



Outcomes from IQER: 2008-10

Staff development

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Contents

Preface	1
Summary	2
Staff development: context	3
Themes	5
Staff development strategies or frameworks	5
Organisation and monitoring of staff development	6
Availability of opportunities for staff development	7
Consortia arrangements between colleges and links with awarding bodies	7
Formal development programmes	8
Teaching observation and peer review	9
Opportunities for scholarly activity	10
The themes in context	11
Conclusions	11
Appendix A: Good practice relating to staff development	14
Annex B: Recommendations relating to staff development	18
Appendix C: Methodology used for producing papers in <i>Outcomes from IQER</i>	22
Appendix D: The IQER reports	23
Appendix E: Titles of papers in <i>Outcomes from IQER</i>	24

Preface

Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER) is defined in the current *Handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* as 'an evidence-based peer review of a college's management of the student learning experience and performance of its responsibilities for the academic standards and quality of its higher education provision'.¹

Each IQER Summative review report identifies good practice which has been noted by the review team during the process. In this context, good practice is defined as 'practice that the IQER team regards as making a particularly positive contribution to the college's management of the student learning experience of higher education in the context of that college; and which is worthy of wider dissemination within and/or beyond the college'. QAA is committed to disseminating the good practice identified in review reports, and the present series of *Outcomes from IQER* papers is one method by which this dissemination is achieved.

The papers take a thematic, evidence-based approach. The four papers in the series are:

- *College management of higher education*
- *Staff development*
- *Assessment*
- *The student voice.*

Each paper identifies broad themes, drawing particularly on the related good practice and recommendations in the individual IQER reports. Both good practice and recommendations quoted in these papers are cross-referenced to the individual reports, so that interested readers may obtain more details if they wish. Good practice points are identified in the context of the college in question, and should be viewed in that light. Likewise, the recommendations often represent opportunities for enhancement rather than reflecting any major deficiencies in existing practice. The papers place the identified themes within the broader context of developments in the sector as a whole, and summarise the overall position across the sector in relation to the topic in question.

Outcomes from IQER papers are written primarily for policy makers and managers within the college community with immediate responsibility for and interests in quality assurance, although specific topics may be of interest to other groups of readers, in particular to staff in awarding bodies with responsibility for collaborative activity. While QAA retains copyright of the content of the *Outcomes* papers, they may be freely downloaded from QAA's website and cited with acknowledgement.

¹ For more information about IQER see:
www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/IQER-England/Pages/default.aspx.

Summary

This paper analyses comments made in the 90 IQER Summative review reports published between 2008 and 2010 on the topic of the development of staff teaching on higher education programmes in further education colleges. Four-fifths of the reports contained good practice or recommendations relating to staff development.

The IQER reports indicate that most colleges had a strategy for staff development. In some cases this is specific to higher education programmes, but in other colleges a general strategy for staff development covers all provision. The variety and volume of staff development activities ranged from some colleges with little opportunity for staff to undertake development related to the specific demands of teaching at higher education level (though there may be extensive activity linked to teaching at further education level) through to well-established and effective arrangements within consortia for sharing good practice between colleges and with their higher education institution partners. In some cases, staff development is active and well managed by individual colleges themselves.

Many colleges had a formal programme of staff development, which the reports demonstrate was particularly effective if it was linked to the strategic priorities of the college. In some cases, programmes were designed to focus on improving staff understanding of the Academic Infrastructure and maintenance of academic standards. The reports indicate that teaching observation and peer review was commonly employed by colleges. This provided a means by which development needs could be identified.

Many reports identified how colleges encouraged staff to undertake scholarly activity. This was noted to be particularly effective where colleges worked in partnership with their awarding higher education institutions to develop a research culture.

The IQER reports demonstrate that, on the whole, staff development is evolving in colleges, with strengths in some areas and room for some further development. A need for more thorough recording of staff participation in development activities is noted in a few reports in order that the college can be sure that it has adequate oversight of the scale of activities. Engagement of part-time and sessional staff in staff development also remains a challenge, which reflects the findings of Institutional audit for higher education institutions.

Staff development: context

1 This paper is based on a review of the outcomes of the 90 IQER Summative review reports published between January 2009 and July 2010 (a full list of the reports can be found in Appendix D on page 23). The methodology used to produce papers in this series of *Outcomes* is described in Appendix C on page 22.

2 In 2006, the Higher Education Academy published a paper which noted that, while scholarly activity is an integral part of the contract of a lecturer in a higher education institution, lecturers in further education settings who teach on higher education programmes do not have the same contractual requirements.² The paper concluded that much of the scholarly activity of staff teaching higher education programmes in further education colleges is related to updating their subject-specific knowledge. It noted that increasing requirements on staff in further education contexts to demonstrate scholarly activity would require additional time and funding, and it might also be necessary to review the concept of scholarly activity in the broader context of higher education in further education. The paper suggested ways in which scholarly activity could be supported, for example through strengthening links between universities and colleges to enable working in partnership, the sharing of expertise and support for establishing a research culture in a college.

3 Subsequently, the Higher Education Academy published a resource pack which brought together in a single place a range of resources that might be of use in supporting research by staff in further education colleges.³ The pack noted that an essential component of delivering higher education programmes is not only keeping up to date with the subject and the regulatory environment relating to delivering higher education in further education, but also carrying out pedagogic or disciplinary research as part of continuing professional development.

4 The *Outcomes from institutional audit paper: Staff support and development*, based on the findings of the Institutional audits carried out between 2004 and 2006 in England and Northern Ireland, stated that, broadly speaking, staff support and development constituted strengths of the higher education sector in England and Northern Ireland.⁴ The paper demonstrated that the audit reports showed that institutions were making considerable efforts to align their staff development activities to their overall strategic aims while supporting the needs of individual members of staff. Good practice was identified in the way institutions planned, implemented, coordinated and monitored staff development activity and in the ways educational development units and staff development units were supporting staff within institutions. A small number of recommendations related to gaps in the activities of such central units or the need to increase the number of staff making use of such opportunities. However, the audit reports also indicated that staff support and development arrangements for part-time and visiting staff, and postgraduate research students undertaking teaching duties, were less well developed than those for full-time staff.

² Higher Education Academy (2006) *Scholarly Activity in the context of HE in FE*
www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/heinfe/alldisplay?type=resources&newid=resource_database/web0462_scholarly_activity_in_the_context_of_he_in_fe_June_2006&site=york

³ Higher Education Academy (2010) *Research and Scholarly activity resource - guidance for staff delivering HE in FE*

⁴ QAA (2008) *Outcomes from institutional audit, Second series: Staff support and development*
www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Outcomes-from-institutional-audit---Staff-support-and-development---Second-series.aspx.

5 In autumn 2009, a survey of scholarly activity undertaken by staff teaching higher education programmes in 47 further education colleges was carried out.⁵ The survey found that the concept of scholarly activity in higher education in further education was evolving. In some further education colleges a more traditional definition had been devised, while in others a more holistic approach is developing which is in keeping with the college strategic plan and higher education strategy, and the expectations of partner awarding bodies. The survey identified a potential need for support to be given to the development of communities of practice and focused third-party intervention, whether from the Higher Education Academy, the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges, or professional bodies. It concluded that students expect professional currency and credibility in their tutors.

6 The Institute for Learning (IfL) is the professional body for teachers in the further education and skills sector in England and Wales.⁶ Its main role is to support professional development and excellence in order to enable teachers to deliver the best possible teaching experience to millions of learners. All IfL members are required to undergo 30 hours of continuing professional development each year. This gives staff teaching higher education programmes in further education contexts a platform on which to build their staff development activities, albeit within a framework that will cover both further and higher education needs.

7 QAA's Information bulletin on the Summative reviews that were conducted in colleges across England during 2009-10 showed that around 10 per cent of both good practice and recommendations identified related to staff development. Well-supported arrangements for staff development were considered as contributing to the enhancement of the student learning experience and supporting the delivery of higher education provision.⁷ This paper discusses comments on staff development made in Summative review reports in more detail.

8 Summative review reports for IQER contain two sections related to staff development. Under Core theme 1: Academic standards, the reports review the college's arrangements for staff development to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards. Under Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities, the reports review the college's arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities.⁸ Staff development and training are also specifically mentioned in the guidance to colleges preparing self-evaluations for both Developmental engagements and Summative reviews in IQER.

9 Further education colleges delivering higher education were required to submit a higher education strategy to the Higher Education Funding Council for England by January 2010.⁹ This is reflected in some of the IQER reports published in 2009-10, where it is noted

⁵ Mixed Economy Group of Colleges (2009) *Scholarly activity in higher education delivered in further education: a study*

www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/heinfe/MEG_Scholarly_Activity_Report.pdf.

⁶ www.ifl.ac.uk.

⁷ QAA (2011) *Information bulletin: Integrated quality and enhancement review - Findings from the 2009-10 Summative reviews in England*

www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/IQER-Info-bulletin-2011-Findings-2009-10-SRs-England.aspx.

⁸ QAA (2008) *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review*

www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-handbook-for-Integrated-Quality-and-Enhancement-Review.aspx.

⁹ HEFCE (2009/13), *Request for higher education strategies from further education colleges*
www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_13.

that staff development is covered within the context of the wider higher education strategy, or that its development stimulated the production of a separate staff development statement.

Themes

10 A consideration of the areas of good practice, the recommendations and other comments relating to staff development in the IQER reports suggests that the following broad themes merit further discussion:

- Staff development strategies or frameworks
- Organisation and monitoring of staff development
- Availability of opportunities for staff development
- Consortia arrangements between colleges and links with awarding bodies
- Formal development programmes
- Teaching observation and peer review
- Opportunities for scholarly activity.

Staff development strategies or frameworks

11 Most of the IQER reports noted the existence of a strategy for staff development in the college. Colleges were reported to have statements outlining their policies and procedures on staff development, and these were usually evident in the material provided at the time of the reviews. They often demonstrated that the policies were well established. Good practice relating to staff development strategies was identified in eight reports. For example, at Newcastle College the report stated that there was a 'focused and comprehensive approach to staff development', including an extensive programme of development events and support for research and scholarly activity, which together helped to ensure that the profile of teaching staff fitted the needs and expectations of higher education provision.¹⁰

12 In relation to their delivery of further education, colleges are active in ensuring that staff receive opportunities for staff development. The inclusion of staff development within strategies for higher education has ensured that colleges also demonstrate their intentions to support staff engaged with higher education provision. In some cases, colleges are reported to have aligned their staff development policies to the strategic objectives of the college. At Swindon College good practice was noted in the 'comprehensive system to map College and individual professional development and training requirements to the College's eight strategic aims'.¹¹

13 In a few cases, the reports show that colleges recognised the importance of staff development within the teaching and learning environment specifically. For example, at City College Coventry, the learning and teaching strategy identified professional development as the main lever for improving teaching and learning.¹² At Henley College, Coventry, there were reported to be comprehensive, well-understood and readily available staff development opportunities with a high level of take-up, resulting in continuing professional development which effectively underpinned the delivery of the provision and was identified as good practice.¹³

¹⁰ Newcastle College, paragraph 32

¹¹ Swindon College, paragraph 26

¹² City College Coventry, paragraph 33

¹³ Henley College, Coventry, paragraphs 9, 13, 20, 28

14 In some cases, colleges were reported to have produced a staff development statement or reviewed existing policies following the Developmental engagement which took place up to 18 months before the Summative review. For a small number of colleges this action resulted from a specific recommendation in the Developmental engagement. For example, Abingdon and Witney College was reported to have taken steps towards acting on advice to produce a higher education strategy which gave more of a higher education focus for staff development, particularly in relation to approaches to assessment.¹⁴

15 Nine Summative review reports contained recommendations for action about strategies or frameworks for staff development. These recommendations often concerned the focus of staff development opportunities. Colleges were reported as often having support for staff development related to their further education provision but few, if any, opportunities related specifically to their higher education activity. The recommendations suggested providing suitable activities with a greater focus on higher education and encouraging attendance. For example, Basingstoke College of Technology was recommended 'to ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision'.¹⁵ At City College Coventry, the College was recommended 'to enhance staff development opportunities specific to higher education'.¹⁶

16 In three cases, the reports identified good practice in how staff development related specifically to the maintenance of academic standards. This included Southampton City College, where it was reported that support for staff teaching on higher education programmes through staff development ensured that high professional standards were maintained, with staff having appropriate subject knowledge and knowledge of the Academic Infrastructure.¹⁷

Organisation and monitoring of staff development

17 Notably, within the general comments on staff development in the IQER reports, one-sixth of colleges were identified as having made specific strategic appointments within their staff to oversee or coordinate staff development activities. For example, at Calderdale College, these were advanced skills tutors who then led staff development days.¹⁸ At South Tyneside College, quality learning advisers, advanced tutors and subject learning coaches were all reported to have an important strategic role in supporting and mentoring staff.¹⁹

18 However, in other colleges staff development was noted to be informal or poorly recorded. For instance, Birkenhead Sixth Form College was reported to have a strong programme of staff development, but much of the activity at higher education level was informal, happening through team and consortium meetings.²⁰ At Tameside College, staff development activities had been organised within the College following recommendations made during the Developmental engagement, but, because they were 'cost-free', staff attendance had rarely been recorded. This meant that staff records understated the extent of developmental activity in the College.²¹ Similarly, at Chichester College, the report identified that systematic and clear records of staff attendance at development events were not easily available, so the College could not be sure that all staff teaching on higher education

¹⁴ Abingdon and Witney College, paragraph 44

¹⁵ Basingstoke College of Technology, paragraph 20

¹⁶ City College Coventry, paragraph 33

¹⁷ Southampton City College, paragraph 22

¹⁸ Calderdale College, paragraph 19

¹⁹ South Tyneside College, paragraph 49

²⁰ Birkenhead Sixth Form College, paragraph 36

²¹ Tameside College, paragraph 24

programmes were taking up opportunities for updating subject knowledge, pedagogy and scholarship.²²

Availability of opportunities for staff development

19 In a few reports, comments were made about the lack of suitable opportunities for staff development which focused on the demands of teaching at higher education level, or for professional updating, pedagogy and scholarship. In five reports, recommendations were specifically about the need for staff development to support the maintenance of academic standards in the colleges; these were frequently linked to understanding of the Academic Infrastructure. For instance, at Nelson and Colne College the report recommended that the College should put in place staff development 'to ensure that all teaching staff on higher education programmes are conversant with the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure', particularly in relation to assessment and levels of achievement.²³

20 In a few reports the lack of suitable formal staff development opportunities was noted to be balanced by other activities which enabled staff to develop. For example, the report noted that at Salford City College, although there were no arrangements for professional updating, regular staff appraisal ensured staff engaged in appropriate staff development linked to the needs of the curriculum.²⁴

21 The IQER reports also commented on the lack of opportunities for part-time or sessional staff to engage in staff development. At Alton College, the report noted that the majority of staff teaching on one higher education programme were part-time, and did not attend staff development activities.²⁵ In another case, the pressures of time created by further education teaching commitments was noted as limiting the opportunities for staff to engage in scholarly activity at King George V College, Southport.²⁶

Consortia arrangements between colleges and links with awarding bodies

22 The IQER reports indicate that in some colleges partner higher education institutions or other awarding bodies such as EdExcel provide some staff development opportunities or collaborate with the college in providing them. In a few cases, the terms of the agreement between a college and an awarding body meant that there were specific expectations for college staff to undertake staff development. For instance, at South Worcestershire College, the formal agreements between the College and the University of Worcester recognise college lecturers as registered lecturers of the University, which means they are entitled to access development opportunities and scholarly activity.²⁷ At Basingstoke College of Technology, under the terms of the validation agreement with the University of Winchester, staff teaching on Foundation Degree programmes are required to work-shadow university colleagues for first-year lessons, which it is noted enables the sharing of good practice and pedagogical and vocational information.²⁸

23 In other cases, other arrangements are reported to be in place to ensure that college staff engage with a partner higher education institution's staff development opportunities.

²² Chichester College, paragraph 44

²³ Nelson and Colne College, paragraph 13

²⁴ Salford City College, paragraph 17

²⁵ Alton College, paragraph 41

²⁶ King George V College, Southport, paragraph 22

²⁷ South Worcestershire College, paragraph 31

²⁸ Basingstoke College of Technology, paragraph 30

In the report for Derwentside College, it was noted that the University of Sunderland undertook regular needs analysis of staff development for staff in colleges delivering the higher education provision and put in place suitable activities to address the needs identified.²⁹ At Capel Manor College, staff were noted to 'have access to a wide range of development activities at Birkbeck College where they can study alongside university colleagues'.³⁰

24 Some reports indicate that consortia arrangements between colleges allow staff to share staff development opportunities and gain understanding from colleagues. At Ashton-under-Lyne Sixth Form College, the awarding body, Staffordshire University, was noted to provide 'a clear framework of meetings and development events to ensure the maintenance of academic standards', which were well supported by college staff. They also enabled staff to engage with the broader Staffordshire University Regional Federation.³¹ Similar consortia arrangements exist elsewhere, for example at Lewisham College, where staff are able to participate in continuing professional development networks such as the London Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training, which ensures that their subject-specialist knowledge is maintained.³² In another report, the College was recommended to continue to encourage staff to liaise with colleagues at other colleges and at the awarding bodies 'in order to enhance levels of professional activity and scholarship'.³³

Formal development programmes

25 Just under a third of all points of good practice and recommendations relating to staff development related to the theme of formal programmes for development (including programme-related and free-standing generic activities and formal continuing professional development). The comments were evenly distributed between areas of good practice for dissemination and recommendations for action for colleges to consider.

26 Where good practice was identified, this mostly indicated how staff development was harnessed to bring benefits for the college overall. For example, at Lewisham College, the good variety and quantity of staff development activity was noted to contribute significantly to the professional development of staff and to enhance the quality of the provision.³⁴ Similarly, at Hadlow College staff development activity was described as contributing positively 'to the maintenance of high-quality teaching'.³⁵

27 Other examples of good practice were concerned with staff development activity that had a formal relationship to the college's policies and strategies. For example, at Hackney Community College, all higher education teaching staff are included in a three-hour weekly scheduled time for training and professional development.³⁶ At Loughborough College, the staff development programme was identified as extensive, coherently planned and linked to college priorities. It includes a commitment by the College to increase the number of higher-level qualifications, research and scholarly activity. This was identified as good practice, because it ensures that higher education courses are taught by well-qualified and suitably trained staff.³⁷

²⁹ Derwentside College, paragraph 17

³⁰ Capel Manor College, paragraph 21

³¹ Ashton-under-Lyne Sixth Form College, paragraph 23

³² Lewisham College, paragraph 20

³³ St Vincent College, paragraph 36

³⁴ Lewisham College, paragraphs 20, 32, 34

³⁵ Hadlow College, paragraph 34

³⁶ Hackney Community College, paragraph 45

³⁷ Loughborough College, paragraphs 21 and 36

28 Where recommendations for action were made, most of these concerned setting up procedures for monitoring and recording staff development in higher education policy and practice. For example, in the report for South Downs College, it was recommended that the College consider monitoring and evaluating the uptake of higher education staff development in order to ensure its continued effectiveness.³⁸ Similarly, it was recommended that Aylesbury College 'formalise and record procedures for identifying and addressing higher education staff development needs across the provision'.³⁹

29 Some other recommendations were concerned with a lack of effective dissemination of good practice in higher education provision to the wider staff body. For example, at Guildford College, it was recommended that the embedding of effective systems for sharing good practice across the higher education provision would contribute to empowering staff.⁴⁰

30 In most of the cases where recommendations were made about the need for more formal procedures for staff development, staff development activity was already at a significant level and colleges were being encouraged to record these activities in a more systematic way to ensure they had effective oversight. In some of these reports, comments were also made about making sufficient differentiation between staff development for further and higher education provision. For example, the report for Huntingdonshire Regional College recommended that 'the College would benefit from a policy on higher education-specific staff development needs and a discrete system for reporting and evaluation'.⁴¹

Teaching observation and peer review

31 Schemes and processes for teaching observation and peer review made up around one quarter of the areas of good practice and recommendations (equally distributed) related to staff development identified in the IQER reports.

32 Almost all the points of good practice related to the effectiveness of existing peer observation and review processes in enhancing student learning experiences and staff expertise, as well as for sharing good practice among college staff. For example, at Hertford Regional College, the use in some subject areas of the themed observation process to focus on higher education provision specifically was noted to have provided staff with an opportunity to focus and reflect on sector-specific issues and to share good practice.⁴² At Henley College Coventry, robust teaching observation procedures followed by support from advanced teaching practitioners were reported to have a clear focus on the needs of the higher education provision and to result in high-quality learning and teaching.⁴³

33 Recommendations in this area were concerned with the need for colleges to develop appropriate peer observation or review processes from scratch, or to enhance current processes to make them more relevant to higher education. For example, it was recommended that Bishop Burton College consider introducing a specific higher education system of peer teaching observation,⁴⁴ while Dearne Valley College was recommended 'to

³⁸ South Downs College, paragraphs 18 and 30

³⁹ Aylesbury College, paragraph 47

⁴⁰ Guildford College, paragraph 40

⁴¹ Huntingdonshire Regional College, paragraph 41

⁴² Hertford Regional College, paragraph 30

⁴³ Henley College Coventry, paragraph 25

⁴⁴ Bishop Burton College, paragraph 22

develop the observation of classroom practice to reflect the requirements of higher education programmes'.⁴⁵

Opportunities for scholarly activity

34 Scholarly activity is an important aspect of the staff development expected of staff teaching on higher education programmes, and it attracts some specific comments in the IQER reports, with slightly fewer identifications of good practice than recommendations for action. Where good practice was identified, it related to the commitment of staff teaching on higher education programmes to scholarly and research activity with the aim of enhancing the student learning experience. Colleges were reported to have taken significant steps to identify and promote scholarly activity, which was normally focused on a group or committee with the college. For example, at Havering College of Further and Higher Education, it was noted that the Research and Ethics Committee had a ring-fenced budget that enabled staff to undertake research and scholarly activity related to the curriculum.⁴⁶

35 Connections between scholarly activity and staff development opportunities and/or college policy are also highlighted in some of the areas of good practice identified in the reports. For example, it was noted that an annual research report is published on the college website at Myerscough College, as a reflection of the college's commitment to research-informed teaching as part of curriculum development.⁴⁷ Staff at City College Norwich were reported to be encouraged by the College to get involved in research activity with their partner higher education institution, the University of East Anglia.⁴⁸ At Reaseheath College, a new 'Scholarly Activity Scheme' had been introduced to provide staff with opportunities for further personal academic development, including undertaking higher-level qualifications.⁴⁹

36 Further, some examples among the areas of good practice identified demonstrate how colleges are taking this type of staff development activity to a new level. For example, at York College, the Debbie Thornton Scholarship scheme enables wide engagement of staff in research and scholarly activity, to inform curriculum development and delivery.⁵⁰ At Newcastle College, one member of staff was noted to have been included in the University of Sunderland submission for the most recent Research Assessment Exercise.⁵¹ At City of Bristol College an annual research conference is held, and the report commented that the impact of research and scholarship on the student experience is evident in college publications that disseminate staff scholarly activity.⁵²

37 Most recommendations in this area concerned suggestions to colleges that they develop and implement policy and practice to encourage staff to engage with scholarly activities. Some reports encouraged colleges to develop the potential for better support for the maintenance of academic standards in higher education provision through the promotion of research and scholarly activity⁵³ or to develop a college-wide scholarly ethos which would enhance the quality of learning opportunities and teaching.⁵⁴ In the report for Carlisle

⁴⁵ Dearne Valley College, paragraph 35

⁴⁶ Havering College of Further and Higher Education, paragraph 45

⁴⁷ Myerscough College, paragraph 19

⁴⁸ City College Norwich, paragraph 20

⁴⁹ Reaseheath College, paragraph 36

⁵⁰ York College, paragraphs 26 and 60

⁵¹ Newcastle College, paragraph 33

⁵² City of Bristol College, paragraph 31

⁵³ Chelmsford College, paragraph 19

⁵⁴ Hadlow College, paragraph 35

College, the College was recommended 'to develop and implement a strategy to enable all staff teaching on higher education courses to engage with an appropriate level of scholarly activity', and to ensure that it informed reviews of staff performance.⁵⁵

The themes in context

38 The 90 IQER reports analysed in this paper show that for colleges delivering higher education provision in England there is considerable activity in the area of staff development. This parallels the findings for higher education institutions in the paper *Outcomes from institutional audit: Staff support and development*.

39 The themes identified in this paper can be considered typical of staff development activity wherever the higher education provision is delivered. Further, in the context of higher education in further education provision, the activities are in many cases natural extensions of staff development carried out by staff who teach on further education programmes. The theme of scholarly activity occurred with a lower frequency than the other main themes. This probably indicates that this is still a more embryonic activity in further education colleges than in higher education institutions, which aligns with the conclusion of the Higher Education Academy 2006 paper.

40 Colleges have shown a variety of approaches to raising the awareness and experience levels of staff teaching higher education programmes, including strategic approaches, programmes of development activities and encouragement for staff to pursue scholarly activities. One key difference from the findings of the *Outcomes from institutional audit* paper would appear to be the lack of reference to specific educational development units within colleges as part of the overall staff development process. Such units are not as common in colleges as they are in higher education institutions. Instead, colleges tend to rely more on specific coordinator appointments and external agencies such as the Institute for Learning and the Higher Education Academy.

41 The reports also show that many colleges work in partnership with their awarding bodies to establish staff development programmes, with some of these being arranged through consortia with other colleges. This reflects suggestions made in the Higher Education Academy 2006 paper.

42 The evidence discussed in this paper suggests that staff development activity, while strong in some specific areas and demonstrating areas of good practice in many colleges, is still evolving. This is in line with the findings of the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges 2009 survey.

Conclusions

43 The IQER reports analysed in this paper show that there is a generally effective and stimulating level of staff development activity among staff teaching on higher education programmes in further education colleges. Development in generic pedagogy is an important area of activity, reflected in the overall volume of comments made in reports. Four-fifths of the reports contain good practice or recommendations relating to staff development. This reflects the interest of both colleges and individual members of staff in updating skills and, consequently, enhancing the overall student learning experience in higher education.

⁵⁵ Carlisle College, paragraphs 30 and 49

Areas of strength as indicated by the evidence from the reports

44 The underlying reasons for staff development activity which can be identified in the reports are varied, but include:

- raising awareness of college higher education policies, and national policy and guidelines such as the Academic Infrastructure
- encouragement to engage in scholarly activity and higher degree qualifications
- the recognised need for staff teaching students on higher education programmes to share good practice to ensure that best pedagogical practice is disseminated for the benefit of all staff and students.

45 A number of comments on staff development related to formal programmes of continuing professional development in colleges, demonstrating a maturity of approach which is in some cases a result of experience in delivering staff development for all areas of provision. The reports demonstrate that in many colleges there are clear links between the overall higher education strategy and staff development activities undertaken by staff teaching higher education programmes. Wider college policies and national developments also encourage staff to engage in development activities. The use of teaching observation throughout colleges also helps to identify staff development needs.

46 A notable feature in some colleges identified by the reports has been the support given to 'champions' (or other similar roles) of good practice in allowing them time and responsibility to develop staff development activities. This is reported to be an effective way of disseminating good practice and encouraging others to adopt different practices in their approaches to enhancing student learning.

47 Where colleges are involved in consortia arrangements with their higher education institution awarding bodies and other colleges, the reports indicate that this is also an effective and collegial way to ensure development activity is shared between individuals with similar interests and to allow a diversity of approaches to be discussed.

48 Awarding bodies are also shown to support staff development directly through running specific programmes of staff development for colleges or consortia and indirectly by supporting colleges' own activities, for example by providing speakers. There is also evidence that much of the scholarly activity mentioned in reports is coordinated and/or supported through a university partner. However, the reports also indicate that some colleges deliver their own staff development activities effectively and undertake scholarly activity of a relevant nature. In most cases these activities are noted to be 'fit for purpose' for the nature, level and size of the higher education provision.

Areas where further work is required

49 It is notable from some reports that, while staff development activity is present and in some cases quite vigorous in colleges, not all of the activity is necessarily focused on higher education matters but is instead part of an overall staff development programme. Several of the recommendations made to colleges relate to making the higher education focus more explicit for the benefit of staff and students.

50 As a particular facet of this, some reports make it clear that more staff development is required in the key area of understanding and application of the Academic Infrastructure, in particular sections of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* on external examining and assessment, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and subject

benchmark statements. In many cases awareness of the Academic Infrastructure was highlighted through the Developmental engagements with colleges and the Summative review reports demonstrate that some focused staff development activity has already taken place.

51 Some reports make reference to colleges needing to be more explicit in formally recording staff development activities. This has been suggested not only as an effective means of benefitting an individual member of staff's continuing professional development record, but also to allow colleges to more effectively track and monitor their staff development activities and enable this to better inform overall strategic direction and specific needs in pedagogical enhancement.

52 Lastly, some reports indicate that, while staff development activities for full-time teaching staff are in place and effective, this is less so for part-time or sessional teaching staff. Since such categories are often quite prominent within the profile of staff delivering higher education in colleges this is an area deserving more attention, either through shared staff development activities with full-time staff or, where this is not possible, on programmes of their own.

Appendix A: Good practice relating to staff development

Staff development strategies or frameworks

- the level of support provided to staff new to higher education teaching [Carshalton College]
- the commitment to continuing professional development, as exemplified by its annual Staff Development Festival and its integration with the provision of its university partners, ensures that staff are well equipped for their higher education teaching [Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education]
- comprehensive, well-understood and readily available staff development opportunities, which result in substantial amounts of continuing professional development that underpins the delivery of the provision [Henley College, Coventry]
- staff development is proactive and effective in underpinning the maintenance of academic standards and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities [Herefordshire College of Technology]
- there is a focused and comprehensive approach to staff development, including an extensive programme of development events and active College support for research and scholarly activity; together these contribute to ensuring that the teaching staff profile is well matched to the needs and expectations of higher education [Newcastle College]
- the virtual learning environment supports teaching and learning, the management of the provision and staff development [South Downs College]
- the College's staff development support for higher education staff ensures that high professional standards are maintained and that staff have appropriate subject knowledge and knowledge of higher education generally, including the Academic Infrastructure [Southampton City College]
- a well-designed staff development strategy maps College and individual professional development and training requirements to the College's eight strategic aims [Swindon College]
- the Higher Education Tutor Committee is an important vehicle for disseminating good practice and identifying and implementing the higher education staff development agenda [Walsall College]
- the College's approach to, and promotion of, staff development as it provides sound foundations for the promotion of appropriate standards [Wigan and Leigh College]
- staff participation in the Yorkshire Accord Mentoring Scheme enables York College staff to share and develop more effective working practices [York College]

Availability of opportunities for staff development

- the toolkit for psychology teachers, which uses published materials developed in the College [Aquinas College]
- the development of the use of the virtual learning environment drives forward a programme of continuous improvement by means of staff development in blended learning approaches to support teaching and learning [Bridgwater College]
- the handbook provided to new teaching staff on the year zero programmes [Carmel College]
- the Higher Education Tutorial Guide, which includes guidance on supporting electronic Individual Learning Plans as a way of monitoring student progress, is an example of the high-quality teaching guidance given to staff [City College Norwich]
- staff new to teaching in higher education and part-time staff are provided with well-planned induction, mentorship and continuing staff development, which is supportive and informative [City of Bristol College]

- 'ILT (Information Learning Technology) Champions' are used to promote and disseminate innovative learning and teaching [South Downs College]
- the appointment of the HE Teaching Coach, as it is proving to be an effective means of promoting teaching in higher education of a good quality [Sparsholt College]

Formal development programmes

- the effective use made of staff development by staff on the FdA Early Years Care and Education [Alton College]
- well-supported staff development contributes to enhancing the student learning experience [Bridgwater College]
- the staff development activity in the performing arts is directly relevant for higher education [Brooksby Melton College]
- there is a wide range of internal and external staff development opportunities offered, together with impressive staff participation in them [Croydon College]
- All higher education teaching staff are included in a weekly, three-hour scheduled time for training and professional development [Hackney Community College]
- Staff development activity contributes positively to the maintenance of high-quality teaching [Hadlow College]
- the variety and extent of staff development activities contribute significantly to the professional development of staff and enhance the quality of the provision [Lewisham College]
- The College support for a varied and extensive programme of staff development, with its formal link to staff professional review, ensures that higher education courses are taught by well qualified and suitably trained staff [Loughborough College]
- priority is given to initial and continuing professional development for staff by the College. This approach provides opportunities to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities [Nelson and Colne College]
- the comprehensive and systematic needs-analysis-based nature of the staff development plan and arrangements to support both teaching and support staff across a wide range of activities [South Tyneside College]
- the comprehensive approach to providing for the staff development needs of staff teaching in higher education [Sparsholt College]
- the variety and extent of staff development supports the advanced professional development of staff, which contributes significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the higher education ethos and quality of the provision [The College of West Anglia]
- staff development activity provides effective support for the delivery of the provision [Tyne Metropolitan College]
- part-time staff teaching on higher education programmes are involved extensively in College staff development activities [West Herts College]
- the supportive and sympathetic approach to assisting staff teaching on higher education programmes [Wigan and Leigh College]
- the remission in the form of a 13 per cent weighting of hours given to all staff teaching on higher education programmes [Wigan and Leigh College]
- the College holds annual development days and reflective days for staff, which feed into the annual programme self-assessment and action reports [Wirral Metropolitan College]

Teaching observation and peer review

- annual lesson observation for all staff [Aquinas College]
- staff benefit from the reciprocal arrangements for the peer observation of teaching between College staff and colleagues at the University of Bolton [Bolton Community College]
- the formation and operation of Higher Education Peer Groups/Action Learning Sets [Bradford College]
- the higher education peer observation system helps to enhance teaching and learning approaches and build confidence in new staff [Canterbury College]
- the College's Teaching Squares peer observation system [Carmel College]
- the systems in place to monitor the quality of learning that is used developmentally to support teaching staff [College of North West London]
- the process of teaching observation using advanced practitioners and the resulting centre reports, together with the Principal's newsletter on good practice [Dudley College of Technology]
- the Institute's developing process for the comprehensive observation of teaching and learning in its higher education programmes supports the enhancement of the quality of teaching and the dissemination of good practice [Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education]
- robust teaching observation procedures, including the resulting teaching support activity provided by the advanced teaching practitioners, which has a clear focus on needs of the higher education provision, ensuring a high quality of learning and teaching [Henley College, Coventry]
- the use of the themed observation process by business and computing to focus on higher education has effectively provided staff with an opportunity to focus and reflect on sector-specific issues and to share good practice [Hertford Regional College]
- the additional opportunity for higher education staff to develop and enhance their teaching and learning skills through the reciprocal teaching observation process being trialled with staff from a college in a nearby town [Leeds College of Building]
- the extensive, supportive and developmental method of peer review which staff believe promotes reflection and the sharing of good practice [Petroc]
- there is a robust pilot lesson observation process which aligns with the requirements of higher education teaching and learning [South Devon College]

Opportunities for scholarly activity

- the College provides strong support for staff development in gaining higher level qualifications, subject updating and improving teaching and learning which ensures currency in the curriculum and fosters a high level of staff commitment [Brockenhurst College]
- staff development systems support the achievement of higher qualifications and encourage scholarly activity by staff [Canterbury College]
- staff carry out a range of professional updating, research and scholarly activity with commitment and enthusiasm and the support of the College [City of Bristol College]
- the strategic commitment to staff development and scholarly activity in order to enhance the student learning experience [Havering College of Further and Higher Education]
- the new policy on scholarly activity for higher education staff [Hopwood Hall College]

- the Advanced/Postgraduate Certificate in Lifelong Learning (Vocational Subject Mentoring) provides an innovative vocational programme which strengthens mentoring and enhances the mentoring focus for both staff and students across the College [Lewisham College]
- the involvement of many staff in research informs their teaching and imparts a research awareness to students [Myerscough College]
- the Debbie Thornton Scholarship scheme enables a wide engagement of staff in research and scholarly activity, to inform curricular development and delivery [York College]

Annex B: Recommendations relating to staff development

Staff development strategies or frameworks

- review the Continuing Professional Development Strategy in order to provide staff development appropriate to higher education, which should include scholarly activity [Ashton-under-Lyne Sixth Form College]
- give further consideration to supporting staff in meeting the expectations of the FHEQ as the College implements level 6 teaching [Ashton-under-Lyne Sixth Form College]
- ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision [Basingstoke College of Technology]
- offer staff involved in the design, delivery, assessment and monitoring of the programme, specific higher education focused staff development that covers matters related to the maintenance and assurance of academic standards, the use of the Academic Infrastructure and enhancing student learning opportunities [Birkenhead Sixth Form College]
- in view of the College's plans to expand higher education provision, consideration should be given to the creation of a forum where staff teaching on higher education programmes can meet to discuss relevant issues and share good practice [Boston College]
- implement its proposals for higher education professional development to help keep staff apprised of current higher education practice [Carlisle College]
- develop a strategy for regular higher education lesson observations, which include the use of criteria relevant to higher education teaching and learning, and include a specific higher education focus to the work of the advanced practitioners team to help assure the quality of the higher education teaching and learning [Carlisle College]
- enhance staff development opportunities specific to higher education [City College Coventry]
- perform an annual audit of specific higher education development activities to develop a more focused and proactive development programme for staff [Hertford Regional College]
- take steps to maximise the attendance of all staff at higher education staff development events and develop and implement a strategy to ensure that all staff teaching higher education engage with an appropriate level of scholarly activity [Richmond upon Thames College]
- provide carefully targeted introductory information to new members of staff on the College's management of its higher education provision and the quality assurance processes underpinning academic standards [Somerset College of Arts and Technology]
- ensure the provision of staff development opportunities to update and embed procedures relating to internal verification [South Devon College]
- identify and plan for the specific, appropriate staff development requirements of those engaged in the delivery and assessment of higher education programmes [South Leicestershire College]
- make staff development more focused on the needs of the higher education provision to support curriculum delivery and assessment [South Thames College]

Availability of opportunities for staff development

- introduce an equivalent handbook to that provided for staff teaching on year zero programmes to staff teaching on year one programmes [Carmel College]

- put in place staff development to ensure that all teaching staff on higher education programmes are conversant with the content of the Academic Infrastructure. This would ensure a consistency of understanding of assessment requirements and levels of achievement including the correct use of higher education level descriptors, an issue commented on by a number of external examiners [Nelson and Colne College]
- enhance the support provided for higher education staff through a practitioners' handbook, which should provide key information pertinent to those new to higher education [South Devon College]

Consortia arrangements between colleges and links with awarding bodies

- explore the staff development opportunities offered under the terms of the existing partnership agreement, particularly in the area of study for higher degrees, to enhance further approaches to the maintenance of academic standards [Birkenhead Sixth Form College]
- monitor attendance at awarding body staff development events and ensure that all relevant staff are fully included [Hackney Community College]
- continue to encourage staff to liaise with colleagues at other colleges and at the awarding bodies in order to enhance levels of professional activity and scholarship [St Vincent College]

Formal development programmes

- establish a development programme specifically for staff teaching on higher education programmes so that the quality of learning opportunities may be maintained and enhanced [Alton College]
- further develop its strategy towards higher education staff development, paying particular attention to opportunities for scholarly activity [Askham Bryan College]
- formalise and record procedures for identifying and addressing higher education staff development needs across the provision [Aylesbury College]
- continue to ensure, through staff development, that staff, particularly new and sessional staff, are aware of and implement the College's policies and processes specific to higher education [Canterbury College]
- consider how attendance at staff development events can be systematically monitored, collated and taken into account during individual staff appraisal [Chichester College]
- encourage the course tutor for the Jewish Agudist Women's Information Technology and Tele-working Group to engage in the staff development opportunities provided by the awarding body, rather than relying on feedback from the Assistant Programme Leader [Derwentside College]
- empower staff approaches more fully in higher education by embedding effective systems for sharing good practice into the cross-curricular management and delivery of higher education [Guildford College]
- consider developing a programme for staff new to teaching on higher education programmes to ensure that they understand the requirements of higher education and, in particular, their responsibilities as internal examiners for the maintenance of academic standards [Hackney Community College]
- introduce a specific policy for staff development for higher education and a discrete system for reporting and evaluation [Huntingdonshire Regional College]
- keep a more systematic record of teamwork and development opportunities undertaken by staff [John Kitto Community College]

- increase the emphasis on staff development activities relevant to higher education issues such as embedding of the Academic Infrastructure, and higher-level teaching and learning skills [King George V College, Southport]
- make further improvements to the monitoring of staff development to ensure that all staff acquire appropriate knowledge and skills to support the programmes [North Hertfordshire College]
- consider maintaining the good practice booklet on the College's virtual learning environment alongside an associated staff discussion forum to encourage the sharing of the good practice [Richmond upon Thames College]
- monitor and evaluate the uptake of higher education staff development in order to ensure its continued effectiveness [South Downs College]
- ensure that all staff development relating to higher education provision is recorded formally and that records provide a clearer picture of the nature of the activities undertaken [Tameside College]
- review the allocation process for training and development funding to ensure clarity in the prioritisation of higher education staff development opportunities [York College]

Teaching observation and peer review

- develop the College's existing process for peer observation of teaching to ensure that all staff teaching on the higher education programme are observed in a higher education learning context in line with current practice in the University [Birkenhead Sixth Form College]
- consider introducing a specific higher education system of peer teaching observation, which would be more appropriate for the higher education provision [Bishop Burton College]
- modify the observation of teaching to make more reference to learning and teaching in higher education [Brooksby Melton College]
- implement the process of peer review of teaching as required by the awarding body [Capel Manor College]
- make use of its thorough and well-embedded teaching and learning observation scheme, to ensure that the observation sample includes an agreed proportion of higher education classes; the outcomes should be separately and routinely analysed, and be used to support enhancement [Chelmsford College]
- ensure that its Learning and Teaching Strategy and its observation of teaching make more reference to higher education [City College Coventry]
- ensure that the arrangements for staff development and the observation of teaching address the needs of higher education programmes and take account of the need for honours level teaching to be supported by scholarship [City Lit]
- continue to develop a peer observation scheme to support its higher education staff [City of Bristol College]
- develop the observation of classroom practice to reflect the requirements of higher education programmes [Dearne Valley College]
- explore the merits of a peer observation process to promote the enhancement of higher education focused teaching and learning [Hadlow College]
- consider how a specific higher education skills focus might be built into the lesson observation procedure [Hopwood Hall College]
- make more reference to higher education in its process for the observation of teaching [Lancaster and Morecambe College]
- provide a discrete higher education observation process to support lecturers in aligning learning and teaching to reflect implicitly the FHEQ [Thanet College]

- ensure the higher education teaching observation policy is embedded throughout the College and that consideration is given to moving this fully to the new higher education peer review process, to facilitate the dissemination of best practice and further nurture a higher education ethos and culture among staff [The Sheffield College]

Opportunities for scholarly activity

- encourage further engagement with the discipline, through support for staff to attend and present at academic conferences [Aquinas College]
- develop and implement a strategy to enable all staff teaching on higher education courses to engage with an appropriate level of scholarly activity and ensure that this is monitored and planned to inform the staff performance reviews process [Carlisle College]
- develop a cross-college forum to enable staff studying for higher degrees to share their knowledge and experience [Dudley College of Technology]
- consider the further development of higher education away days, the internal exchange of good practice and develop a realistic plan for scholarly activity [Hackney Community College]
- develop a coherent policy to advance scholarly activity among staff [Hadlow College]
- address the lack of an overview at senior level of scholarly activity among staff who are not research active [Myerscough College]
- expand opportunities for staff to undertake scholarly activity and research, and encourage uptake [Swindon College]
- build upon existing examples of scholarly activity to ensure that there is a systematic approach to subject updating in the College [West Herts College].

Appendix C: Methodology used for producing papers in *Outcomes from IQER*

For each published Summative review report, the text of bullet points of good practice and recommendations identified by the review team is taken from section E, Conclusions and summary of judgements. The bullet points are incorporated into a spreadsheet and coded to a series of top-level themes:

- Academic Infrastructure
- Assessment
- Employer engagement
- Public Information
- Quality management
- Staff development
- Student experience
- Student engagement.

Each bullet point text is then coded to a series of more detailed topics within each theme. This enables areas of good practice and recommendations to be sorted and analysed. The paragraph references in the main text of this paper refer to section B of the Summative review report, where the examples of good practice and recommendations are discussed in more detail and in the context of the individual college.

Individual *Outcomes* papers are written by experienced IQER reviewers and coordinators. To assist in compiling the papers, authors are able to use the spreadsheet of bullet points to establish a broad picture of the overall distribution of features of good practice and recommendations in particular areas, as seen by the review teams. They then consider this information in the context of the more detailed discussion in the main text of the Summative review reports.

Appendix D: The IQER reports

2008-09

Alton College
 Askham Bryan College
 Bolton Community College
 Calderdale College
 Carshalton College
 Central Sussex College
 Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education
 Henley College Coventry
 Herefordshire College of Technology
 Huntingdonshire Regional College
 Kingston College
 Lakes College
 Loughborough College
 Nelson and Colne College
 North Hertfordshire College
 Richmond upon Thames College
 South Tyneside College
 Sparsholt College
 Swindon College
 Thanet College
 The City Literary Institute (City Lit)
 West Hertfordshire College
 Wigan and Leigh College
 York College

2009-10

Abingdon and Witney College
 Aquinas College
 Ashton-under-Lyne Sixth Form College
 Aylesbury College
 Basingstoke College of Technology
 Birkenhead Sixth Form College
 Bishop Burton College
 Boston College
 Bradford College
 Bridgwater College
 Brockenhurst College
 Brooklands College
 Brooksby Melton College
 Cambridge Regional College
 Canterbury College
 Capel Manor College
 Carlisle College
 Carmel College
 Chelmsford College
 Chichester College

City College Coventry
 City College Norwich
 City of Bristol College
 College of North West London
 Croydon College
 Dearne Valley College
 Derwentside College
 Dudley College of Technology
 Guildford College of Further and Higher Education
 Hackney Community College
 Hadlow College
 Havering College of Further and Higher Education
 Hereford College of Arts
 Hertford Regional College
 Highbury College Portsmouth
 Hopwood Hall College
 John Kitto College
 Kidderminster College
 King George V College
 Lancaster and Morecambe College
 Leeds College of Building
 Lewisham College
 Myerscough College
 Newcastle College
 Newham Sixth Form College
 North West Kent College of Technology
 Petroc
 Reaseheath College
 Riverside College Halton
 Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
 Salford College
 Somerset College of Arts and Technology
 South Devon College
 South Downs College
 South Leicestershire College
 South Thames College
 South Worcestershire College
 Southampton City College
 St Vincent College
 Tameside College
 The College of West Anglia
 The Sheffield College
 Tyne Metropolitan College
 Walsall College
 Westminster Kingsway College
 Wirral Metropolitan College

The full Summative review reports can be found at
www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Pages/Institutions-A-Z.aspx.

Appendix E: Titles of papers in *Outcomes from IQER*

Papers to be published in 2011:

- *College management of higher education*
- *Staff development.*

Forthcoming papers to be based on the Summative review reports for reviews carried out in 2010-11:

- *Assessment*
- *The student voice.*

All published *Outcomes* papers can be found at

www.qaa.ac.uk/ImprovingHigherEducation/Pages/Outcomes-IQER.aspx.

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