



QAA

Learning from Academic review of higher education in further education colleges in England 2002-07



Sharing good practice

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ISBN 978 1 84482 829 6

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Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the findings of the Academic reviews of the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) directly-funded and consortium-funded higher education in further education colleges (colleges) in England between September 2002 and July 2007. It considers the development of higher education in colleges and identifies key messages for colleges and all interested stakeholders. From 2002-07, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) conducted 310 Academic reviews in 232 colleges, which looked at programmes delivered within 20 different subjects, as defined by the HEFCE unit of review (Annex 1).

Data available from surveys conducted by QAA to inform review planning show that the total head count of students during this period was approximately 30,200, equating to around 26,000 full-time equivalent students. Of the students, 68 per cent were studying full-time; 57 per cent of students were studying HNC/D programmes; 9 per cent were taking Foundation Degrees; 32 per cent were studying for honours degrees and 2 per cent were on taught postgraduate programmes.

Each review resulted in judgements on academic standards. The reviewers had confidence in the standards of around 94 per cent of the provision. Five per cent of reviews resulted in a judgement of no confidence and 1 per cent of reviews in a judgement of limited confidence. The proportion of confidence judgements on standards remains broadly consistent across the cycle. Judgements were also made on the quality and effectiveness of learning opportunities. The quality of learning opportunities was found to be commendable or approved in 98.3 per cent of reviews and 1 per cent of reviews resulted in a failing judgement for all or part of the provision.

Colleges' engagement with, and use of, the Academic Infrastructure to inform the development and delivery of their higher education provision has demonstrably increased during the review cycle. In many cases, reports note that intended learning outcomes clearly reflect the relevant subject benchmark statement and are appropriate to the qualification level. *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (Code of practice), published by QAA, are used systematically to inform internal reviews and other quality assurance processes. Most colleges which had re-reviews needed to make significant improvements to student assessment. They have paid particular attention to improving assessment strategies since their previous review and have made effective use of the *Code of practice* in doing this. A small number of reports indicate that a collective discussion of the external reference points in relation to intended learning outcomes, in particular, would enhance the student learning experience.

Generally, programmes prepare students well for future employment, especially where curricular content is relevant to employment, industry and students' career intentions. A key strength of many programmes is the opportunity for students to combine study for an higher education qualification with relevant employment, particularly through part-time programmes, work-based projects or work placements. A small minority of colleges have not made use of employers or external practitioners to develop or enhance their curricula, resulting in less evidence of currency in curriculum content.

Student assessment remains an area in need of further enhancement in most colleges. The assessment of student work based on a strategy that ensures a close link between intended learning outcomes and assessment methods is noted as good practice. However, a number of reports note that feedback on student work was variable in terms of quality and quantity across different modules and/or programmes. A common problem in many colleges is the lack of clear information, for staff and/or students, on assessment criteria and marking schemes which leads to inconsistency of practice across programmes. The further development of clear assessment policies and procedures to ensure reliability and integrity of the assessment process would assist colleges in maintaining and enhancing the standards and quality of their higher education provision.

In general, there is an effective use of formative assessment across all subjects. Small higher education student groups help to facilitate the timely return of marked and graded work, and the comprehensive feedback provided to students on assessments makes a substantial contribution to learning. The provision of oral feedback to supplement written feedback is a feature of good practice in most colleges. Reports note that the most successful programmes ensure an effective link between theory and practice at all levels. A small number of reports note that colleges could adopt a more consistent approach in providing feedback to students. In a few cases, written feedback is focused on practical skills at the expense of more analytical and cognitive development.

Colleges place considerable emphasis on developing and enhancing students' study skills to help them with the transition to higher-level study. The small size of many classes enables staff to pay attention to students' individual development. The use of extended projects helps to promote independent learning. However, in a significant number of cases, there is scope for further development of students' critical and analytical skills, such as the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate.

The proportion of students progressing to further study has improved over the review period. There are increasing opportunities for progression within colleges, including progression from Foundation Degrees to the final year of a designated honours degree, delivered either at the college or at a partner or other nearby higher education institution. On occasion, inconsistent, incomplete or unclear progression data hinder colleges' ability to demonstrate fully how many students progress to further study or employment.

Comments on students' progression to employment are more prevalent in later reports. Colleges' close links and good liaison with employers are seen as key to helping students obtain subject-related employment. The extent to which students are prepared for future work through their programme of study is also frequently endorsed by employers, who comment favourably on students' academic abilities as well as their vocational or practical skills.

Colleges are making an important contribution to widening participation in higher education, which has increasingly featured as a strength of college provision. The reviewers identify many examples of effective recruitment procedures which target specific groups, such as mature students, those from the local area, and/or ethnic

minorities. The importance of providing higher education opportunities to the local population remains a key aim for colleges throughout the five-year period of reviews.

Colleges frequently provide staff development and training for those who have no formal teaching qualification or experience. Reports identify strengths in relation to effective teaching observation schemes and staff development to support teaching and learning. Areas for development include the limited time available for staff to undertake higher education-related development activities and the need for staff to pursue activities that update their subject knowledge and skills. Reports also comment on the limited higher education focus of some staff development activities.

There is clear evidence of development in the provision of learning resources over the review period. Improvements are particularly noticeable between 2003-05, where strengths feature strongly across the whole range of learning resources provided. Teaching accommodation and industry-standard equipment are often seen as strengths of colleges' higher education provision. Areas for further development generally include limited book or journal stock and limited access to library facilities and specialist equipment.

In general, the reviewers found quality assurance and enhancement systems to be strong and effective. Typically, a high level of staff commitment to quality processes is linked to strategies for staff development in the colleges. In the best examples, students and employers are involved in the maintenance and enhancement of quality and in such cases the reviewers note effective mechanisms for student representation, for acquiring and considering students' and employers' views, and responding to them.

The reviewers also note the scope for more systematic and evaluative annual review of programmes and more effective monitoring and recording of action planned and taken. There is evidence of over-reliance on informal processes, leading to a shortage of appropriate documentation to record changes in provision; problems in accessing quality assurance related information, and limited involvement of employers. Where a college was subject to a re-review, in most cases the colleges concerned had responded rapidly and effectively to address and improve the areas reported to be in need of urgent action.

Academic review has identified a substantial amount of good practice as well as areas for development in higher education programmes in colleges, which has led to significant improvement and enhancement in this provision over the last five years. Many areas for development are concerned with the assessment cycle, from initial design of assessment tasks to measuring outcomes and assuring sufficient rigour and integrity in the implementation and monitoring of assessment processes. This has led to a focus on enhancing assessment processes in the new QAA method of review for higher education in further education colleges: Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Introduction

1 This report provides an overview of the findings of the Academic reviews of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) directly-funded and consortium-funded higher education in further education colleges (colleges) in England between September 2002 and July 2007. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) carries out reviews to enable HEFCE to fulfil its statutory responsibility to ensure that provision is made for assessing the quality of the education it funds and for reporting on standards and quality. The cycle of Academic review has now been completed. QAA published three periodic reports in the *Learning from Academic review of higher education in further education colleges in England* series,¹ which summarise the findings of the review teams carrying out Academic review. This report considers the development of higher education in colleges in England over the full five-year cycle, and identifies key messages for colleges and all interested stakeholders arising from the review reports.

2 The chief purposes of this report are to:

- highlight elements of good practice in higher education in further education colleges identified by the reviewers
- assist current and potential providers in developing and enhancing their higher education provision
- identify key messages for colleges and their awarding bodies
- inform national policy and future review methods for higher education delivered in colleges
- consider the contribution that Academic review has made to the development of higher education in further education colleges.

3 This report is structured in three main parts. The outcomes section looks at the judgements made in the reviews on the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. The findings section explores the findings of the reviewers by considering topics which have been identified as significant themes across all of the review reports. Conclusions are then drawn from the outcomes and findings sections, identifying key messages for colleges, their awarding bodies and other stakeholders.

4 Higher education delivered in colleges has grown significantly over the period 2002-2007. Immediately prior to this period, colleges were involved in delivering mainly higher national certificates (HNC) and diplomas (HND), and honours degrees. A small number of colleges also provided some taught postgraduate programmes. Subsequently, Foundation Degrees were set up, following proposals by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and HEFCE as a new two-year higher education qualification. They aim to give students the intermediate technical and professional skills that are in demand from employers, and to provide more flexible and accessible ways of studying. Foundation Degrees are commonly validated by higher education institutions and delivered in partner colleges. They have led to a significant expansion in student numbers during this period. By the end of the Academic review cycle, over 60,000 students were estimated to have registered on a

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/academicReview/default.asp

Foundation Degree.² A similar number of students were registered on BTEC Higher National (HN) programmes.³ A major revision of the HN model is underway to respond to recent changes and developments in the higher education sector and government policy, in order to maintain the currency and appropriateness of these awards in meeting the Government's priority to develop skills in the workforce in order to maximise economic prosperity, productivity and to improve social justice.⁴

5 HEFCE began a review of higher education in colleges in November 2005⁵ with the aim of developing a consistent and coherent policy on the contribution of colleges to higher education provision. The proposals, published in 2007, consider how HEFCE can support colleges in contributing to the changing landscape in higher education by promoting access to, and progression through, programmes which meet employers' needs for more employees with higher-level skills. Higher education in colleges is often focused on short-cycle (1 or 2 year) vocational programmes, which are delivered flexibly and are responsive to local or regional skills demands. Lifelong learning networks are groups of institutions, including higher education institutions and colleges, which come together, typically across a city, area or region, to offer new progression opportunities for vocational learners. They aim to bring higher education institutions and colleges together to increase participation in higher education, particularly in areas with traditionally low levels of participation. They also aim to put students on vocational programmes on the same footing as those on more traditional academic programmes in higher education institutions. The Leitch report,⁶ published in 2006, also signals a more focused development of higher education in colleges in raising the level of participation and in meeting the higher-level skills targets.

6 Over the past nine years, the volume of interaction between QAA and colleges has increased significantly. In 1999, funding for HNC/Ds was transferred from the Further Education Funding Council to HEFCE. Following this, there has been significant planned expansion in the delivery of higher education in colleges. In the period from September 2000 to December 2001, QAA carried out 166 subject reviews in colleges. During 2002-07, QAA conducted 310 Academic reviews in 232 colleges. QAA provided a range of briefing events to assist college staff to prepare for Academic review. A number of these events were run in collaboration with the Association of Colleges and the Learning and Skills Development Agency.

7 QAA also established a Higher Education in Further Education Colleges Liaison Group and a Policy Advisory Forum for associated organisations in 2003. The Policy Advisory Forum facilitates debate between representatives of colleges and national bodies including Edexcel, Foundation Degree Forward, HEFCE, Ofsted and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This provides an opportunity for discussion and debate on the impact at college level of the various review and inspection methods (conducted by QAA and other organisations); the opportunity to comment on and inform development of QAA methods of review of higher education in

² Foundation degrees: Key statistics 2001-02 to 2006-07 (HEFCE, 2007)
www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_03/07_03.doc

³ www.edexcel.org.uk/quals/hn/ri/news/happening.htm

⁴ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/4/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

⁵ www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2006/06_48/

⁶ www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm

colleges, and to advise on the development of policy and strategy for higher education in colleges. The Liaison Group aims to provide a forum for the discussion of matters of interest to colleges, related organisations and the QAA. Members include representatives from colleges, the Association of Colleges, the Mixed Economy Group, the Association of Collaborative Providers, the Learning and Skills Network, and QAA.

8 In common with all methods of review carried out by QAA, Academic review uses a set of nationally-agreed reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure, to consider the standards and quality of higher education awards. These reference points have been developed by QAA in consultation with providers of higher education. The purpose of the Academic Infrastructure is to help all providers of higher education to set and maintain standards and to provide guidance on good practice. The components of the Academic Infrastructure are:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*
- *the Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements
- programme specifications.

The reviewers have paid close attention to these reference points and have identified some of the ways in which colleges have addressed the intentions of the Academic Infrastructure and introduced changes in their practice. Pinpointing this good practice is key to enabling colleges to build on their strengths and to identify areas for further development.

9 Academic review looked at directly-funded or consortium-funded programmes delivered within a specific subject, as defined by the HEFCE unit of review (Annex 1). Table 1 shows the number of reviews, by subject, across the three rounds of reviews. Reviews were structured in one of three different ways: a review of a single subject area; an aggregate review of two or more related subject areas (treated in the same way as a single review, with one team, one self-evaluation, one review and one report); or a parallel review of two different subject areas conducted simultaneously by two different teams, resulting in two separate reports. Twenty subjects were reviewed across the cycle, most of which were conducted as single-subject reviews. The most common combinations of subjects for aggregate reviews were:

- Computing and Engineering
- Art and Design; Communications, Media, Film and Television Studies; Dance, Drama and Performance Arts; Music (usually only two of these subjects were reviewed at any one time)
- a combination of English, History, Geography, Sociology and Anthropology, Law (often taught as BA combined studies programmes).

Table 1: Subjects reviewed by round

Round	Total number of reviews (including aggregate reviews)	Number of colleges reviewed	Subjects reviewed
2002-03	153	107	<p>Computing</p> <p>Earth, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies</p> <p>Engineering</p> <p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Law</p> <p>Social Policy and Administration and Social Work</p> <p>Sociology and Anthropology</p>
2003-05	106	79	<p>Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences</p> <p>Art and Design</p> <p>Building and Surveying</p> <p>Communications, Media, Film and Television Studies</p> <p>Computing</p> <p>Dance, Drama and Performance Arts</p> <p>Engineering</p> <p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Nursing and Midwifery</p> <p>Psychology</p> <p>Social Policy and Administration and Social Work</p> <p>Sociology and Anthropology</p> <p>Subjects Allied to Medicine</p>
2005-07	51	46	<p>Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences</p> <p>Art and Design</p> <p>Biosciences</p> <p>Building and Surveying</p> <p>Business and Management</p> <p>Communications, Media, Film and Television Studies</p> <p>Computing</p> <p>Dance, Drama and Performance Arts</p> <p>Engineering</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Social Policy and Administration and Social Work</p> <p>Subjects Allied to Medicine</p>

10 The small number of reviews which resulted in no confidence or failing judgements (see outcomes section below) were followed up by a re-review of the relevant programmes, one year after the first review. Table 2 shows the number of re-reviews conducted by subject. The greatest number of re-reviews took place in engineering, mostly taught at HNC/D level. The greatest proportion of re-reviews, out of the total number of first reviews in that subject, was in Combined studies (History, Geography and English), mostly taught at honours level. No re-reviews were conducted in Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences; Biosciences; Business and Management; Earth, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies; Law; Music; Nursing and Midwifery; Psychology or Subjects Allied to Medicine.

Table 2: Reviews by subject 2002-07

Subject	Total number of first reviews	Number of re-reviews	Total number of reviews for that subject
Art and Design	63	2	65
Building and Surveying	21	3	24
Communications, Media, Film and Television Studies	38	3	41
Computing	89	4	93
Dance, Drama and Performance Arts	25	1	26
Engineering	85	6	91
Combined studies (English/Geography/History)	8	2	10
Social Policy and Administration and Social Work	26	2	28
Sociology and Anthropology	6	1	7

11 The data available from the scope and preference surveys, conducted by QAA prior to the reviews taking place, show that around 68 per cent of students on programmes reviewed between 2002-07 were studying full-time, and 32 per cent were part-time. The total head count of students was approximately 30,200, which equates to around 26,000 full-time equivalent.

12 The scope and preference data also indicate that around 57 per cent of students were studying HNC/D programmes, 9 per cent were taking Foundation Degrees, 32 per cent were studying for honours degrees and 2 per cent were on taught postgraduate programmes (see Figure 1). Table 3 shows the proportion of students by award across the three rounds of reviews.

Figure 1: Percentage of students by type of award (2002-07)

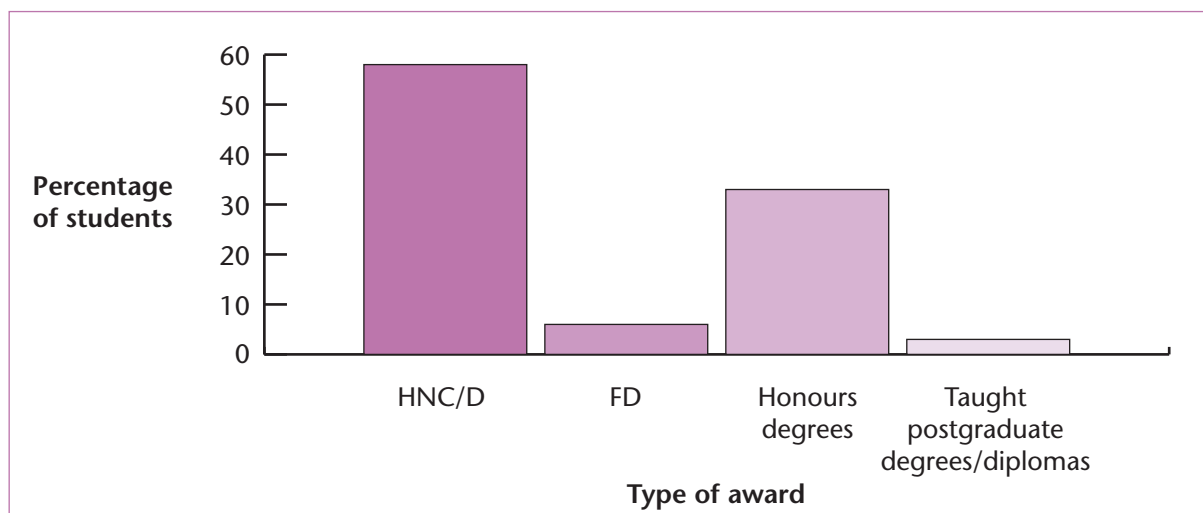


Table 3: Percentage of students by award

Award	2002-03 %	2002-05 %	2005-07 %
HNC/D	60	69	45
FD	0	9	10
Honours degrees	35	21	43
Taught postgraduate degrees/diplomas	5	1	2

Part one - Outcomes

13 In the Academic review method, the reviewers make judgements on the academic standards of the provision and on three aspects of the quality of learning opportunities: teaching and learning; student progression, and learning resources. The judgements relating to academic standards are as follows:

- a 'confidence' judgement will be made if the reviewers are satisfied both with current standards and with the prospect of those standards being maintained into the future
- a 'limited confidence' judgement will be made if standards are being achieved, but there is doubt about the ability of the college to maintain them into the future
- a 'no confidence' judgement will be made if the reviewers feel that arrangements are inadequate to enable standards to be achieved or demonstrated.

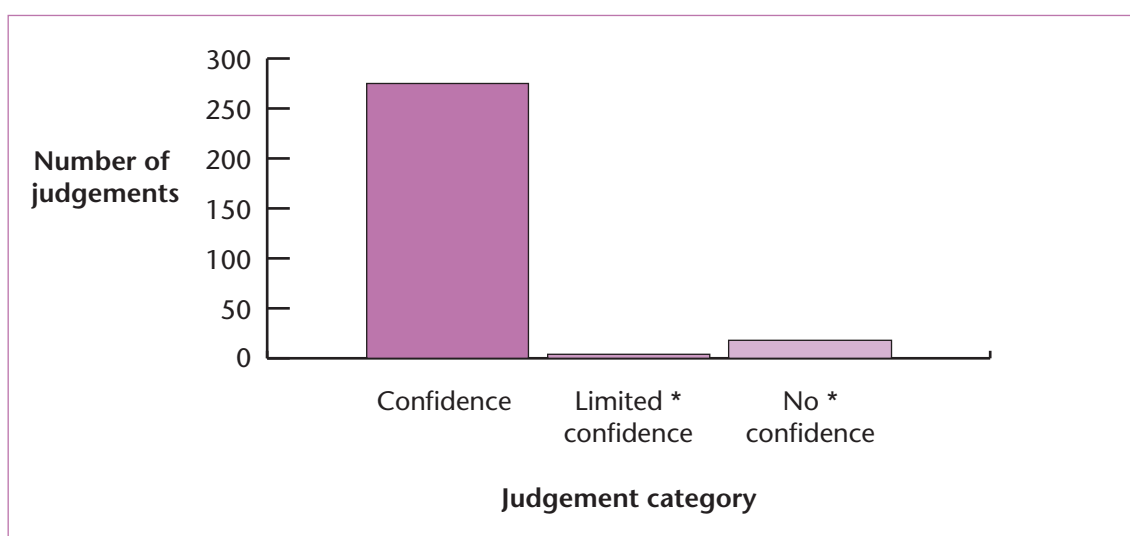
The reviewers were required to make one judgement for all of the provision reviewed, where possible. If necessary, they could differentiate between programmes, level of award, or subject, where more than one subject is reviewed at the same time.

14 Table 4 shows the judgements made across each of the three review periods, and across the whole cycle, from 2002-07. The number of confidence judgements in academic standards remains broadly consistent across the cycle, although there is a marginally greater proportion of no confidence judgements during 2003-05. The number of differentiated judgements dropped towards the end of the cycle, although this can be attributed to the final year (2006-07) in which all of the reviews involved small provision, mostly in one subject, and with less than 30 full-time equivalent students.

15 The majority of issues raised in reviews resulting in a no confidence judgement are related to assessment; particularly the rigour of assessment practices and security of student achievement at a level appropriate to the award. All reviews resulting in no confidence were followed up by a second visit, which usually took the form of a full re-review of the provision, one year after the first review. Out of 24 re-reviews, 22 resulted in a judgement of confidence, showing that the college had significantly improved the provision following the first review. There were 2 re-reviews which resulted in a second no confidence judgement and these were subject to further follow-up action by HEFCE, for example, in one case direct funding for a programme was withdrawn and the students transferred to a nearby higher education institution.

Table 4: Judgements on academic standards 2002-07

Judgement	2002-03	2002-05	2005-07	2002-07 (%)
Confidence	138	91	46	275 (88)
Limited confidence	0	1	1	2 (1)
No confidence	5	8	2	15 (5)
Differentiated: confidence/no confidence	9	6	1	16 (5)
Differentiated: confidence/limited confidence	1	0	1	2 (1)
Totals	153	106	51	310 (100)

Figure 2: Number of judgements on academic standards 2002-07


(*includes differentiated judgements)

16 For the aspects of the quality of learning opportunities (learning and teaching, student progression and learning resources) the judgements are as follows:

- commendable: the provision contributes substantially to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, with most elements demonstrating good practice
- approved: the provision enables the intended learning outcomes to be achieved, but improvement is needed to overcome weaknesses
- failing: the provision makes a less than adequate contribution to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Significant improvement is required urgently if the provision is to become at least adequate.

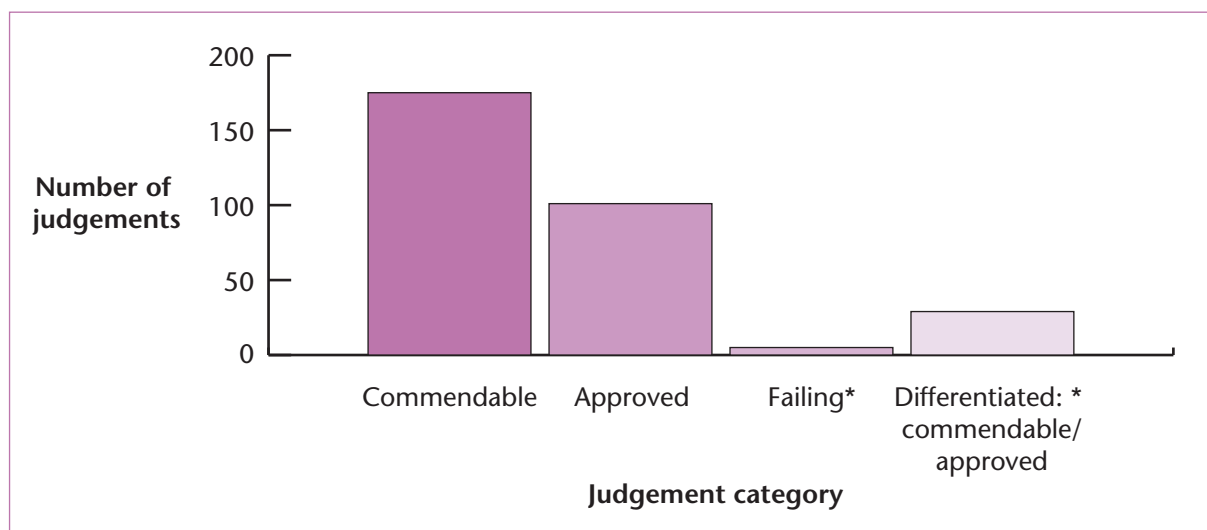
Again, the reviewers had the opportunity to make differentiated judgements between programmes, level of award or by subject, if this was necessary.

17 Table 5 shows judgements made on the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching. There is some variation across the cycle in these judgements, with a greater proportion of commendable judgements being made in 2005-07, and a greater proportion of approved judgements made at the start of the review cycle in 2002-03. There are very few failing judgements across the cycle; just five reviews out of 310 (1.5 per cent) resulted in a failing judgement for all or part of the provision. This shows that in the vast majority of cases, colleges are providing adequate or better teaching and learning opportunities for their higher education students. The findings section of this report confirms the quality of learning and teaching in colleges, highlighting a significant amount of good practice.

Table 5: Judgements on learning and teaching

Learning and teaching	2002-03	2003-05	2005-07	2002-07 (%)
Commendable	81	61	33	175 (56)
Approved	56	31	14	101 (33)
Failing	0	2	0	2 (1)
Differentiated: commendable/approved	15	11	3	29 (9)
Differentiated: commendable/failing	1	0	0	1 (0.3)
Differentiated: commendable/approved/failing	0	1	0	1 (0.3)
Differentiated: approved/failing	0	0	1	1 (0.3)
Totals	153	106	51	310 (100)

Figure 3: Number of judgements on learning and teaching 2002-07



(*includes differentiated judgements)

18 Table 6 shows the judgements on student progression. This judgement considers the effectiveness of strategies for recruitment, admission, induction, academic support and guidance, and the extent to which arrangements are in place to facilitate students' progression towards successful completion of their programmes. As with teaching and learning, there is a higher proportion of commendable judgements in the final period of the cycle. The average across the five years is roughly the same at just over two-thirds of judgements being commendable. There are fewer failing judgements in this section, in just three out of 310 reviews (1 per cent). This shows that colleges are nearly all effective in providing appropriate support to students to enable them to achieve their awards.

Table 6: Judgements on student progression

Student progression	2002-03	2003-05	2005-07	2002-07 (%)
Commendable	82	60	37	179 (58)
Approved	51	35	11	97 (31)
Failing	1	2	0	3 (1)
Differentiated: commendable/approved	19	9	3	31 (10)
Totals	153	106	51	310 (100)

Figure 4: Number of judgements on student progression 2002-07



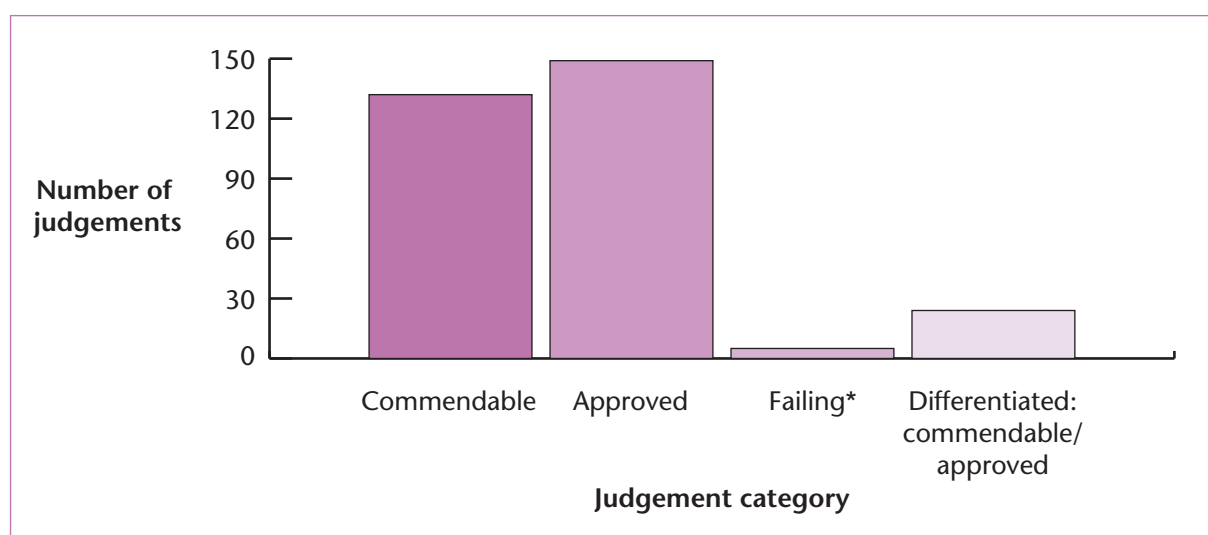
19 Table 7 shows the judgements made with regard to the adequacy of staffing and physical learning resources and the effectiveness of their utilisation. This includes the number of staff; suitability of staff qualifications; professional experience and currency of subject knowledge; in addition to books, journals, information technology, accommodation and specialist facilities. While the vast majority of

judgements (98 per cent) are either commendable or approved, it is notable that there are a greater proportion of approved judgements here than in the other two sections. However, these judgements show that most colleges are able to provide at least the minimum resources necessary to deliver the programme, and that around half the colleges reviewed provide significantly more than this.

Table 7: Judgements on learning resources

Learning resources	2002-03	2003-05	2005-07	2002-07 (%)
Commendable	44	61	27	132 (42)
Approved	89	38	22	149 (48)
Failing	1	2	0	3 (1)
Differentiated: commendable/approved	18	5	1	24 (8)
Differentiated: commendable/failing	1	0	1	2 (1)
Totals	153	106	51	310 (100)

Figure 5: Number of judgements on learning resources 2002-07



(*includes differentiated commendable/failing numbers)

Part two - Findings

20 The conclusions section of each review report has been analysed to identify key findings across all of the reviews. Each of the bullet points identified by the reviewers has been examined and collated into themes which provide the framework for this section. Each theme discusses the most common features of good practice or areas for further development shown across the review cycle. Themes are further divided into two-year review periods, to consider any changes or improvements across the whole cycle. References in square brackets show typical example reports which reflect the point identified.

Use of the Academic Infrastructure

Summary: Use of the Academic Infrastructure

Colleges' engagement with, and use of, the Academic Infrastructure to inform the development and delivery of their higher education provision has demonstrably increased during the review cycle. In many cases, reports note that intended learning outcomes clearly reflect the relevant subject benchmark statement and are appropriate to the qualification level. The FHEQ, *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the *Code of practice*, published by QAA, are used systematically to inform internal reviews and other quality assurance processes. Programme specifications took longer to be fully embedded and QAA provided further guidance for colleges on writing programme specifications during 2005-06. A significant number of colleges needed to develop programme specifications for Edexcel programmes.

21 In 2002-03, while a majority of colleges matched the level of the programme to the level descriptor set out in the FHEQ, fewer colleges took account of subject benchmark statements or the *Code of practice*, or made use of programme specifications. However, in many cases, reports note that intended learning outcomes reflect the relevant subject benchmark statement and are appropriate to the qualification level [Farnborough College, SR23/2002]. A few reports note that more explicit mapping of the learning outcomes and curriculum against the requirements of the qualifications frameworks such as the FHEQ or the National qualifications framework would help to enhance the assurance of standards of the provision [Blackpool and The Fylde College, SR121/2002]. In cases where Foundation Degrees had been validated before the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* was published, the reviewers note instances of a limited emphasis on work-based learning in the programme structure.

22 By 2003-05, an increasing number of colleges demonstrated more effective engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. While the use of programme specifications had become more established, colleges had embraced the *Code of practice*, FHEQ, *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and subject benchmark statements to varying degrees [Guildford College of Further and Higher Education, SR76/2004]. Colleges with previous experience of engaging with the Academic Infrastructure, through their involvement in previous reviews generally demonstrated

improvements. They exhibited a better understanding of the need to ensure that intended learning outcomes reflect programme aims, and that programme specifications are well matched to the relevant subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ [Liverpool Community College, SR27/2004].

23 In addition, most colleges delivering Foundation Degrees have taken account of the defining characteristics of these degrees identified in the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Programme intended learning outcomes are adequately differentiated and reflect the intermediate level of the FHEQ [Northbrook College of Further and Higher Education, SR01/2005]. Colleges are working with their awarding partners to enhance the work-based learning element to ensure that full account is taken of *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* requirements [Hull College, SR13/2004]. Where Foundation Degrees have been jointly designed with a higher education institution, partnership colleges, or national and local employers, account has been taken of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, in developing partnership contracts [Chesterfield College, SR02/2005]. In general, programme specifications for Foundation Degrees are comprehensive and identify links between aims, objectives and outcomes. They clearly identify learning, teaching and assessment methods in addition to programme content and student support [Newcastle College, SR23/2004].

24 A small number of reports from colleges with no previous experience in Academic review indicate that further consideration of the external reference points, in relation to the development and assessment of intended learning outcomes in particular, would help to enhance the student learning experience. A significant number of reports indicate that the intended learning outcomes detailed in programme specifications, student handbooks and assignments are not always consistent with each other. In general, the reviewers note the colleges' intentions to address this before the start of the next academic year. Some reports show variation in the effective use of subject benchmark statements, with some colleges considering them irrelevant to HN programmes, as the statements are set at honours degree level. In the best cases, colleges use them effectively as a valuable guide to the appropriate level of study and the material which students should master to progress to an honours degree in the same subject. In the best cases, the components of the Academic Infrastructure are used systematically to inform internal reviews and other quality assurance processes.

25 There is considerable evidence of engagement with the *Code of practice*. However, a minority of reports note concerns with regard to generous marking, undetected plagiarism and ineffective internal verification systems at the subject level. In such cases, college processes would benefit from further consideration of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. The reviewers could not always easily track responses to external examiner comments and formal examination or assessment boards are not widely employed unless colleges are in partnership with a validating higher education institution. In a small number of cases, colleges would benefit from greater engagement with the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining* to develop further good practice.

26 In 2005-07, the majority of reports indicate that appropriate account is being taken of all elements of the Academic Infrastructure. Colleges are engaging effectively with the FHEQ, and programme specifications are now firmly established in colleges. Subject benchmark statements are being used to inform the development of intended learning outcomes. Colleges have developed a more formal approach to the use of the *Code of practice*. In particular, the *Code of practice* is referred to in programme specifications and approval documentation, and colleges acknowledge its usefulness in the development of their assessment strategies. Colleges which had re-reviews have paid particular attention to improving assessment strategies since their previous review and have made effective use of the *Code of practice* in doing this. For programmes validated by Edexcel and without higher education institution partners, there remains less evidence of colleges' engagement with the *Code of practice*, *Section 4: External examining*, even though Edexcel has revised its quality assurance processes for higher education to be consistent with the Academic Infrastructure.

Good practice in the use of the Academic Infrastructure

- In general, colleges delivering Foundation Degrees have taken account of the defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees identified in the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* (paragraph 23).
- In the best cases, the components of the Academic Infrastructure, in particular subject benchmark statements, the FHEQ and the *Code of practice*, are used systematically to inform internal reviews and other quality assurance processes (paragraph 24).
- Effective practice exists where assessment policies ensure that rigorous assessment procedures reflect the expectations of the *Code of practice* (paragraph 25).

Curriculum design and development

Summary: curriculum design and development

Reports from across the whole cycle show that the curricula of most programmes are vocationally relevant, influenced by local circumstances and relevant to employers' needs. The currency of the curricula is enhanced by a range of part-time teaching staff actively practising in the sector. Colleges adopt a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning to facilitate the delivery of curricula, including live projects and direct contributions from practitioners. These provide appropriate opportunities for students to apply their theoretical learning to practical settings. Some reports note that the scholarly activities of staff have only had a limited impact on curricula design and content.

27 Reports from 2002-03 show that the content of the curricula of most programmes are influenced by local circumstances and are relevant to employers' needs. Reports note good vocational links within the programmes, with significant input from local industries [Gateshead College, SR35/2002]. A key strength of many

programmes is the opportunity for students to combine study for a higher education qualification with relevant employment, particularly through part-time HNCs, work-based projects or placements [Reading College and School of Arts and Design, SR129/2002, Basingstoke College of Technology, SR65/2002, North Tyneside College, SR066/2002].

28 In subjects such as engineering and computing, the currency of the curricula is enhanced by a range of part-time staff actively practising in industry [Gloucestershire College, SR111/2002]. Similarly, local employers are increasingly involved in the specification of intended learning outcomes, which enhances the currency and relevance of the provision, particularly where detailed consultation with local industrialists has occurred [Carlisle College, SR37/2002].

29 In other subjects, for example accountancy, law and social work, many programme intended learning outcomes have also been designed to comply with professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements [Havering College of Further and Higher Education, SR068/2002]. The matching of intended learning outcomes to professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements is a valuable feature which enables students to study for additional qualifications alongside the HNC/D, or degree, and gain simultaneous accreditation, or be eligible to enter a professional register on completion of their studies [Worcester College of Technology, SR072/2002].

30 Reports from 2003-05 show that the overwhelming majority of colleges set their strategic aims within their college mission, which generally makes reference to the development of multidisciplinary curricula to meet the needs of the local community [Barnsley College, SR24/2004]. Examples of good practice in colleges include the effective use of subject benchmark statements during the development of curricula to enable programme aims to be implemented. Other effective practice includes relating and adapting the intended learning outcomes to reflect and address local circumstances, such as local labour market requirements [Newcastle College, SR23/2004]. Reports indicate that only a few colleges have not made use of employers or external practitioners to develop or enhance their curricula [Accrington and Rossendale College, SR47/2004]. In such cases, reviewers note less evidence of currency in curriculum content [West Herts College, SR98/2004].

31 Colleges adopt a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning to facilitate the delivery of curricula. The best examples use live projects and direct contributions from practitioners, including part-time staff, which provide opportunities for students to apply their learning within a variety of vocationally relevant and practical contexts [Oldham College, SR21/2004].

32 Reports confirm that the design and content of Foundation Degree curricula encourage students' achievement of intended learning outcomes and, in the majority of cases, match the defining characteristics of a Foundation Degree [City College Manchester, SR141/2004]. In the best examples, the reviewers note that the design of Foundation Degrees is influenced by consultations between colleges, awarding partners and various employers. This enables colleges to fulfil their commitment to be responsive to local needs [Chesterfield College, SR02/2005]. The introduction of Foundation Degrees also allowed greater flexibility in curriculum development to

address vocational needs [Hull College, SR13/2004], and provide an opportunity for curricular innovation, at the same time as maintaining continuity of provision through successful HNs [Newcastle College, SR23/2004].

33 Reports produced during 2005-07 note that the vocational nature of college provision continues to feature strongly in college aims and often specifically refers to links to local or wider economies through a curriculum which addresses the recognised needs of employers [Dewsbury College, SR16/2006]. Curricula continue to be informed by current professional and occupational needs and practices and to be technically and vocationally challenging [Northbrook College, SR01/2005, Filton College, SR26/2005]. In most cases, curricula provide students with opportunities to relate theory and practice and to reflect critically on practice [Hull College, SR02/2006]. A small number of reports indicate a need for more employer and professional body contribution to enhance the professional relevance of the curricula. Reports note that the scholarly activities of staff have a limited impact on curricula design and content.

Good practice in curriculum development and enhancement

- Local employers are increasingly involved in the specification of intended learning outcomes, which enhances the currency and relevance of the provision (paragraph 28).
- Effective practice includes relating and adapting the intended learning outcomes to reflect and address local circumstances, such as local labour market requirements (paragraph 30).
- In most cases, curricula provide students with opportunities to relate theory and practice and to reflect critically on practice (paragraph 33).

Widening participation

Summary: widening participation

Widening participation in higher education has increasingly featured as a strength of college provision over the review period. The reviewers identify many examples of effective recruitment procedures which target specific groups, such as mature students, those from the local area and/or black or minority ethnic groups. The importance of providing higher education opportunities to the local population remains a key aim for colleges throughout the five-year period of reviews.

34 Widening participation has increasingly featured as a strength of college provision. In 2002-03 reviews, around 60 per cent of the programmes reviewed were at HNC or HND level and provided an entry point into higher education for a wide range of students. The reviewers identify many examples of effective recruitment procedures which target specific groups, such as mature students, those from the local area and/or black or minority ethnic groups. The importance of providing higher education opportunities to the local population remains a key aim for colleges across the five-year period of reviews.

35 Reports note a commitment to widening participation in the aims of a number of colleges, and the successful recruitment of a diverse student body. Good practice includes the use of diagnostic tests as part of the admissions policy and carefully structured procedures to recognise prior learning or experience [Havering College of Further and Higher Education, SR068/2002, Skelmersdale College, SR049/2002].

36 By 2004, most colleges had developed their student induction programmes to include special sessions to support students to determine their preferred learning styles and offer targeted support for their needs. Successful induction procedures help students to understand the requirements of studying at higher education level and support them in the early days of their programmes [North East Surrey College of Technology, SR135/2004, West Nottinghamshire College, SR120/2004].

37 Support provided for students, both formal and informal advice and guidance and additional tutorial support, underpins the widening participation strategies of many colleges. The majority of reports comment on the high level of academic support provided for students. A small number of reports comment specifically on how the success of the support and teaching that colleges provide for their higher education students can be linked directly to the high levels of achievement for students who enter a programme with modest qualifications [Sparsholt College, SR49/2004].

38 Many reports from 2005-07 highlight admissions procedures as a significant strength. They successfully relate to the widening participation aims of colleges. In these cases, strengths are linked to the effectiveness of student support for all students, indicating how colleges have enhanced their support mechanisms to meet the needs of a diverse student profile.

Good practice in widening participation

- Effective recruitment procedures target specific groups, such as mature students, those from the local area and/or ethnic minorities (paragraph 34).
- Diagnostic tests are used as part of the admissions policy as well as carefully structured procedures to recognise prior learning or experience (paragraph 35).
- Sessions are designed to support students to help to determine their preferred learning styles and offer targeted support for their needs (paragraph 36).

Work-based learning and employer engagement

Summary: work-based learning and employer engagement

Work-based learning and employer engagement has substantially increased through the review period. The introduction of Foundation Degrees has made a significant contribution to the development of work-based learning in higher education programmes in colleges. The *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* has also helped colleges to successfully design and implement these qualifications. Many colleges have established effective partnerships with local employers who may be involved in curriculum design and content and may provide work-based or placement opportunities for both learning and assessment. Key strengths of college higher education provision include the use of students' employment and/or other work experience to enrich the learning process and to encourage students to exchange ideas and knowledge gained from their insights into work. There remains a challenge for colleges to sustain employer involvement in the programmes.

39 During the first phase of reviews in 2002-03, the overall aims of colleges' higher education provision often included specific reference to practical placements for students that promote the integration of theory with practice, develop competence at work, and provide opportunities for employment. Reports generally indicate that programmes have successfully met the aim of preparing students for relevant employment, and that there is clear support for the employment relevance of programmes from present and former students, employers and practitioners [Stockport College of Further and Higher Education, SR088/2002, Suffolk College, SR132/2002]. Reports also cite as a strength the successful implementation of Colleges' aims to develop partnerships, with key local organisations with a view to enabling graduates to make an immediate contribution to employment [Barking College, SR100/2002].

40 Reports indicate variation in the effectiveness of colleges' relationships with local employers and in the impact such relationships have on student learning. In the best examples, relationships are noted as being close, while others provide scope for improved reflection on current practice and participation in order to enliven teaching. Work placements are noted as providing significant learning opportunities for most full-time students [Reading College and School of Arts and Design, SR216/2002, South Tyneside College, SR205/2002, Staffordshire University Regional Federation, SR102/2002].

41 The use of students' employment experience to enrich the learning process and the use of the work experience of students to encourage an exchange of ideas continue to be noted as strengths of the provision during 2003-05 [West Nottinghamshire College, SR120/2004, North East Surrey College of Technology, SR31/2004]. Good practice is evident in the continued use of work-based units to reinforce the vocational nature of programmes and prepare students for future employment [Guildford College of Further and Higher Education, SR133/2004]. This is further enhanced by the good quality on-site placements in several colleges and the provision of wide-ranging opportunities for work-related experience through close

contacts with employers, in others [City of Bath College, SR148/2004, City College Manchester, SR141/2004].

42 A small number of reports, mainly from reviews conducted early in the cycle, indicate that at this stage work placements were not yet a requirement in some Foundation Degrees, work-based learning was incorporated into all programmes. Reports indicate that students commented very favourably on the value of workplace experience in enhancing the quality of their learning, and employers emphasised the significant impact of such learning on all programmes [Farnborough College of Technology, SR112/2004]. A few Foundation Degrees, developed before the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* was published, did not include the full requirement for an assessed work placement as set out in the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. This limited the ability of students to fully relate their theoretical study to their practical experience in the workplace.

43 In Foundation Degrees, curricula are based on a balance of academic, personal and professional development and work-based learning, often including a mix of work-based and work-related activity, in line with the defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees [Dewsbury College, SR16/2006]. Colleges also employ simulated or live briefs to help to ensure that students have the necessary vocational skills to achieve their learning outcomes [Yorkshire Coast College, SR131/2004]. In such cases, good practice is identified where an imaginative and analytical approach to the delivery of students' learning is used, supported by a careful monitoring and evaluation of the variety of students' learning experiences [Newcastle College, SR23/2004]. To strengthen the link with employability within teaching and learning, one college expects that all Foundation Degree tutors have current and relevant industry experience [Gateshead College, SR16/2005].

44 Reports from 2005-07 show that, in completing practical projects, students are increasingly encouraged to make effective use of their workplace, work experience or work placements. Where practical work and work experience form part of the students' learning experience, assignment briefs emphasise the linking of theory and practice, encourage students to make use of live projects and scenarios from their place of work or attachment and, where relevant, make links to professional requirements [North East Surrey College of Technology, SR17/2005]. Assignment tasks employ realistic scenarios drawn from work-based projects to allow students to apply their skills within their professional roles [Bradford College, SR14/2005]. Many reports refer to the contribution that staff with industrial or professional experience make to supporting students in their work-related projects [North East Surrey College of Technology, SR31/2005, Mid-Cheshire College, SR38/2005, Blackpool and The Fylde College, SR40/2006]. Colleges and employers work closely together to ensure that students make full use of their work experiences in their learning [Newbury College, Engineering, SR05/2006].

Good practice in work-based learning and employer engagement

- The use of students' employment experience to enrich the learning process and the use of the work experience of students to encourage an exchange of ideas is a continuing strength (paragraph 41).

- Good practice is evident in the continued use of work experience units to reinforce the vocational nature of programmes and prepare students for employment (paragraph 41).
- An imaginative and analytical approach to teaching, supported by a careful monitoring and evaluation of the variety of students' learning experiences (paragraph 43).
- Assignment briefs emphasise the linking of theory and practice where practical work and work experience form part of the learning experience (paragraph 44).
- Assignment tasks employ realistic scenarios drawn from work-based projects to allow students to apply their skills within their professional roles (paragraph 44).
- Colleges and employers work closely together to ensure that students make full use of their work experiences in their learning (paragraph 44).

Student assessment

Summary: Student assessment

While there is much good practice to be seen in many reports in the area of assessment, there has also been scope for considerable further development, evidenced across the whole review cycle. Assessment of student work based on a strategy that ensures a close link between intended learning outcomes and assessment methods is noted as good practice. However, the further development of clear assessment policies and procedures to ensure reliability and integrity of the assessment process would assist colleges in maintaining and enhancing the standards and quality of their higher education provision. In general, there is an effective use of formative assessment across all subjects. The provision of oral feedback to supplement written feedback is a feature of good practice in most colleges. However, a number of reports note that feedback on student work was variable in terms of quality and quantity across different modules and/or programmes.

45 Reports from 2002-03 indicate many strengths in student assessment, including coherent assessment strategies which closely link intended learning outcomes to assessment methods, and detailed written feedback to help students improve [Suffolk College, SR132/2002, Barnsley College, SR127/2002, Henley College, Coventry, SR126/2002]. Reports indicate that the majority of colleges maintain clear records of internal verification and moderation of marked assignments, and explicit policies for plagiarism, late submission and referral of students' work [Bolton Community College, SR107/2002]. In most colleges, external verifiers or external examiners are satisfied that student achievement meets the expectations for the awards subject to review [Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology, SR062/2002]. Examples of good assessment practice also occur in colleges where students are fully aware of the grading criteria, where these form part of each assignment sheet, where satisfaction with the formative feedback they receive is high and where work is handed back by tutors in person, on time, and with verbal comments [Reading College and School of Arts and Design, SR114/2002].

46 Reports note the effective use of formative assessment across all subjects. Small student groups, typical of higher education in colleges, help to facilitate the timely return of marked and graded work, and the comprehensive feedback provided to students on assessments makes a substantial contribution to learning [Stroud College of Further Education, SR185/2002]. The provision of oral feedback to supplement written feedback is a feature of good practice in most colleges. Students commend the high level of formative oral feedback on assessment as this enhances their learning experience [Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology, SR062/2002]. Colleges with well-designed and documented assessment procedures and with assessments securely linked to intended learning outcomes are mostly providing students with clear written feedback [New College, Durham, SR091/2002].

47 The reviewers note a number of areas for further development in assessment practice. These could be addressed by colleges paying further attention to all aspects of the assessment process and sharing good practice identified internally and in other colleges. For example, some reports note the absence of a clear statement of assessment strategy and the need for closer management of the assessment process. A common problem in many colleges is the lack of clear information on assessment criteria and marking schemes which lead to inconsistency of practice across programmes. Some reports note that more systematic internal verification would be of benefit.

48 A small number of reports note that colleges could adopt a more consistent approach in providing feedback to students, and that where procedures on the provision of feedback exist, these should be systematically followed across all higher education programmes. A limited number of reports note that a better balance between formal and informal feedback to students would enable students to apply early feedback to subsequent assignments.

49 Reports from 2003-05 note many examples where strategies for, and execution of, assessment at all levels are robust and fair [Accrington and Rossendale College, SR47/2004]. There are many examples of clear links between intended learning outcomes and the assessment strategies [Doncaster College, SR103/2004]. Generally, internal verification systems continue to be reported as being robust and effective, and external verifiers and examiners continue to express satisfaction with the vast majority of standards achieved [City College Coventry, SR106/2004, Salisbury College, SR115/2004].

50 Reports note that the most successful programmes ensure an effective link between theory and practice at all levels and that, typically, this occurs where the students' acquisition of skills is reinforced through feedback mechanisms and tested through the assessment process. Formative assessment is used to good effect by many colleges, with nearly all students receiving timely, supportive feedback to assist the development of their learning [City of Westminster College, SR 75/2004]. In the best cases, prompt feedback is directed at the students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes and an indication given of how the work could be improved, including for those receiving high grades. In some instances, there continues to be scope for more timely return of marked work and more detailed feedback to ensure that students are kept well informed of their progress.

51 The reviewers note that the further development of clear assessment policies and procedures to ensure reliability and integrity of the assessment process would assist colleges in maintaining and enhancing the standards and quality of their higher education programmes. Greater use of *Section 6* of the *Code of practice* to inform assessment strategies and practice would also support enhancement of the provision. In a few cases, reports note that draft assessment strategies need to be developed and implemented as a matter of priority, while other reports comment that assessment strategies need to be more clearly linked to intended learning outcomes and grading. The lack of transparency and robustness in the assessment process attributed to colleges without an assessment strategy led the reviewers to question the integrity and security of the assessment process. Similarly, the implementation of an effective internal verification process continues to be reported as being problematic for a small number of colleges.

52 Responses to external examiners' comments were not always easily tracked, and formal and effective consideration of students' attainments, for example, through examination or assessment boards were not widely employed unless colleges were in partnership with a validating higher education institution. In a small number of cases, colleges would benefit from greater engagement with *Section 4* of the *Code of practice* to develop good practice.

53 The most successful colleges reviewed during 2005-07 are characterised as formally engaging with *Section 6* of the *Code of practice* to develop and enhance their assessment strategies to provide programmes with clear frameworks for managing assessment processes [Bromley College, SR12/2006]. Such frameworks include procedures for internal verification and moderation, the provision of detailed, standardised feedback to students, and robust external examining procedures and assessment boards [Hull College, SR02/2006, Suffolk College, SR41/2005, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, SR32/2005]. Good assessment practice ensures that assessment criteria are set at the appropriate level and clearly linked to learning outcomes, and that assessment methods are sufficiently varied, contextualised and challenging, and are clearly designed to measure the students' achievement of intended learning outcomes [Northbrook College, Sussex, SR01/2005, Bradford College, SR14/2005].

54 Many reports confirm that written feedback on student work is usually extensive and supports students in improving and enhancing their learning [Accrington and Rossendale College, SR23/2006]. Students benefit most where feedback makes careful reference to learning outcomes and assessment criteria. In colleges which do not use a standardised feedback form or use different types of form, feedback tends to be less consistent and there is an over-reliance on oral or informal feedback. In a few cases, written feedback is too brief to provide sufficient detail to inform students how to improve their work, or is focused on practical skills at the expense of more analytical and cognitive development.

55 In noting scope for further development, the reviewers specifically mention the need for some colleges to continue to develop assessment strategies which include greater engagement with the *Code of practice*, *Sections 4* and *6*. An over-reliance on coursework is also noted and the reviewers conclude that this could disadvantage

students progressing to other higher education programmes which make greater use of examinations. Closely connected to this is a need for colleges to ensure that grading and assessment criteria are clearly linked to module content and the type of assessment. Reports continue to note a need for some colleges to establish and implement more formal recording systems for the internal verification process to ensure the integrity of student assessment. Colleges are also encouraged to make greater use of standardised feedback forms to ensure consistency of written feedback on student assignments.

56 Examples of areas for further development also include written work that indicates that students are not accessing a sufficiently wide range of academic materials; over-complex assignment briefs that do not adequately reference the module learning outcomes, assessment and grading criteria; over-assessment that results in the award of fewer higher grades than the standard of the student work warrants, and poor timing in the distribution of assignment briefs which has an adverse effect on students' ability to spread their workload. Where matching of assessment criteria with learning outcomes is not evident, it is not clear how the achievement of the more able students is measured.

Good practice in student assessment

- Students are fully aware of the grading criteria and these are included in each assignment sheet; satisfaction with the formative feedback they receive is high where work is handed back by tutors in person, on time, and with verbal comments (paragraph 45).
- An effective link between theory and practice at all levels occurs where the students' acquisition of skills is reinforced through feedback mechanisms and tested through the assessment process (paragraph 50).
- Prompt feedback is directed at the students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes and an indication given of how the work could be improved, including for those receiving high grades (paragraph 50).
- Formal engagement with *Sections 4 and 6 of the Code of practice* to develop and enhance colleges' assessment strategies provide programmes with clear frameworks for managing assessment processes (paragraph 55).

Development and achievement of higher-level skills

Summary: development and achievement of higher-level skills

In early reports, the reviewers note scope for colleges to place further emphasis on the achievement of the higher level skills of analysis and criticism, as set out in the FHEQ, when developing intended learning outcomes. Mid-cycle reports identify a lack of differentiation of aims between programmes and outcomes as a matter of concern and the majority of reports note scope for further development of students' critical and analytical skills, such as the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate. The most recent reports note that higher skills are not explicitly identified in the aims of most programmes, but curricula design and content generally encourage students' achievement of intended learning outcomes and the acquisition of such skills.

57 Higher level skills are those which go beyond acquiring basic knowledge and understanding and being able to apply that understanding to straightforward situations. They include analysis and synthesis of a range of knowledge, which may be acquired by using research skills; critical reflection on different and potentially conflicting sources of knowledge; problem-solving by identifying a range of possible solutions, evaluating these and choosing the solution most appropriate to the situation; developing complex arguments, reaching sound judgements and communicating these effectively. The FHEQ describes the higher-level skills that students should be able to achieve and demonstrate at each qualification level.

58 The majority of reports from 2002-03 show that the use of project modules, particularly projects undertaken by HN students based on work-based assignments, help to promote independent learning and basic research skills. In many cases, HN programmes are recognised as offering students a commendable range of progression opportunities which are valued by both students and employers [Staffordshire University Regional Federation, SR102/2002, Reading College and School of Arts and Design, SR129/2002].

59 In a few reports, the reviewers note scope for colleges to place further emphasis on the achievement of the higher level skills of analysis and criticism, as set out in the FHEQ, when developing intended learning outcomes for programmes leading to an HN award. This would help to ensure that students are better prepared for progression to honours degree level studies. Although most HN programmes are generally strong on practical knowledge and subject-specific and transferable skills, intended learning outcomes for subject knowledge and skills are noted as being developed often at the expense of intellectual skills such as critical analysis and reflection.

60 In 2003-05, reports record relatively few references to higher level skills being included in programme aims, but where these are included, it is noted that programmes meet such aims by offering progression to a range of further studies [Barnsley College, SR109/2004]. A lack of differentiation of aims between HNC and HND programmes and between H1 and H2 levels is identified as a matter of concern in some programmes. The reviewers conclude that where the aims of related HNC and HND programmes are not sufficiently differentiated, the provision does not appear to offer HND students sufficient depth and challenge.

61 Many students have been accepted on to higher education programmes under widening access policies, with entry qualifications other than GCE AS and A Levels. Colleges place considerable emphasis on further developing and enhancing students' study skills to help them with the transition to higher-level study and the increased demands of higher education. The small size of many classes enables teachers to pay attention to each student's development. This, along with staff offering learning support outside timetabled teaching hours, helps to ensure that the development and enhancement of students' study skills is generally effective. A theme running through the reports from this period is the limited development of students' subject knowledge and skills in applying independent critical judgement.

62 In the majority of cases, there is scope for further development of students' critical and analytical skills, such as the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate.

Final year projects are seen as particularly valuable in developing these skills [South Thames College, SR122/2004]. In a few cases, programmes do not facilitate appropriate development of skills of reflection or prepare students sufficiently for further higher education study. In others, teaching, learning and assessment methods do not prepare students adequately to progress from HN to degree programmes. In such cases, students would benefit from being encouraged to research from a wider and more varied base; have greater familiarity with conventions for the inclusion of academic sources; and ensure the proper use of quotations and referencing. A few reports indicate that by widening the range of optional units available on HN programmes, colleges might better meet the needs of employed students wishing to develop the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills to prepare them for further study.

63 A defining characteristic of Foundation Degrees is that they provide progression opportunities to honours level programmes. Most Foundation Degrees have been appropriately designed to enable students to achieve this aim [Dewsbury College, SR16/2006]. However, in common with other provision reviewed, reports note that students' critical analysis and reflective ability are not uniformly demonstrated across all Foundation Degree programmes. To address this concern, several colleges include core modules within Foundation Degree curricula which include the development of research skills. Other colleges have set a minimum level of student performance which must be achieved to enable students to progress to an honours degree. Some higher education institutions assist students in proceeding to further study through the provision of short bridging programmes which reinforce higher level study skills [Newcastle College, SR23/2004].

64 Reports from 2005-07 show that college aims often include specific reference to providing mature students and/or students in full-time employment with the opportunity to study a higher education programme [Stockport College of Further and Higher Education, SR29/2005]. However, aims covering the development of higher-level skills continue to be a feature of only a small number of the programmes reviewed. Exceptions include aims which set out to strengthen students' ability to learn and be self-reliant and self-motivated in order to have the confidence for independent learning and study [Kensington and Chelsea College, SR10/2006]. While higher skills are not explicitly identified in the aims of most programmes, curricula design and content generally encourage students' achievement of intended learning outcomes through the acquisition of higher level skills. Project work continues to be used by many colleges to develop individual and group skills. The best examples of challenging project work are effective in enabling students to work independently and to develop report-writing skills and work-based research skills [Newbury College, SR05/2006].

65 A few reports from this period indicate that the development of analytical thinking, research and critical evaluation skills continues to present a challenge to some staff and students. Some reports identify difficulties in assessment design which resulted in HN students wishing to progress to study at a higher level being hindered by the lack of formal, properly referenced academic work. As in earlier reports, the reviewers consider that an over-reliance on coursework could disadvantage students progressing to other higher education programmes which use mainly examinations.

Also that assessment that places too much emphasis on the development of the students' technical ability often does so at the expense of their knowledge, analytical and cognitive skills.

Good practice

- Use of project modules, particularly projects undertaken by HN students focused on work-based assignments, helps to promote independent learning and development of higher level skills (paragraph 58, 62, 64).
- Colleges place considerable emphasis on further developing and enhancing students' study skills to help them with the transition to higher-level study and the increased demands of higher education (paragraph 61).
- Several colleges include core modules within Foundation Degree curricula which include the development of research skills (paragraph 63).

Student progression to further study or employment

Summary: Student progression to further study or employment

Student progression to further study has improved over the review period. There are increasing opportunities for progression within colleges, including progression from Foundation Degrees to the final year of a designated honours degree, delivered either at the college or at a partner or other nearby higher education institution. Comments on progression to employment are more prevalent in later reports. Colleges' close links and good liaison with employers are seen as key to helping students obtain subject-related employment. The extent to which students are prepared for future work through their programme of study is also frequently endorsed by employers, who comment favourably on students' academic abilities as well as their vocational or practical skills.

66 Student progression to further study has improved over the five years of Academic review. In 2002-03, progression to higher education is seen as a strength in several colleges, with a variety of progression opportunities provided for full and part-time students specifically praised in a few reports [Gloucestershire College SR111/2002, Reading College and School of Arts and Design, SR129/2002]. Opportunities include progression to a different programme, such as a top-up honours degree, within the same college, or to degree programmes locally or elsewhere in the UK [Newham College of Further Education, SR109/2002, West Hertfordshire College, SR064/2002]. A small amount of good practice is cited in relation to partnership arrangements with higher education institutions that promote progression to further study [Staffordshire University Regional Federation, SR102/2002]. In a few cases in early reports, there is only anecdotal evidence of progression to further study, as some colleges do not have complete and reliable first-destination statistics.

67 A few reports identify strengths in relation to employment and employability, and progression to employment [Stockport College of Further and Higher Education,

SR088/2002, Newham College of Further Education, SR109/2002, Oakland College, SR141/2002, Henley College, Coventry, SR126/2002]. In early reviews, the majority of programmes were in vocational subject areas, such as computing and engineering, with around 60 per cent of the programmes reviewed being for part-time students. Most of these programmes were HNCs involving students already in employment. Informal information obtained from students who had completed their studies suggests that success in their programmes contributes to promotion opportunities at work [Somerset College of Arts and Technology, SR169/2002, South Tyneside College, SR165/2002].

68 In reports from 2003-05, the reviewers note the increasing opportunities for progression to further study within colleges, specifically mentioning the progression route of the recently-introduced Foundation Degrees to the final year of a designated honours degree programme [St Helens College, SR119/2004]. Partnerships between the college and a higher education institution provide further opportunities for progression, which may be informal or specifically designated pathways [West Kent College, SR89/2004]. There are only a few instances where student progression is highlighted as a problem. The reviewers conclude that in a few cases, programmes could prepare students better for further study or make them more aware of the benefits and value of pursuing a degree programme.

69 Comments on progression to employment are more prevalent in later reports, with the majority of strengths found in reviews from 2004 onwards. Reports refer to successful progression into employment in areas such as the theatre and music industries [Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education, Birmingham, SR19/2004]. On a number of occasions, close links and good liaison with employers are seen as key to helping students obtain subject-related employment [Grimsby College, SR01/2004].

70 Reference is frequently made to the skills and knowledge that students have gained which prepare them well for employment [Suffolk College, SR41 2005; Stratford-upon-Avon College, SR07/2006]. The extent to which students are prepared for employment through their programme of study is also frequently confirmed by employers, who comment favourably on academic abilities as well as vocational or practical skills [Cleveland College of Art and Design, SR18/2005]. Incomplete information on first destinations is mentioned in some cases, which means that colleges cannot monitor progression to employment effectively [Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, SR003/2004].

71 Most reports from 2005-07 mention the high levels of progression to degree programmes, although this is cited less frequently as a specific strength than in earlier years. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in student progression in reports over the five years shows a decline in the number of strengths from 2002 to 2007. This shows that colleges have generally strengthened their routes to degree programmes and students have enhanced their achievement, so that progression to further study is seen by the reviewers as the norm, rather than a strength to be highlighted. A few weaknesses are identified, including inconsistent, incomplete or unclear progression data, or of colleges not maximising the progression routes to a partner higher education institution.

72 Career progression and promotion continue to be positive features [Southwark College, SR18/2006]. Employers comment favourably on how students' workplace capabilities have been enhanced [City of Bath College, SR05/2005]. In the best cases, these capabilities have been enhanced through external visits, placements and interaction with guest speakers or professional body representatives. Practical sessions are cited as providing skills that can be taken back into the workplace. One report sums up the benefits for both students and employers which feature in a number of reviews, with most part-time students returning to their existing employers with significantly enhanced skills, knowledge and wider experience of higher education [North East Surrey College of Technology, SR17/2005].

Good practice in progression to further study or employment

- A variety of progression opportunities exist, including opportunities to progress to a different programme, such as a top-up degree, within the same college, or to degree programmes locally or elsewhere in the UK (paragraph 66).
- Partnership arrangements with higher education institutions exist that promote progression to further study, which may be informal or fully articulated pathways (paragraph 66, 68).
- Close links and good liaison with employers are seen as key to helping students obtain subject-related employment (paragraph 69).
- Students' work capabilities have been enhanced through external visits, placements and interaction with guest speakers or professional body representatives (paragraph 72).
- Practical sessions are cited as providing skills that can be taken back into the workplace (paragraph 72).

Staff development

Summary: staff development

Reports from across the cycle show that colleges continually make efforts to provide development opportunities for higher education staff. They are supported by partner higher education institutions who offer access to their own staff development courses to relevant college staff. However, while opportunities are made available, they frequently focus on teaching skills rather than subject-updating and within the college are aimed at all staff, and are not higher education specific. Areas identified for development include the limited time available for staff to undertake higher education-related development activities because of high teaching workloads, particularly where staff teach both further education and higher education programmes, and on the need for staff to pursue activities that maintain the currency of their subject knowledge and skills.

73 Positive features in 2002-03 are mainly centred on the availability of staff development opportunities, rather than the actual take-up among staff [St Helens College, SR030/2002, North Tyneside College, SR128/2002]. Such opportunities

cover both teaching skills and subject-specific updating. Training is usually provided for those who have no teaching qualification or experience [Croydon College, SR125/2002, Lincoln College, SR096/2002]. A few reports cite staff upgrading their qualifications, for example by studying for postgraduate and/or research degrees in their subject area [Skelmersdale and Ormskirk College, SR049/2002, Bedford College, SR119/2002]. Areas for further consideration include the limited time available for staff to undertake development activities because of their high teaching workloads, and the need for staff to pursue activities that update their subject knowledge and skills. These problems are highlighted in around 10 per cent of reports.

74 In the 2003-05 reviews, there is greater emphasis on staff take-up of relevant development activities, while still acknowledging the range of opportunities available [City College Coventry, SR079/2004, City College Manchester, SR141/2004]. The majority of strengths relate to effective teaching observation schemes and staff development which supports teaching and learning [South Downs College, SR125/2004, Accrington and Rossendale College, SR146/2004]. There are few instances of strengths relating to subject or professional updating [Hertford Regional College, SR026/2004].

75 Areas for further consideration identified in reports refer to the limited focus on higher education staff development activities offered and undertaken. Where staff development opportunities are being provided, they are often more relevant to further education-level teaching and learning. The need for staff development to relate more specifically to maintaining scholarly and/or industrial and professional currency is highlighted in a number of reports.

76 By 2005-07, strengths include effective teaching observation schemes, dedicated staff time for scholarly activity, and effective staff development sessions that include teaching skills and subject or professional updating [West Thames College, SR020/2005, Southwark College, SR018/2006, City of Wolverhampton College, SR011/2006]. Most colleges have implemented peer review of teaching, which is frequently linked to staff appraisal. Practice is most effective where the emphasis of peer review is on enhancing teaching practice [West Thames College, SR20/2005]. Further good practice is identified in colleges which have taken steps to make reductions in teaching loads for higher education staff so that they can undertake appropriate staff development [North East Surrey College of Technology, SR31/2005].

Good practice

- Staff development sessions that include teaching skills and subject or professional updating are positive features (paragraph 73).
- Strengths include teaching observation schemes, dedicated staff time for scholarly activity, and effective staff development sessions (paragraph 76).
- The emphasis of peer review on enhancing teaching practice highlights good practice (paragraph 76).
- Colleges have taken steps to reduce teaching loads so that higher education staff can undertake appropriate staff development (paragraph 76).

Development of learning resources

Summary: Development of learning resources

There is clear evidence of development in the provision of learning resources over the review period. Improvements are particularly noticeable during 2003-05, where strengths feature strongly across the whole range of learning resources provided. Teaching accommodation and industry-standard equipment are often seen as strengths of colleges' higher education provision. Areas for further development generally include limited book or journal stock and limited access to library facilities, computing and specialist equipment, particularly for part-time students.

Specialist equipment

77 In 2002-03 reviews, specialist equipment was noted as a strength in very few reviews, most of which were in computing and engineering. Good examples identified modern and/or industry-standard equipment [Blackpool and The Fylde College, SR215/2002, North Lindsey College, SR208/2002]. In some cases, specialist equipment is considered good, whilst in others it is reported to be adequate to support the programmes [Walsall College of Arts and Technology, SR56/2002]. Areas for development focus on the lack of up-to-date equipment, and in some cases, the lack of a strategy to ensure that equipment is maintained and updated. A number of colleges had gained Centre of Vocational Excellence status for their further education provision and higher education students are sometimes able to benefit from the specialist facilities resulting from this.

78 Reports from 2003-05 show a greater number of strengths. Good workshop facilities, industry standard graphic design hardware and media facilities are mentioned as well as recognition of recent investment, for example in photographic equipment and studio facilities [City of Bristol College, SR148/2004, Stourbridge College, SR105/2004, St Helens College, SR119/2004]. The most prevalent areas for development relate to a limited availability of specialist equipment or accommodation.

79 In 2005-07, many strengths were noted in performing and fine arts subjects, particularly with regard to digital music facilities, industry-standard studio facilities and professional standard theatre space. Most reports comment that the equipment available is fit for purpose [Mid-Cheshire College, SR38/2005, Doncaster College, SR34/2005, Filton College, SR26/2006].

Information and communication technology

80 In the earliest reviews, only a few reports comment positively on the availability of computers and up-to-date software, even though most reviews were in computing and engineering. Examples of good practice identified include provision of industry standard software and effective technical support. In one case, the communications technology development strategy was cited as a strength, while another referred to the college's considerable investment in impressive information and communication technology (ICT) facilities [Blackburn College SR207/2002, Newham College of Further Education, SR109/2002]. Provision of general ICT facilities was identified as a strength in other subjects [North East Worcestershire College, SR039/2002, South Tyneside College, SR97/2002]. Areas for development included dated computers with incompatible software and limited access to workstations.

81 The use of virtual learning environments was emerging in 2002-03 and colleges were exploring their potential for promoting independent learning among students. The extent of their use often depended on the enthusiasm and aptitude of a member of staff to take the use of virtual learning environments beyond simply using them as a repository for lecture notes. However, in a small number of reviews, the use of the virtual learning environment in supporting the teaching of systems analysis in the computing programme was recognised as a strength [Walsall College of Arts and Technology, SR56/2002].

82 Reports from 2003-05 reviews indicate that improvements have been made in ICT. There are examples of effective use of online resources to support programmes, together with substantial investment to update general and specialist ICT hardware and software [City College Birmingham, SR149/2004, City College Manchester, SR141/2004, Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, SR03/2004]. Reports note availability of extensive ICT facilities, while recognising that access to ICT facilities continues to be a challenge in some cases.

83 Reports from 2005-07 indicate that colleges are nearly all providing adequate or better ICT facilities for their students. Issues regarding access to ICT and the need to update equipment remain in a small number of reports [East Riding College, SR13/2006, Southwark College, SR18/2006]. Virtual learning environments are more often noted as an area for development where the virtual learning environment is not contributing significantly to students' learning or it is underused by both staff and students.

Books and journals

84 In 2002-03 reviews, a number of reports cite book stocks as a strength. Arrangements with partner higher education institutions provide additional facilities for students [North Hertfordshire College, SR116/2002, Staffordshire University Regional Federation, SR102/2002]. Such arrangements vary from reading rights only to full borrowing rights. Journal holdings are less satisfactory, but good availability of journals, including access to online journals, feature in a few reports [Suffolk College, SR132/2002, Croydon College, SR125/2002]. A significant proportion of reports comment on the need for colleges to update and review their book stock in order to support higher education provision. Several colleges reviewed did not have

up-to-date books, insufficient numbers of core texts or limited access to appropriate academic journals.

85 Reports from 2003-05 acknowledge improvement in some areas, although strengths in library provision are often expressed only in terms of the book stock being adequate to support the programmes under review. Positive comments relate to expanded book stocks, multiple copies of key texts, a wide range of journals and an ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving library provision to support higher education programmes [Bradford College, SR39/2004, Sparsholt College, SR49/2004]. In one report, reviewers note that book and journal holdings are not ideal but acknowledge that the college's acquisitions policy and its agreement with a higher education institution were helping to improve the situation. Reviewers note that the updating of books remains an issue in several colleges, and that part-time students continue to have difficulty in accessing books and journals to support their studies.

86 Between 2005 and 2007, reports note fewer areas of weakness than in previous years, but there are also fewer strengths cited [Oxford and Cherwell College, SR15/2005, Leeds College of Art and Design, SR12/2005]. The areas for development highlighted in previous years remain in a significant number of reports: the low number of core texts, non-current books and limited access to appropriate journals for the level of study.

Learning resource centres

87 In 2002-03, several reports specifically mention dedicated higher education resources as a strength and comment on how the facilities provided are particularly conducive to student learning [The Solihull College, SR20/2002, Blackburn College, SR172/2002]. The learning resource centres are on occasion considered to be excellent, with flexible access and the support afforded to students by learning resource centre staff singled out for special mention [Stephenson College, SR77/2002, Lakes College, West Cumbria, SR85/2002, Accrington and Rossendale College, SR104/2002, Havering College of Further and Higher Education, SR68/2002]. Issues in these early reports focus on limited opening hours and accessibility, particularly for part-time.

88 A number of learning centres are praised in the 2003-05 reports. Not only are the resources provided considered a positive feature, but also the layout of the centre, including a dedicated space for higher education students; the flexibility of the space for study; the welcoming environment that is conducive to study and the effective management of the resources are commented on favourably [Barnsley College, SR109/2004, West Herts College, SR98/2004, Guildford College of Further and Higher Education, SR76/2004]. Opening hours remain a problem for part-time students. Limited quiet study space to encourage research at higher education level and less than effective liaison between subject and learning resource centre staff are also noted.

89 Reports from 2005-07 identify as strengths extensive opening hours in well-equipped learning centres which promote independent learning [City of Wolverhampton College, SR11/2006, Stockport College, SR29/2005, North East Surrey College of Technology, SR31/2005]. Areas for development include managing high noise levels and the lack of an appropriate ambience to foster study at higher education level.

Good practice

- The provision of industry standard software and effective technical support identifies good practice (paragraph 80).
- Virtual learning environments to actively support teaching and learning are used, in addition to providing a repository for lecture notes (paragraph 81).
- Online resources are used effectively to support programmes (paragraph 81).
- Flexible access to learning centres with good support afforded to students by learning resource centre staff is noted (paragraph 87).
- Well-equipped learning centres promote independent learning (paragraph 88).

Improvements in quality assurance processes

Summary: Improvements in quality assurance processes

Overall, reviewers found quality assurance and enhancement systems to be strong and effective across the review cycle. Typically, a high level of staff commitment to quality processes is linked to strategies for staff development in the colleges. In the best examples, students and employers are involved in the maintenance and enhancement of quality and in such cases reviewers note effective mechanisms for student representation; for acquiring and considering students' and employers' views, and responding to them. Reviewers also note scope for more systematic and evaluative annual review of higher education programmes and more effective monitoring and recording of action planned and taken. There is evidence of over-reliance on informal processes, leading to a shortage of appropriate documentation to record changes in provision; also problems in accessing quality assurance related information, and little involvement of employers. Reviewers indicated that colleges would benefit from closer attention to the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*.

90 The great majority of the colleges reviewed during 2002-03 have well-managed, robust and effective quality assurance systems in place [Sandwell College, SR036/2002]. Reviewers note that in many colleges, higher education quality processes have been developed from longstanding further education practice [Carlisle College, SR037/2002]. A high level of staff commitment to quality processes is linked to strong and effective strategies for staff development in the colleges, particularly where staff are able to take advantage of such opportunities [Dudley College of Technology, SR084/2002, Wirral Metropolitan College, SR095/2002]. Students and employers are fully involved in the maintenance and enhancement of quality in a number of colleges, and, in such cases, reviewers note effective mechanisms for student representation, for acquiring and considering students' and employers' views and responding to them [Staffordshire University Regional Federation, SR102/2002].

91 A few reports identify the need for further development of the application of quality assurance processes at the programme level. The reviewers also note scope for more systematic and evaluative annual reviews of programmes and more effective

monitoring and recording of action planned and taken. The reviewers also found instances where agreed college procedures have not been applied in the subject reviewed, or where the processes of quality assurance are unclear and where the quality of the programmes has not been consistently managed. The causes of these problems include an over-reliance on informal processes, leading to a shortage of appropriate documentation recording changes in provision, difficulties accessing information and little involvement of employers. Overall, the reviewers indicated that colleges would benefit from closer attention to the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*.

92 The reviewers identified the effectiveness of internal and external examining and verifying as a strength and an area for further development in equal numbers of reports. Examples of good practice show close and productive working relationships with external examiners whose reports include evaluative commentary [Bradford College, SR076/2002]. At its best, internal verification is consistently monitored or evaluated, ensuring its value in maintaining and enhancing standards [Peterborough Regional College, SR130/2002]. Many colleges have productive relationships with partner higher education institutions which contribute significantly to assuring the quality of programmes and, where appropriate, to maintaining the standard of the awards.

93 The 2003-05 reports note that colleges' quality assurance procedures are, in most cases, well established and robust. Some colleges continue to develop policies and procedures for the maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality specific to their higher education programmes [Calderdale College, SR45/2004]. In the best cases, the policies and procedures apply not just to quality assurance arrangements, but also to the development of higher education-specific teaching and learning policies, assessment strategies and learning resources arrangements [Worcester College, SR142/2004]. The reviewers note that quality assurance arrangements are most effective when they are closely monitored and recorded, to provide an effective check on progress made [West Nottinghamshire College, SR120/2004]. In a few cases, college procedures that are based largely on those that have been developed to meet the requirements of further education-level programmes are not entirely appropriate or suitable for higher education provision. They lack clear evidence to show that the maintenance of standards in higher education programmes is being addressed routinely or explicitly.

94 Reports indicate that while significant progress has been made at college management level to apply appropriate higher education quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms, this is not always sufficiently embedded at programme level where consideration of quality assurance procedures is sometimes limited. In the best cases, subject benchmark statements, the FHEQ and the *Code of practice* are used routinely to inform internal reviews and quality assurance systems [Wiltshire College, SR16/2004].

95 The level of colleges' responses to both University and Edexcel appointed external examiners is variable. In the best cases, the examiners' reports are monitored firstly by a nominated member of college staff who forwards them with comments and a request for a response, to the subject staff. In some cases, however, college

systems of quality maintenance and enhancement make it difficult to identify the specific programmes to which reports relate or how the college has responded to individual external examiner comments.

96 Informal mechanisms for addressing matters raised by students are often noted in reports. Students found staff in all subjects to be accessible and supportive. However, it is clear that the more informal systems for drawing together student feedback are often less effective for quality enhancement. The reviewers conclude that the process of providing students with feedback on matters raised by them could be strengthened by the introduction of more formal arrangements which are recorded appropriately.

97 Reports from 2005-07 indicate that most colleges have well-established and effective quality assurance processes that contribute to the integrity of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The reviewers note that the vast majority of colleges have taken account of, and embedded within their processes, the intentions of the Academic Infrastructure and as a result have a strong focus on higher education [Cleveland College of Art and Design, SR18/2005]. Good practice in colleges includes processes of annual monitoring to analyse and evaluate a wide range of information such as student statistical data, feedback from students, external examiner reports and relevant committee minutes [Derby College, SR15/2006]. Such quality assurance processes result in clear action plans, provide for the scrutiny of key documents by senior college staff and ensure that all quality assurance processes are completed. In the most effective examples, these processes are disseminated through the use of clear and accurate quality assurance manuals, and supported by a member of staff who has dedicated oversight of all higher education provision, including responsibility for supporting quality assurance in higher education [East Riding College, SR13/2006].

98 A small number of colleges are continuing to rely on a quality assurance model designed for further education provision which only addresses the requirements of the Learning and Skills Council and Ofsted. In such cases, reports indicate that colleges are often unable to provide information specific to higher education which could be used to inform planning and to enhance their higher education provision. The reviewers conclude that, in a few cases, colleges need to do more to establish processes where points relating specifically to higher education programmes are more clearly identified and addressed. Similarly, colleges also need to ensure that all programme managers are aware of the quality assurance policies and procedures, and of their responsibilities to implement them. Good practice shows that close cooperation with a higher education institution can help colleges to design and implement effective quality assurance processes, and that the involvement of senior college staff can also be very beneficial [Gateshead College, SR16/2005, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, SR32/2005].

99 Most reports identify the responsiveness of colleges to students' views as a significant strength. The reviewers note that colleges employ a variety of methods for gathering students' views on their programmes of study, including questionnaires, focus groups, informal feedback, student councils and the presence of students on college committees [Accrington and Rossendale College, SR23/2005]. As in previous review periods, reports indicate that colleges frequently rely on informal contacts to

supplement meetings and questionnaires but the majority of reports note that this works well and that students report satisfaction with their representative opportunities and the ways in which staff respond to their concerns through informal contacts [Newbury College, SR05/2006]. However, in a few colleges, students express concern at the methodologies employed to enable them to express their views and at the lack of any feedback about action arising as a result. Where this occurs, the cause is generally attributed to poor communication of action planned to student representatives.

100 The best self-evaluations produced by the colleges are accurate, self-critical and evaluative, identifying strengths and weaknesses and outlining the action proposed to rectify the latter [Northbrook College, Sussex, SR01/2005]. However, a general criticism noted by the reviewers throughout the period 2002-07 is that colleges' self-evaluations for the reviews often lack self-critical and evaluative comments supported by evidence. Reports indicate that in many cases, self-evaluations contain insufficient detail, and particularly lacked reliable student statistics. The extent of consultation about the development of the self-evaluation varies considerably. In the best examples, subject and central services staff, current and former students and employers are regularly involved in internal review and evaluation, and the self-evaluation document is based on the documents resulting from these processes [The Sheffield College, SR77/2004].

101 Where a college was subject to a re-review, the reviewers reported that, with the exception of two re-reviews, the colleges concerned had responded rapidly and effectively to address and improve the areas the reviewers found to be in need of urgent action. This prompt action has enhanced the quality and standards of their students' experience and resulted in judgements of confidence in standards and at least approved quality of learning opportunities at re-review. In such cases, reports are unanimous in praising the positive way in which these colleges have responded to areas for improvement identified in the first review report.

Good practice in improving quality assurance processes

- A high level of staff commitment to quality processes is linked to strong and effective strategies for staff development (paragraph 90).
- A number of colleges demonstrate effective mechanisms for student representation, for acquiring and considering students' and employers' views and responding to them (paragraph 90).
- Close and productive working relationships exist with external examiners whose reports include evaluative commentary (paragraph 92).
- At its best, internal verification is consistently monitored or evaluated, ensuring its value in maintaining and enhancing standards (paragraph 92).
- Quality assurance arrangements are most effective when they are closely monitored and recorded, to provide an effective check on progress (paragraph 93).
- Quality assurance processes are disseminated through the use of clear and accurate quality assurance manuals, and supported by a member of staff who has dedicated oversight of all higher education provision (paragraph 97).

Part three - Conclusions

102 Academic review has identified a substantial amount of good practice in HEFCE directly-funded higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges in England. This good practice has been summarised and shared through the publication of three QAA periodic 'Learning from Academic review' reports, and this publication draws together themes from across each of the periodic reports. The reviewers have also identified many areas for further development in reports which have led to significant improvements in college higher education provision over the last five years.

103 The outcomes of the reviews were highly positive, with nearly all reviews resulting in judgements of confidence in academic standards and commendable or approved quality of learning opportunities. In nearly all cases, colleges which received no confidence or failing judgements demonstrated an ability to improve rapidly the provision so that at 12 months later, the re-review team could see substantial enhancements which enabled them to have confidence in the academic standards and/or to commend or approve the quality of learning opportunities.

104 Good practice has been highlighted throughout this report at the end of each of the findings sections. Many colleges are making appropriate reference to the Academic Infrastructure and have secure processes in place for assuring and enhancing the quality of the higher education they deliver. Awarding bodies are providing effective support for colleges in managing their responsibilities for their programmes. Edexcel has revised the guidance it provides to colleges on securing the standards of their provision, including making greater reference to the Academic Infrastructure, for example by revising the external examiner process and offering guidance on producing programme specifications.

105 Many areas for development in higher education delivered in colleges are concerned with the student assessment cycle, from initial design of assessment tasks to measuring outcomes and assuring sufficient rigour and integrity in the implementation and monitoring of assessment processes. This continuing need for improvement has led to an emphasis on assessment processes in the new QAA method of review for higher education in further education colleges: Integrated quality and enhancement review. The first Developmental engagement with a college looks at the college's management of its higher education provision, with a particular focus on assessment.

106 The most successful higher education provision in colleges may be characterised by the following strengths identified in this report. As well as the considerable good practice and many strengths in the delivery of higher education programmes identified, the reviewers also considered that there were a number of areas where there is scope for further development and enhancement of the provision.

Strengths	Areas for further development
Use of the Academic Infrastructure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intended learning outcomes reflect the relevant subject benchmark statement and are appropriate to the qualification level (paragraph 21). ● Colleges which had re-reviews have paid particular attention to improving assessment strategies since their previous review and have made effective use of the <i>Code of practice</i> in doing this (paragraph 26). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further consideration of the external reference points, in relation to the development and assessment of intended learning outcomes in particular, would help to enhance the student learning experience (paragraph 24). ● There is variability in the effective use of subject benchmark statements, with some colleges considering them irrelevant to HN programmes as the statements are set at honours degree level (paragraph 24).
Curriculum design and development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reports note good vocational links within the programmes, with significant input from local industries (paragraph 27). ● A key strength of many programmes is the opportunity for students to combine study for a higher education qualification with relevant employment, particularly through part-time HNCs, work-based projects or placements (paragraph 27). ● Foundation Degrees also allow greater flexibility in curriculum development to address vocational needs [Hull College, SR13/2004], and provide an opportunity for curricular innovation, at the same time as maintaining continuity through successful HN provision (paragraph 32). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A small minority of colleges have not made use of employers or external practitioners to develop or enhance their curricula (paragraph 30). ● The scholarly activities of staff are noted as having a limited impact on curricula design and content (paragraph 33).
Widening participation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Successful induction procedures help students to understand the requirements of studying at a higher education level and support them in the early days of their programmes (paragraph 36). 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support provided for students, in terms of formal and informal advice and guidance and additional tutorial support, underpins the widening participation strategies of many colleges (paragraph 37). ● Admissions procedures successfully match the widening participation aims of colleges (paragraph 38). 	
Work based learning and employer engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work placements provide significant learning opportunities for most full-time students (paragraph 40). ● The use of practical, work-related assignments is a major strength of the colleges and many reports note well-designed and appropriate assessment tools that reflect professional, work-based practice (paragraph 41). ● Teaching and learning on programmes is typically enriched and updated by contributions from practising professionals, study visits, employer engagement and staff experience of professional practice which enable the content to remain current and topical (paragraph 44). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a need for some colleges to clarify the role of work experience within the overall student learning experience (paragraph 41).
Assessment and feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coherent assessment strategies closely link intended learning outcomes to assessment methods (paragraph 45). ● The timely return of marked assessments with detailed written feedback is a strength (paragraph 45). ● Students benefit most where feedback makes careful reference to learning outcomes and assessment criteria (paragraphs 50, 54). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Colleges could pay further attention to all aspects of the assessment process and sharing good practice identified internally and in other colleges (paragraph 47). ● A common problem is the lack of clear information on assessment criteria and marking schemes which leads to inconsistency of practice across programmes (paragraph 47). ● A better balance between formal and informal feedback to students would enable students to apply early feedback to subsequent assignments (paragraph 48).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further development of clear assessment policies and procedures to ensure reliability and integrity of the assessment process, and greater use of <i>Section 6</i> of the <i>Code of practice</i> to inform assessment strategies and practice, would assist colleges in maintaining and enhancing the standards and quality of their higher education provision (paragraph 51). ● There is a need for colleges to continue to develop assessment strategies and include greater engagement with the <i>Code of practice, Section 4: External examining</i> (paragraph 52). ● Some colleges should ensure that grading and assessment criteria are clearly linked to module content and the type of assessment (paragraph 55). ● Some colleges could establish and implement more formal recording systems for the internal verification process to ensure the integrity of student assessment (paragraph 55). ● Colleges could adopt a more consistent approach in providing feedback to students (paragraph 55).
Development and achievement of higher skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HN programmes are recognised as offering students a commendable range of progression opportunities, which are valued by students and employers (paragraph 58). ● The small size of many cohorts enables attention to be paid to each student's development (paragraph 59). ● Aims which set out to strengthen students' ability to learn and be self-reliant and self-motivated in order to have the confidence for independent learning and study are often included (paragraph 64). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is scope for colleges to place further emphasis on the achievement of the higher order skills of analysis and criticism, as set out in the FHEQ, when developing intended learning outcomes (paragraph 59). ● A lack of differentiation of aims between programmes and between outcomes is identified as a matter of concern in some HN programmes (paragraph 60). ● Small classes can inhibit the effective use of group work (paragraph 61).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curricula design and content generally encourage students' achievement of intended learning outcomes and the acquisition of higher level skills (paragraph 64). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching can be less informed by scholarly activity and research because of the corresponding lack of staff time and the greater breadth of programme coverage (paragraph 61). ● In the majority of cases, there is scope for further development of students' critical and analytical skills, such as the ability to synthesise, analyse and evaluate (paragraph 62). ● Assessment that places too much emphasis on the development of the students' technical ability often does so at the expense of their knowledge and analytical and cognitive skills (paragraph 65).
Progression to further study and employment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A variety of opportunities is provided for full and part-time students to progress to further study in higher education (paragraph 66). ● The progression route of the recently-introduced Foundation Degrees to the final year of an articulated honours degree programme provides increasing opportunities for progression (paragraph 67). ● Informal information obtained from students who had completed their studies suggests that success in their programmes contributes to promotion opportunities at work (paragraph 69). ● Skills and knowledge that students have gained prepare them well for employment (paragraph 70). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In a small number of cases, programmes could prepare students better for further study or make them more aware of the benefits and value of pursuing a degree programme (paragraph 68). ● Weaknesses identified in some colleges include inconsistent, incomplete or unclear progression data, or of colleges not maximising the progression routes to a partner higher education institution (paragraph 68). ● The tracking of employment destinations of students' needs to be improved in some cases (paragraph 72).
Staff development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employers comment favourably on academic abilities as well as vocational or practical skills (paragraph 70). ● The availability of staff development opportunities, which cover both 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is limited time available for staff to undertake development activities due to high teaching workloads (paragraph 73). ● There is scope for staff to pursue more

<p>pedagogy and subject-specific updating is a positive feature (paragraph 73).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective teaching observation schemes and staff development linked to staff appraisal supports teaching and learning (paragraph 74, 76). 	<p>activities that update their subject knowledge and skills (paragraph 73).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a limited focus on higher education in staff development activities offered and undertaken (paragraph 75). ● Staff development could relate more specifically to maintaining lecturers' scholarly and/or industrial and professional currency (paragraph 75).
<p>Development of learning resources</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good workshop facilities, industry-standard equipment and facilities are a strength in a number of colleges (paragraph 78). ● An ongoing commitment exists to maintain and improve library provision to support higher education programmes (paragraph 85). ● Dedicated higher education space within learning resource centres provides a flexible space and a welcoming environment that is conducive to study (paragraph 88). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a lack of up-to-date equipment and a lack of a strategy to ensure that equipment is maintained and updated in some colleges (paragraph 77). ● There are some issues regarding access to ICT in some colleges (paragraph 83). ● The virtual learning environment is not always contributing to students' learning and is sometimes underused by both staff and students (paragraph 83). ● A significant proportion of reports comment on the need for colleges to update and review their book and journal stock in order to support higher education provision (paragraphs 84, 85, 86). ● There are instances of limited opening hours and accessibility to learning resource centres, particularly for part-time students (paragraph 87). ● There is often limited quiet study space to encourage students' research at higher education level (paragraph 88).

Improvements in quality assurance processes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Well-managed, robust and effective quality assurance systems are generally in place (paragraph 90). ● Many colleges have productive relationships with partner higher education institutions which contribute significantly to assuring the quality of programmes and, where appropriate, to maintaining the standard of the awards (paragraph 92). ● In the best cases, subject benchmark statements, the FHEQ and the <i>Code of practice</i> are used routinely to inform internal reviews and quality assurance systems (paragraph 94). ● Most colleges have well-established and effective quality assurance processes that contribute to the integrity of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. (paragraph 97). ● The vast majority of colleges have taken account of, and embedded within their processes, the intentions of the Academic Infrastructure and as a result have a strong focus on higher education (paragraph 97). ● Colleges employ a variety of methods for gathering students' views on their programmes of study including questionnaires, focus groups, informal feedback, the student council and the presence of students on college committees (paragraph 99). ● Where a college was subject to a re-review, they responded rapidly and effectively to address and improve the areas reviewers found to be in need of immediate development (paragraph 101). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is scope for more systematic and evaluative annual review of programmes and more effective monitoring and recording of action planned and taken (paragraph 91). ● There is evidence of over-reliance on informal processes, leading to a shortage of appropriate documentation recording changes in provision, difficulties accessing information and little involvement of employers (paragraph 91). ● Higher education quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms are not always sufficiently embedded at programme level (paragraph 94). ● In some cases, college systems of quality maintenance and enhancement make it difficult to identify the specific programmes to which reports relate or how the college has responded to individual external examiner comments (paragraph 95). ● More informal systems for drawing together student feedback are often variable in their effectiveness for quality enhancement purposes (paragraph 96). ● A small number of colleges are continuing to rely on a quality assurance model designed for further education, which is often unable to provide evidence specific to higher education which could be used to enhance their higher education provision (paragraph 98). ● In a few colleges, students express concern at the methods available to express their views and at the lack of any feedback about action arising as a result (paragraph 99).

Annex 1: HEFCE units for reviews of subjects during 2000-06

Accountancy
Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences
Allied Health Progressions
Art and Design
Biosciences
Building and Surveying
Business and Management
Communications, Media, Film and Television Studies
Computing
Dance, Drama and Performance Arts
Earth, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies
Engineering
English
Geography
History
Law
Music
Politics and International Relations
Psychology
Social Policy and Administration and Social Work
Sociology and Anthropology
Subjects Allied to Medicine

Annex 2: Academic reviews in further education colleges 2002-07

Accountancy

Bradford College*

Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural and Food Sciences

Askham Bryan College
Bishop Burton College
Capel Manor College
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education
Huddersfield Technical College
Pershore Group of Colleges
Sparsholt College
Walford and North Shropshire College
Warwickshire College
Wiltshire College

Allied Health Professions

Accrington and Rossendale College
Barnsley College
Bradford College

Art and Design

Barking College*
Basingstoke College of Technology
Bedford College
Bishop Burton College
Blackburn College
Blackpool and The Fylde College
Bradford College
City College Coventry*
City College Manchester
City of Sunderland College
City of Westminster College
Cleveland College of Art and Design
Croydon College
Dewsbury College
Doncaster College
East Surrey College
Farnborough College of Technology
Filton College*
Herefordshire College of Art and Design
Hertford Regional College
Hull College

Kensington and Chelsea College
 Leeds College of Art and Design
 Leicester College
 Macclesfield College
 Manchester College of Arts and Technology
 Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education, Birmingham*
 Mid-Cheshire College
 New College Nottingham*
 Newcastle College*
 North Tyneside College*
 North Warwickshire and Hinckley College*
 Oldham College*
 Oxford and Cherwell College*
 Richmond Adult and Community College
 Salisbury College
 Solihull College
 South Nottingham College*
 Southwark College
 Stamford College
 Stockport College of Further and Higher Education
 Stourbridge College
 Suffolk College Ipswich*
 Swindon College
 Tameside College
 The Calderdale Colleges Corporation*
 The Walsall College of Arts and Technology*
 Warwickshire College, Royal Leamington Spa, Rugby and Moreton Morrell*
 West Herts College*
 West Thames College*
 Wirral Metropolitan College
 York College

Biosciences

City of Westminster College
 North East Surrey College of Technology
 Suffolk College, Ipswich

Building and Surveying

Blackpool and The Fylde College
 Bradford College
 City College Birmingham
 City of Bath College
 City of Bristol College
 City of Westminster College
 Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology
 Guildford College of Further and Higher Education
 Highbury College, Portsmouth

Lambeth College
 Lincoln College
 Liverpool Community College
 Manchester College of Arts and Technology
 New College Nottingham
 North East Surrey College of Technology
 Oaklands College
 Richmond Upon Thames College
 Sandwell College of Further and Higher Education
 St Helens College
 Stockport College of Further and Higher Education
 West Kent College
 West Nottinghamshire College

Business and Management

City of Wolverhampton College

Communications, Media, Film and Television Studies

Accrington and Rossendale College
 Barking College*
 Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology
 Cleveland College of Art and Design*
 Farnborough College of Technology*
 Grimsby College
 Guildford College of Further and Higher Education
 Liverpool Community College*
 Newcastle College*
 North East Worcestershire College*
 North Tyneside College*
 North Warwickshire and Hinckley College*
 Northbrook College Sussex*
 Oxford and Cherwell College*
 Peterborough Regional College*
 Sandwell College
 South Thames College*
 St Helens College
 Stratford-upon-Avon College
 Strode College
 Suffolk College, Ipswich*
 The People's College, Nottingham
 The Sheffield College*
 The Solihull College
 Warwickshire College, Royal Leamington Spa, Rugby and Moreton Morrell*
 West Herts College
 Wirral Metropolitan College
 Worcester College of Technology
 Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education

Computing

Abingdon and Witney College*
 Barking College*
 Barnsley College*
 Basingstoke College of Technology*
 Bedford College*
 Blackburn College*
 Blackpool and The Fylde College
 Bolton College
 Bradford College*
 Bridgwater College
 Carlisle College*
 Chesterfield College
 Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology*
 City College Coventry*
 City College, Birmingham*
 City of Bath College*
 City of Sunderland College*
 Crawley College*
 Croydon College*
 Doncaster College*
 Dudley College of Technology*
 East Riding College
 Fareham College*
 Farnborough College of Technology
 Gateshead College*
 Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology*
 Grimsby College*
 Havering College of Further and Higher Education*
 Henley College Coventry*
 Herefordshire College of Technology*
 Hertford Regional College*
 Highbury College, Portsmouth*
 Hull College*
 Kingston College*
 Lakes College, West Cumbria*
 Leeds College of Technology*
 Lewisham College
 Lincoln College*
 Liverpool Community College*
 Loughborough College*
 Manchester College of Arts and Technology*
 Mid-Cheshire College of Further Education*
 New College, Durham*
 New College, Nottingham
 Newcastle College*
 Newham College of Further Education*

North East Worcestershire College*
 North Hertfordshire College
 North Trafford College of Further Education*
 Northbrook College Sussex
 Oldham College
 Park Lane College
 Peterborough Regional College*
 Reading College and School of Arts and Design
 Sandwell College*
 Skelmersdale College
 South Cheshire College*
 South Thames College
 South Tyneside College*
 Southampton City College*
 St Helens College*
 Stamford College
 Stephenson College*
 Stockport College of Further and Higher Education*
 Stroud College of Further Education*
 Suffolk College*
 SURF [Staffordshire University Regional Federation] consortium*
 Swindon College
 Tameside College*
 The Calderdale Colleges Corporation
 The College of North West London*
 The People's College, Nottingham*
 The Sheffield College*
 The Solihull College*
 Uxbridge College*
 Wakefield College*
 Walsall College of Arts and Technology*
 Warwickshire College, Royal Leamington Spa and Moreton Morrell*
 West Cheshire College*
 West Herts College*
 West Nottinghamshire College*
 West Thames College
 Westminster Kingsway College*
 Wigan and Leigh College*
 Wirral Metropolitan College*
 Worcester College of Technology*
 Yeovil College*
 York College of Further and Higher Education*

Dance, Drama and Performance Arts

Barking College*
 Blackpool and The Fylde College
 Carshalton College*

City College Manchester*
 Doncaster College*
 Filton College*
 Gateshead College
 Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology*
 Havering College of Further and Higher Education*
 Hull College
 Liverpool Community College*
 New College Nottingham*
 Newcastle College*
 North East Surrey College of Technology
 North Tyneside College*
 Northbrook College Sussex*
 Oldham College
 Peterborough College
 Suffolk College
 Wakefield College
 West Herts College*
 West Thames College*
 Worcester College of Technology*
 Yorkshire Coast College of Further and Higher Education

Earth, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies

Blackpool and The Fylde College*
 Farnborough College of Technology

Engineering

Abingdon and Witney College*
 Accrington and Rossendale College*
 Barking College*
 Barnsley College*
 Basingstoke College of Technology*
 Bedford College*
 Blackburn College*
 Blackpool and The Flyde College
 Bolton College*
 Bradford College*
 Brooklands College
 Carlisle College*
 Chesterfield College
 Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology*
 City College, Birmingham*
 City College Coventry*
 City of Bath College*
 City of Bristol College
 City of Sunderland College*

Cornwall College
Crawley College*
Croydon College*
Derby College
Doncaster College*
Dudley College of Technology*
Fareham College of Technology*
Farnborough College of Technology*
Filton College
Gateshead College
Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology*
Grimsby College*
Halton College
Havering College of Further and Higher Education*
Henley College Coventry*
Herefordshire College of Technology*
Hertford Regional College*
Highbury College, Portsmouth*
Hopwood Hall College
Hull College*
Kingston College*
Lakes College, West Cumbria*
Leeds College of Technology*
Leicester College
Lincoln College*
Loughborough College*
Manchester College of Arts and Technology*
Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education, Birmingham*
Mid-Cheshire College of Further Education*
New College, Durham*
Newbury College
Newcastle College*
Newham College of Further Education*
North East Worcestershire College*
North Lindsey College
North Trafford College of Further Education*
North Tyneside College
North West Kent College of Technology
Oaklands College
Oxford College of Further Education
Peterborough Regional College*
Reading College and School of Arts and Design
Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
Sandwell College*
South Cheshire College*
South East Derbyshire College
South Tyneside College*

Southampton City College*
 St Helens College*
 Stephenson College*
 Stockport College of Further and Higher Education*
 Stourbridge College
 Stroud College of Further Education*
 Suffolk College*
 SURF [Staffordshire University Regional Federation] consortium*
 Tameside College*
 The College of North West London*
 The People's College, Nottingham*
 The Sheffield College*
 The Solihull College*
 Uxbridge College*
 Wakefield College*
 Walsall College of Arts and Technology*
 Warwickshire College, Royal Leamington Spa and Moreton Morrell*
 West Cheshire College*
 West Herts College*
 West Nottinghamshire College*
 Wigan and Leigh College*
 Wirral Metropolitan College*
 Worcester College of Technology*
 Yeovil College*
 York College of Further and Higher Education*

English

Accrington and Rossendale College*
 Barnsley College*
 Blackburn College*
 Blackpool and The Fylde College*
 Doncaster College*
 Grimsby College*
 Peterborough Regional College*
 Suffolk College*

Geography

Barnsley College*

History

Barnsley College*
 Grimsby College
 Peterborough Regional College*
 Suffolk College*

Law

Bradford College*
Croydon College
Peterborough Regional College*

Music

Accrington and Rossendale College
City College Manchester*
Doncaster College*
Liverpool Community College*
Manchester College of Arts and Technology
New College Telford
Newcastle College*
North Trafford College of Further Education
Northbrook College, Sussex*
South Downs College
Worcester College of Technology*

Politics and International Relations

Barnsley College*

Psychology

Suffolk College

Social Policy and Administration and Social Work

Accrington and Rossendale College*
Barnsley College*
Blackburn College*
Boston College
Bradford College*
Bromley College of Further and Higher Education
Carlisle College*
Doncaster College*
Grimsby College
Havering College of Further and Higher Education
Liverpool Community College
North East Worcestershire College
North Tyneside College
Northumberland College
Oldham College
Ruskin College*
Somerset College of Arts and Technology*
South Tyneside College
St Helens College*
Suffolk College

The Sheffield College
Warwickshire College, Royal Leamington Spa and Moreton Morrell*
West Herts College
Wigan and Leigh College*
Wiltshire College
Worcester College of Technology*

Sociology and Anthropology

Accrington and Rossendale College*
Barnsley College*
Blackpool and The Fylde College*
Doncaster College*
Peterborough Regional College*
Ruskin College*

Subjects Allied to Medicine

North East Surrey College of Technology

Annex 3: Reviewers who took part in Academic reviews of subjects of higher education in further education colleges, 2002-07

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Mr Tim Appelbee
Professor Allan Ashworth
Dr David Arney
Professor Chris Arnison
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Mr Duncan Backhouse
Dr George Bainbridge
Mr Jonathan Baker
Ms Marie Baker
Dr Peter Banister
Dr John Barkham
Mr Andrew Bates
Professor Terry Baylis
Dr C Paul Beckwith
Professor Clive Behagg
Mr Joe Bennett
Dr John Bennett
Mrs Miriam Birch
Professor Derek W Birrell
Mr Ian Blackhall
Ms Penny Blackie
Ms Bernadette Blair
Ms Mary Blauciak
Mr Timothy Blinks
Ms Joanna Breslin
Miss M Glenda Brindle
Mr Frank Brogan
Dr Darrell Brooks
Mr Jason Brown
Eur Ing Geoffrey Browning
Mr Maldwyn Buckland
Professor John Bull
Professor Rodney Burgess
Mr Kevin Burnside
Mr David Burrows
Mr Roger Bush
Mr Jeffery H Butel
Mr Michael Caddis
Mrs Helen Campbell
Mr Ross Campbell
Mr Tom W Cantwell

Professor Derek Cassidy
Dr Leslie Caul
Eur Ing Alan Chantler
Mr Keith Chapman
Dr Val Chapman
Mr David Cheetham
Ms Alexa Christou
Mr Tony Clancy
Dr Andrea Clarke
Mr Peter Clarke
Miss Elspeth Clements
Dr David Collins
Mr Paul Collins
Ms Jo Compton
Mr Roger Conlon
Dr Paul Conway
Dr Andrew Cooper
Dr Mark Cooper
Mrs Alison Cotgrave
Mr Gerry Crawley
Mr Alan Curtis
Dr Dee Davenport
Mr Allan Davies
Mr Damian Day
Professor Anthony Dean
Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Doherty
Ms Niamh C Dowling
Mrs Elisabeth C Downes
Dr Celia Doyle
Mr Tim Dunbar
Professor Jonathan Dunsby
Dr David Eaton
Dr Gordon Edwards
Dr Margaret Edwards
Dr Michael Emery
Mrs Catherine Fairhurst
Dr Annette Fitzsimons
Dr David Fligg
Dr Colin Fowler
Dr Colin Fryer
Mr John Fulton
Mrs Julia Gaimster
Dr Barry Garnham
Dr Phil Garnsworthy
Professor Kevan Gartland
Dr Bill Gaskins
Dr Robert Giddings
Ms Myra Gilbert

Mr Tony Gilby
Ms Judy Glasman
Professor Robert Glass
Professor Nicholas Goddard
Mrs Ruth Goodison
Dr Philip Grant
Ms Frances Gray
Dr Ruth Green
Mr Derek Greenaway
Professor Alan Griffith
Mr Brian Griffiths
Mr Ted Hackett
Dr David Hall
Mr Nigel Hall
Mr Gary Hargreaves
Professor Barbara Harrison
Mr Robert Haslem
Mr John Hawthorn
Professor Michael Healey
Mr Keith Hegarty
Dr Patricia Higham
Mr Martin Hill
Dr Susan A Hill
Mr Will Hill
Dr Abigail Hind
Dr Luke Hockley
Mr Robert Hodgkinson
Mr John Hodgson
Mr John Holloway
Mr Peter Honeyman
Mr Rob Honeyman
Mrs Bernice Horgan
Mr A Grant Horsburgh
Dr David Houlston
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Dr Jenifer Lewis
Dr Andrea Liggins
Ms Rosi Lister
Professor Derek Longhurst
Mrs Elizabeth Lydiate
Dr Mark Lyne
Professor David Mackmin
Dr Heidi Macpherson
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Mr Ken Marsden
Dr John Martin
Mr Rob Mason
Mr Neil McGarvey
Ms Marilyn McHugh
Professor George McKay
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Mr Mario Minichiello
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Mr Tim Moruzzi
Dr John Mundy
Mr Gary Naylor
Miss Rita Newton
Mrs Annet Nottingham
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Mrs Monica Owen
Mr Richard W Owen
Dr Derek Paddon
Dr Julian Park
Mr Millard Parkinson
Mr Keith Parsons
Professor Dilipkumar Patel

Dr Derek Peacock
Mr Nick Phillips
Ms Arabella Plouviez
Mrs Christine Plumbridge
Ms Heather Purdey
Ms Charlotte Purkis
Mr John Pymm
Dr Ann Read
Mr Mike Riley
Mrs Rhona L Riley
Mr Ian Roberts
Professor Geoffrey Robinson
Mr Paul Robottom
Mr Paul Rogers
Mr Andrew Ross
Professor David Ross
Mr Steve Saffhill
Mr Liam Scanlan
Dr Robert E Schofield
Dr Alister Scott
Dr Ian Scott
Dr Stephen Scott
Mr Martin Seath
Mr Andrew Sedgwick
Professor Pamela Shakespeare
Ms Angela J Shaw
Professor Marion Shaw
Professor John Simons
Dr Martin Simons
Ms Polly Skinner
Dr Jo Smedley
Mr Alan Smith
Dr Paul Smith
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Mr Terry Speake
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Professor Frank Stowell
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Dr Jeremy R Strong
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Mr Kevin Taylor

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Ms Angie Thew
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