clearly also enhances and supports the achievement of academic standards on this programme. These arrangements for staff development represent good practice.

> **The team concludes that it has no confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities as set out in its partnership agreement for the management and delivery of the standards of the programme it offers on behalf of the University.**

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?

There are longstanding and close links between the College and the University, which facilitate easy access to University resources for delivery of the programme. This is good practice. The responsibilities and reporting arrangements described in paragraphs 11 to 14 also apply to the College's management of the quality of learning opportunities. The College is responsible for the quality of all teaching and learning, and the provision of appropriate learning accommodation and resources, including laboratories and library facilities. The University provides accommodation for some mathematics teaching and access to library facilities. The terms of reference for the Programme Management Committee include responsibility for 'setting and monitoring the frameworks for the organisation and running of the programme' including agreement on the division of responsibilities between the partners, and arrangements for half-term activities. The minutes of the Programme Management Committee show that aspects of organisation of the programme related to the quality of learning opportunities are discussed. However the annual monitoring reporting framework used by the Committee does not enable it to fully discharge its terms of reference. The senior member of College staff responsible for the oversight of the programme is the Assistant Principal, who also teaches on the programme, and two members of staff have tutorial responsibilities for students. At subject level, there is regular informal contact between teaching staff and the respective University academic tutors. College subject tutors are aware of their responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities and understand the reporting arrangements that are in place. However, they do not contribute directly to the programme Annual Monitoring Report.

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

21   The College's obligations to the University for managing the quality of learning opportunities cover all teaching including practical sessions and tutorials, feedback and monitoring of student progress. The provision of induction, academic and pastoral support, guidance for progression, and review of the programme are shared with the University. The admissions process and the student appeal system are those of the University and are not the responsibility of the College.

22   There are two processes for annual monitoring. In principle, issues and shortcomings relating to the quality of learning opportunities which are identified through the annual monitoring undertaken by the Management Committee are taken forward in the College's own higher education monitoring processes. However, as the two processes for annual monitoring do not explicitly interconnect, some matters requiring action by both partners are not addressed. For example, since 2001 reports have identified the programme's high failure and resit rates, but little evidence exists of a formal process of review that identifies underlying causes or potential remedial changes. Moreover, there is no routine process for the identification of good practice that could be disseminated across the provision. This contributed to the essential recommendation about annual monitoring set out in paragraph 17.

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

23   The College's declared aim is to support students to maximise their achievements, and an inspection by Ofsted in 2007 judged the College to be outstanding in all aspects including the quality of provision and capacity to improve. The draft Teaching and Learning Policy statement covering all College provision indicates that the successful provision of teaching and learning opportunities is checked with reference to student attainment, by obtaining feedback from students, and through a range of self-assessment processes including lesson observations, departmental self-assessments, and staff performance management processes.

24   The appointment of staff to teach on the programme is undertaken by the College. The College operates a developmental teaching observation process whereby each member of teaching staff undergoes a formal annual observation. The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality has overall responsibility for ensuring that the process is operated effectively. The resulting observation development plan is reported as part of the individual's performance management review with their line manager. There is more frequent observation of new staff. Staff confirm that feedback obtained from lesson observation is useful in improving their teaching practice. Student feedback is obtained through the biannual meetings of the Staff-Student Committee and the annual course evaluation questionnaire, and the findings are discussed at the Programme Management Committee. Student views indicate that the teaching at the College is highly regarded.

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

25   Students are supported effectively in a variety of ways including a well-established system of tutorials and subject support. Each student is assigned a College tutor who provides academic and personal support and monitors progress on a weekly basis, resulting in a written report for the University at the end of the first term and at the end of the programme. Study skills support is provided through group tutorials for an assessed module in research and communication skills, and additional subject support is available outside of timetabled sessions at drop-in sessions organised by departments. This system effectively ensures that any student difficulties are identified and acted upon promptly, is highly regarded by students and represents good practice. Students are also allocated a University tutor in the department to which they hope to progress, but these links are not consistent across the provision. The College Additional Support Team provides support for students with additional needs due to medical reasons or learning difficulties, and students confirm that this support is appropriate and accessible.

26   New entrants to the programme are sent a pack of enrolment information by the University Registry, and induction is then largely handled at the College. In their first week of attendance, the College provides for students to receive the Student Handbook and Regulations and pre-printed timetables, and to have a tour of the site. At the first class for each subject, College tutors introduce themselves and issue course booklets with detailed syllabuses. Students confirm that induction provides a useful introduction to course requirements and library services, although they express a wish for more involvement with the University at the start of their programme by meeting with University tutors and also with students who had progressed to the University. The current arrangements for induction and orientation of new students are broadly satisfactory. However it is desirable for the College to discuss with University colleagues specific actions to enhance the induction process and the contribution of all stakeholders to this.

27   The Staff-Student Committee enables the College to obtain student feedback and to monitor the support it provides to students. The meetings are minuted by a representative of the University Quality Office and are formally considered by the Management Committee. The College also obtains student feedback through the annual course evaluation questionnaire, for example in relation to timely assessment and feedback to support and promote learning. The questionnaire was revised in 2011 with the assistance of the student representative who is the Co-Chair of the Staff-Student Committee. Students indicate that the Staff-Student Committee provides an excellent platform to air their concerns, and confirm that the College responds to their opinions and issues raised. These measures to obtain student views on the provision represent good practice.

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

The arrangements for staff development described in paragraph 20 also apply to arrangements in support of learning opportunities. The teaching team has extensive experience of delivering A-level courses; many staff have contributed to the programme for several years, and therefore have the requisite skills to deliver it. The draft teaching timetable is drawn up in early summer when likely student numbers are known, so that there is adequate time for staff preparation. Staff confirm that the College organises staff training events each year, including activities with the CENBASE (Central and Eastern Network for Building and Sustaining Excellence) group of sixth-form colleges. There is also a generous budget for staff development which supports attendance at off-site training events and study for postgraduate qualifications. One member of the Physics teaching team had recently attended a week-long programme at CERN in Switzerland, which would enable the development of lecture material on Astrophysics. The range of group and individual staff development activities and the way this is managed is good practice and is appropriate to support and enhance the quality of learning opportunities in the programme.

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?

28   The College has a range of resources and facilities that are used by all College courses and there is no dedicated budget or accommodation for the programme. The science laboratories recently underwent a large-scale refurbishment, and the students have modern teaching accommodation. The College Learning Resource Centre comprises a library and open access study centre with networked computers offering access to the College's virtual learning environment. All students are provided with a College e-mail account. The library supports the study of all subjects taught at the College. The partnership agreement provides for use of some teaching accommodation at the University and for students to access the University library and learning resources. Students are aware of and make use of the learning resources at both the College and the University. Since the College and the University share a campus, the University resources are easily accessible and this is good practice.

29   The College provides students with all necessary learning materials in hard copy including textbooks, although students report that the quality of subject-level materials varied between courses. The teaching timetable includes compulsory sessions in IT skills, but students have not found these particularly useful. The College virtual learning environment provides additional learning resources to support students' work, for example worked solutions for assessed work. However the structure, layout and volume of material provided on the virtual learning environment is variable between subject areas. Students indicate that Physics materials are especially helpful, and they advocate that all subjects make general

use of the virtual learning environment to support student learning. The College encourages staff to upload teaching resources to the virtual learning environment, but has no formal strategy for the development of electronic resources or policy to guide staff in this area. In response to the findings from the course evaluation questionnaire, the College has identified that it must consider how to improve the quality and range of subject-related materials made available electronically. It is desirable that the College should develop its approach to the provision of learning materials and electronic resources in the programme, in particular to ensure an equitable learning experience across subjects.

30   The existing programme monitoring and student feedback processes provide the College with appropriate information on the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources to students. However, the team heard that agreed actions to improve learning resources had not been fully implemented. For example, the Staff-Student Committee identified that students should be given subject-specific recommended reading lists for the academic year 2011-12, however staff could not confirm that this had been addressed for all subjects. More robust arrangements for action planning and managing the provision of learning resources would promote equity of the student experience on the programme.

The team concludes that it has no confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities 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?

31   The College's Mission Statement, Strategic Plan, Quality Statement and Higher Education Strategy are available in hard copy and electronically. The College produces its prospectus, which does not list the Foundation Programme, and the College website, which does. The Student Handbook for the Foundation Programme lists all course outlines and relevant information (though not in the form of a programme specification). Students receive a paper copy of the handbook during their induction. They later receive a paper copy of subject handbooks, produced by the relevant teaching teams. Staff use the College's virtual learning environment variably to disseminate programme support materials, which students can also access.

32   There is a lack of awareness in the College about the nature of public information that providers of higher education are expected to publish. The self-evaluation indicates a number of examples of public information which are the responsibility of the University and therefore out of scope in IQER. The only piece of public information that the College indicates it is responsible for, in its self-evaluation, is the student handbook. However, several additional items of public information published by the College were identified in the visit but were not recognised as such by College staff. It is essential that the College should engender a common understanding among staff of the scope and nature of public information in order to manage the accuracy and completeness of this.

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?

33   The partnership agreement requires that all advertising and publicity is provided by the University. The College has therefore not established procedures to assure the accuracy of such promotional materials. Students confirm that the information they receive prior to starting the programme is largely accurate and reflects their on-course experience. Students obtain information principally from the University website supplemented by dialogue with College staff. The College website contains a brief description of the programme, and is also a source of information for potential students. Until shortly before the review visit, the website contained information about a degree course option which ceased in 2008, indicating that the content is not adequately checked to ensure compliance with the partnership agreement. It is desirable for the College to consider, with the University, the benefits of strengthening the information provided about the programme on the College website and the process for checking the content with the University.

34   The Student Handbook is the key published source of information for staff and students, and the College has arrangements in place for this to be reviewed and revised prior to each academic year. The review is undertaken jointly by the Assistant Principal and a Programme Tutor and then forwarded for approval in final form by the University Programme Director and Quality Office. The College has no systematic process for checking the accuracy and coherence of the subject-level information in the Student Handbook, nor in the separate subject-level handbooks that subject teams and individual tutors prepare. Therefore, there is considerable variation between subjects in the format and content of the subject-level information. The team also identified an example of conflicting information on assessment weightings between the Student Handbook and a subject handbook. The Student Handbook contains some information on the appeals process, but indicates that details will be sent by the University along with the notification of course results. This approach to providing information does not reflect the general principles of the *Code of practice, Section 5: Academic appeals and students complaints on academic matters*, and the College should take action to make available more easily comprehensible information. It is therefore advisable that the College establishes more effective and systematic processes to check the accuracy and completeness of public information provided to students.

The team considers that reliance cannot be placed on the accuracy or 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

35   The College had not received a Developmental engagement prior to the visit.

D   Foundation Degrees

36   The College provision does not include any Foundation Degrees.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

37   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 programme the College offers on behalf of the University of Leicester. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and the University.

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

- the measures to obtain student views on the provision through the Staff-Student Committee and the course evaluation questionnaire, which was recently redesigned with student assistance (paragraphs 18 and 30)
- the range of group and individual staff development activities available to staff which enhance the programme (paragraphs 20 and 31)
- the longstanding and close links on the same campus between the College and the University of Leicester enables easy access to University resources for delivery of the programme (paragraph 21)
- the College tutorial system provides effective academic and personal support, which is highly regarded by students (paragraph 27).

39   The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its University partner.

40   The team considers it **essential** that the College, together with its University partner, reviews and where necessary reforms the management of the programme to reflect the precepts and expectations of the Academic Infrastructure. In undertaking this work, particular attention should be paid to the need for:

- more effective communications between the two partners and their staff and students (paragraph 12)
- periodic review (paragraph 19)
- annual monitoring processes which explicitly interconnect to ensure clear and effective programme monitoring and dissemination of good practice (paragraphs 17 and 24)
- appropriate externality in programme design, approval, monitoring, review and assessment (paragraph 19)
- a common understanding among staff of the scope and nature of public information in order to manage the accuracy and completeness of this (paragraph 35).

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

- ensure all information on complaints and appeals procedures is made available in a timely fashion and is easily comprehensible to the students (paragraph 13)
- establish effective and systematic processes for checking the accuracy and completeness of public information provided to students (paragraph 37).

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

- discuss with University colleagues specific actions to enhance the induction process and the contribution of all stakeholders to this (paragraph 28)

- develop its approach to the provision of learning materials and electronic resources in the programme, in particular to ensure an equitable learning experience across subjects (paragraph 32).

43   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **no 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 programme it offers on behalf of the University.

44   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **no 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.

45   Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **cannot** be placed on the accuracy or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programme it delivers.