



**QAA**

## **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

June 2009

Central Sussex College

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## **Preface**

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

## **Purpose of IQER**

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

## **The IQER process**

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

## **Developmental engagement**

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

## Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams, however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

## Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

## Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report:

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published.

Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.



## Executive summary

### The Summative review of Central Sussex College carried out in June 2009

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

### Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- there is a well-defined structure for the management of higher education in the College, with clear reporting arrangements to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities
- the Programme Validation Process provides a rigorous means for the consideration of new programmes
- there is an outstanding assessment strategy for the Higher National engineering programmes
- programme teams, in cooperation with central services, provide outstanding student support
- the College responds quickly and effectively to student opinion to improve learning opportunities
- the materials on the virtual learning environment are extensive, vocationally relevant, and well used by staff and students to improve the quality of the learning experience.

### Recommendations

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

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

- carry out a mapping process to link unit and programme outcomes clearly for the Higher National engineering programmes
- review annual reporting, to reflect more closely practices in the higher education sector, in line with the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*.

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

- consider how best to disseminate all features of good practice identified in its higher education provision
- consider adopting a branded approach to create a higher education identity when it next reviews its publications and the college website
- adopt a more consistent approach to the production and content of programme handbooks, further developing the good practice on some programmes.



## A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and conducted at Central Sussex College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards, and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes that the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel and the Universities of Chichester and of Sussex. The review was carried out by Mr Peter Hymans, Mr Wayne Isaac, Dr Margaret Johnson (reviewers) and Mr Robert Jones (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 The College is a further education college, formed from the merger of Crawley College and Haywards Heath Sixth-Form College in 2005. It is a large college, currently with 10,598 students. In addition to two main campuses at Crawley and Haywards Heath, it has campuses in Burgess Hill, Horsham, East Grinstead and a learning centre at Gatwick Airport. Its mission is 'to be the college of choice by putting skills and learning at the heart of everything we do'. The geographical area it serves in West Sussex has a population of approximately 350,000. Crawley, in particular, has a number of deprived wards, as well as an ethnic minority population higher than the Sussex average. Both these factors make the town a focus for widening participation.

5 The College is primarily a provider at further education levels 1 to 3. In the College's higher education strategy, the provision is predominantly part-time at level 4, offering the opportunity to progress to level 5 locally, where there is sufficient demand, and to honours degrees at partner universities. The HEFCE-funded programmes included in the self-evaluation comprise just under 300 students, roughly half of the total higher education enrolments at the College. Of these, 19 are full-time and 275 part-time, constituting 103 full-time equivalents.

6 The higher education awards at the College funded by HEFCE are listed below, grouped according to the responsible awarding body.

## **Edexcel**

HNC/D in the following programmes:

Legacy

- Aerospace
- Electrical/Electronic
- Manufacturing
- Automotive
- Mechanical

National Qualification Framework

- Aerospace
- Electrical/Electronic
- Manufacturing (Automotive)
- Manufacturing
- Mechanical

## **University of Chichester**

- FD Early Childhood

## **University of Sussex**

- Certificate in Education (Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector)
- BSc Computing Sciences (Foundation Year).

## **Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies**

7 The College has a philosophy of approaching the most appropriate higher education institute rather than having an umbrella relationship with just one. The College researches the provision and contacts the higher education institute that it judges to be the best match.

8 The awarding body for HNC/D Engineering qualifications is Edexcel. The University of Sussex has had a partnership with a college in Crawley since 1993 and, in March 2007, Central Sussex College achieved the status of an affiliated college of the University. A partnership with the University of Chichester commenced in autumn 2008.

## **Recent developments in higher education at the College**

9 Recently, the College has enhanced its academic structure through the work of the Higher Education Working Group. Higher education is now included in the title of the senior manager responsible for higher education in the College: the Executive Director for Skills and Higher Education. There is an application for a university centre in Crawley, led by the University of Brighton, through the 'New University Challenge' programme.

### **Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission**

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The College submitted a document based on the outcome of student focus group meetings, supplemented by data from recent learner satisfaction surveys. The process was facilitated by a member of the non-academic staff to ensure impartiality, and the submission was circulated widely to students to confirm the views expressed. The submission, to which the results of recent higher education satisfaction surveys were appended, was very useful and was supplemented by a fruitful meeting between the team and representative students.

## **B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education**

### **Core theme 1: Academic standards**

**How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure, and what reporting arrangements are in place?**

11 The College has relationships with three awarding bodies: the Universities of Sussex and Chichester and Edexcel. The College's responsibilities for ensuring the standards of its higher education provision are specified in memoranda of agreement with the Universities of Chichester and Sussex. For Higher National awards, Edexcel external examiners monitor standards. The relationships with the awarding bodies are strong and they give the College full support in the delivery of its responsibilities for the management of academic standards, under the terms of its validation agreements.

12 There has, however, been a delay with the completion of the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Chichester. The opening sentence of the Memorandum reads: 'This document sets out the agreement between the University of Chichester and one or more partners that must be signed by all parties before collaborative programmes commence'. The FD Early Childhood started in September 2008, but the agreement was not signed by both parties until June 2009. However, it was evident that the security of the programme was assured by the fact that students were enrolled as students of the University, and by the nature of the relationship between the University and the College.

13 The College has an organisational structure for higher education that clearly specifies how responsibilities for the management of the higher education provision and the maintenance of academic standards are delegated. A programme leader for each of the current four areas of provision reports to the director of the relevant College faculty for management purposes. The directors, in their turn, report to three executive directors with functional cross-college responsibilities. One of these is the Executive Director for Skills and Higher Education, who has responsibility for higher education across the College and chairs the Higher Education Working Group. Under the College's matrix system, each faculty director is responsible to the Executive Director for Skills and Higher Education for the higher education elements of their provision.

14 The College states in its self-evaluation that the 'forum for effectively coordinating practice in HE, the HE Working Group, oversees programme monitoring and review, approvals and sharing of practice. It informs the Curriculum and Quality Council of key developments'. The terms of reference and minutes of this group fully support that

statement. The College may wish to consider the constitution, role and title of the group to recognise its central and permanent function in a higher education provision that is likely to grow significantly. The Executive Director for Skills and Higher Education also provides the link between the Higher Education Working Group and the College Executive and the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Subcommittee of the College's Corporation.

15 Most staff are clear about their responsibilities for the maintenance of academic standards under the terms of the legal agreements. Programme team meetings are held with link tutors from the partner universities, to ensure clarity in relation to their areas of responsibility under the terms of the memoranda of agreement. Programme teams meet regularly and minutes show that due consideration is given to the maintenance of academic standards, as appropriate to the agreements with the awarding bodies.

### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

16 The programmes offered by the College have all been developed in close working partnership with the awarding bodies and the resulting programme specifications are generally comprehensive. The Higher National engineering programmes are designed by Edexcel, and the College has produced a programme specification as required within the Academic Infrastructure. However, there is no mapping of intended learning outcomes at unit level to the overall programme intended learning outcomes. Consequently, it is difficult to ensure that the programme-level internal learning outcomes are met by all of the permissible combinations of units being offered on these programmes.

17 The College is undertaking a review of its policies and procedures, to ensure that they are fully compatible with the *Code of practice*. At the time of this review, six sections have been completed, with a target date of January 2010 for the remaining sections.

18 All the programmes being offered by the College have been developed with the awarding bodies, who have validated them in terms of content, structure and relationship with aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, such as subject and qualification benchmarks and the FHEQ. The awarding bodies assure themselves that appropriate resources, policies and procedures are in place before giving the College permission to run a new programme. The College has a well-developed process for the internal validation of new provision, the Programme Validation Process. This was designed primarily for the approval of new courses within further education, but the College recognised that it needed to be revised to improve the scrutiny for higher education programmes. To achieve this, a further stage has been introduced into the process, giving the Higher Education Working Group oversight of new developments and new programmes prior to their submission to the formal Programme Validation Process panel. The Programme Validation Process is very effective, and it works well in preparing documentation for awarding body external scrutiny through full consideration of the aspects contained within the process.

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

19 The College has undertaken an exercise for each of the programmes indicating which institution is responsible for managing the separate aspects of the provision. This provides an excellent reference framework, to ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under the various University memoranda of understanding and the procedures of Edexcel.

20 The College recognises the need to monitor the effectiveness of programmes on an annual basis and has carried out a mapping exercise against the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. Programmes complete a programme-level self-assessment report annually, but the design of documents relates more to further education programmes and does not encourage in-depth evaluation. The College plans to change the format of the annual report to a style based on the reports it completes for its partner universities, which will fulfil both internal and external reporting requirements.

21 Each faculty produces a self-assessment report annually that brings together the reports from all programmes in the faculty. Although there are specific references to higher education programmes in the faculty report, they are virtually lost in the wealth of information relating to further education programmes. In recognition of this, the College has produced a higher education self-assessment report that brings together issues from across the provision. This is a useful exercise, but the format of the process is again based on the further education systems and does not encourage in-depth evaluation.

22 The College has an assessment policy and procedure covering both further education and higher education provision, but most higher education assessment is carried out under the regulations of the awarding bodies. The College has also recently produced some supplementary procedures relating solely to higher education programmes, concerning mitigating circumstances, plagiarism and academic misconduct. The team thought that significant progress had been made in this area since the Developmental engagement and would encourage further development. More generally, the College has responded positively to the Developmental engagement, dealing thoroughly with every point raised in its action plan.

23 The Developmental engagement noted the strength of the management systems within engineering that enables an exceptionally rigorous approach to internal verification. Within the same curriculum area, there is an outstanding assessment strategy that gives students the opportunity to achieve at higher levels through a rigorous programme of formative assessment, leading to summative assessment, supported by clear guidance on the requirements for Merit and Distinction grades.

24 Examination boards are held in accordance with the requirements of the awarding bodies. The minutes of examination board meetings confirm that they provide a secure mechanism for the determination of students' results. External examiners' reports are considered by programme teams and responded to appropriately.

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

25 The range of staff development opportunities is impressive. Although most of this relates to further education issues, there are opportunities dedicated to higher education. The College holds regular sessions on 'Sharing best practice in Higher Education', with the November 2008 session covering feedback to students, course handbooks, management systems and internal verification. A further session on the Academic Infrastructure was delivered by a member of a partner university in June 2009. Although progress has been made recently in fostering awareness of the Academic Infrastructure, the full benefits of this have yet to be realised. In particular, the College could consider improving the information given to new staff regarding their responsibilities for the academic standards of their work, in relation to their pedagogy and assessment practices.

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

## **Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities**

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

26 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those for managing academic standards, as described in paragraphs 13 and 14. All programme leaders with higher education provision communicate internally through the Higher Education Working Group, and there are very good links with the awarding bodies at management and subject level. The Working Group discusses items relating to the overall quality enhancement of its higher education provision, and the minutes of meetings show that the College is in the process of developing its approaches to teaching observation and quality monitoring at programme and college level, together with the arrangement of specific higher education staff development events.

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

27 There is close collaboration between the College and its partner universities through a number of different monitoring mechanisms to ensure that students receive the appropriate learning opportunities. For example, the review of the foundation year in computing sciences in February 2009 was exceptionally thorough and made recommendations to enhance the provision. The College is well supported by the partner universities in joint annual planning and review days, and staff development activities. These arrangements, together with those described in paragraphs 20 and 21 above, are broadly effective in supporting the College's management of the quality of learning opportunities and follow the procedures outlined by the partner universities in the memoranda of agreement.

**What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

28 The College recognises in its self-evaluation that it needs to increase awareness of staff and students in relation to the Academic Infrastructure and has already taken steps to do so. For example, it has included information on the College intranet for staff, and briefings have been sent to higher education programme leaders that address the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* and *Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. A training event for staff to highlight the Academic Infrastructure has also been arranged and many staff attended. In addition, information has been added to student programme handbooks that is also available on the virtual learning environment. Students know what is expected of them academically, and the programme handbooks contain details of programme specifications and the academic support each student can expect.

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

29 The National Student Survey results for 2008 are generally very positive, exceeding the sector average in nearly all areas, including teaching, assessment and feedback. The Developmental engagement singled out for praise the exceptional speed with which generally clear and constructive feedback was given to students on their work.



Most students whom the team met enthusiastically confirmed that this continued to be true. The sole exceptions were the students on the FD in Early Childhood who, while praising the quality of the feedback, said that it was not always timely. However, it was confirmed both by students and staff that this was a temporary problem at the start of the programme which had been identified and addressed.

30 There is a variety of mechanisms used to evaluate the teaching and learning provided at module, programme and college level that are used to enhance the learning experience for students. Students praise the quality of teaching and learning they experience. The College has introduced a cross-college higher education survey in 2009, using a common design and incorporating the structure of the National Student Survey. The action taken by the College is communicated to students in 'You said-we did' posters. Examples of responsiveness to student opinion are improvements in unit assessment guidelines and access to the websites of partner universities.

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

31 Student support is another aspect where the College is rated at higher than the sector average by the National Student Survey. This was unanimously and very positively confirmed by the students whom the team met.

32 All students are interviewed and screened for additional learning needs as part of the selection process. The College works closely with awarding bodies to ensure that the needs of students identified as requiring additional support are taken fully into account, especially in assessment. Students experience a thorough induction at which information concerning the College, the awarding body and their programme is provided. In the meeting with the team, students praised the dedication of members of staff. Students use programme tutors as the main source of support and clearly regard them as exceptionally helpful and accessible. They also use the College's learner support services to discuss non-academic issues and to access further specialist support. Effective use is made of mentors in the teacher training programmes and FD Early Childhood and, in response to a recommendation made in the Developmental engagement, this is now better organised.

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

33 The College has a peer lesson observation policy and procedure, the principal objective of which is to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The procedure is used to identify and disseminate good practice within programme teams, to provide feedback to staff on their performance, to provide quantitative evidence for self-assessment reports and to identify staff development needs. This scheme has recently been adapted to include guidelines for observers of teaching and learning in higher education lessons. The staff are clear that the observation scheme enhances their teaching performance, but examples of good practice in higher education are not disseminated across the higher education programmes as a whole.

34 Teaching and learning managers and coaches play an important role in developing teaching and learning through staff development. The teaching and learning managers have delivered teaching and learning modules and in-faculty training sessions on managing data. In addition to the sessions on 'Sharing best practice in Higher Education' (see paragraph 25), staff from all programmes attend a variety of external conferences and two members of staff are members of the Higher Education Academy. Staff also take the

opportunity to attend staff development events held by the partner universities, such as 'Understanding Reflective Practice', 'Designing Assessment', 'Improving the HE in FE student experience' and 'Part -Time Study in Higher Education'.

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

35 The College is responsible for the provision and maintenance of adequate and sufficient learning resources to support its higher education provision. Requirements are considered as part of the College Programme Validation Process prior to external validation by the partner university. The responsibility for ensuring that resources are provided is devolved to College faculties and resource bids are part of the annual planning cycle.

36 However, learning resources is the one aspect where the College's National Student Survey results are significantly below the sector average. In its self-evaluation, the College has acknowledged that it is an area that needs to be reviewed and has responded positively to student concerns with the provision of a higher education resource room, a higher education common room, an increase in library stock and the addition of software packages requested by students. This enhances the higher education environment of the College in line with the College's Higher Education Strategy.

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

**Core theme 3: Public information**

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

37 The College is responsible for publishing a range of information for potential and existing higher education students. This includes the full and part-time prospectus, programme briefings, web-based programme related information, programme handbooks, mentor handbooks, programme and module specifications and related documentation, and student application and induction materials. Scrutiny of the publications showed the information to be current, accurate and accessible. Students who had used these sources of published information commented that the content is accurate and helpful.

38 The College Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for producing the College prospectuses and any higher education specific advertising materials. The Learner Support Services Department is responsible for programme briefings. In the part-time prospectus, the various higher education programmes are included within the sections of the relevant curriculum areas. This does not make it easy to access the range of higher education provision, nor does it support the College's desire to establish a higher education identity for students. Programme briefing sheets are available for all higher education programmes in a variety of formats. They are accurate but contain varying amounts of detail. A more detailed, attractively produced leaflet has been produced for the Higher Nationals in engineering in a format that better meets the needs of employers as well as potential students. The College may wish to consider the creation of a more consistent format for programme leaflets and to create an identity for higher education provision in the next publication of the part-time prospectus.



39 For current students, the main sources of information produced by the College are the programme and module handbooks. All programmes provide student handbooks, which include detailed programme specifications. However, the handbooks vary significantly in style and content. The better aspects of programme handbooks include the provision of a wide range of useful information, including staff pen-portraits and contact details, detailed assessment guidelines, module specifications, guidance on programme regulations and College policies. Other examples include clear and accurate guidance on the availability of and access to additional learning support, appeals and plagiarism. Most students are very positive about these documents as up-to-date reference materials, especially through the virtual learning environment. However, the College is advised to consider adopting a more consistent approach to the production and content of handbooks, further developing the good practice currently adopted on some programmes.

40 Much of the programme material is in an electronic format, and published on the virtual learning environment. Online resources are now used as an integral part of teaching and learning. Students make extensive use of the electronic media and resources to support their learning, conduct research and communicate with tutors and other students. The use and effectiveness of the materials published on the virtual learning environment have improved significantly since the Developmental engagement.

**What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing? How does the College know that these arrangements are effective?**

41 The faculty directors are responsible for checking the accuracy of published information of programmes in their areas, working closely with the Marketing and Communications Department and programme leaders. The Head of Marketing and Communications has final responsibility for signing off agreed materials prior to publication. These arrangements, which are clearly documented, work well.

42 The College cooperates closely with the partner universities to gain approval for the programme information the College wishes to publish. The agreements with both universities contain specific reference to the approval of all publicity material and engage with the relevant precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distance learning (including e-learning)*. All relevant information is referred by the College to its partner universities through different, but well understood, processes. In turn the College advises its partners on the accuracy of the information they publish concerning the College. The College has recently introduced an audit process for publications. The first audit of a range of publications confirmed that information is, in the main, accurate and up to date. The audit process ensures that any inconsistencies or inaccuracies are identified and corrected. Audit results are reported to the Higher Education Working Group.

43 The Marketing and Communications Department and the faculties providing higher education programmes are responsible for ensuring that the College's website is accurate, up to date and meets the needs of current students and the general public. The design of the College's website has not been updated for some time but there are plans to do this. The website, while having a higher education search function, does not have a distinct higher education section and is not easy for potential higher education students to navigate. This does not help the College meet one of its higher education strategic aims, which is 'to provide a distinctive adult and HE student ethos, environment and support'. The College may wish to consider a link from the College home page to a higher education section when it reviews the design of the website.

The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

## **C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment**

44 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in June 2008. There were three lines of enquiry: encouragement of assessment practice that promotes effective learning; provision of appropriate and timely feedback to students on assessed work; and ensuring that everyone involved in the assessment of students is competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

45 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. Many of the assignments in both subject areas are based on realistic work situations and encourage the development of essential skills. Generally clear and constructive feedback is given to students with exceptional speed. In engineering, the team commended the internal verification systems, the reports to employers on students' progress, and the well-written and attractively presented student handbook.

46 The team also made a number of recommendations. In engineering, students should be informed that their performance in formative assessment may influence borderline grades in the final graded assignment. In teacher training, students should be clear about the use of level descriptors in assessment; arrangements for double-marking should be clarified; and better training and support should be given to mentors. The College should improve the use of the virtual learning environment and consider the introduction of a time allowance for scholarly activities to enhance higher level assessment.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

47 The College currently runs one Foundation Degree (FD) in Early Childhood, which commenced in 2008 and is validated by the University of Chichester. There are 17 students attending the programme on a part-time basis.

48 There are plans to increase the number of FDs at the College, in partnership with local universities. Research undertaken with young people and employers in Crawley has identified opportunities to develop FDs in Business and Management, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, particularly Electrical Engineering), Public Sector, Hospitality, Construction and the Built Environment and Cultural and Creative Industries.

49 The conclusions listed in paragraphs 51-56 below apply to all of the higher education provision, including the FD, with the exception of the conclusions (one good practice bullet point and one advisable recommendation) which relate specifically to the Higher National engineering programmes.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

50 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Central Sussex College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies: Edexcel and the Universities of Chichester and Sussex.

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

- there is a well-defined structure for the management of higher education in the College, with clear reporting arrangements to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 13, 14, 26)
- the Programme Validation Process provides a rigorous means for the consideration of new programmes (paragraph 18)
- there is an outstanding assessment strategy for the Higher National engineering programmes (paragraph 23)
- programme teams, in cooperation with central services, provide outstanding student support (paragraphs 29, 31, 32)
- the College responds quickly and effectively to student opinion to improve learning opportunities (paragraphs 30, 36)
- the materials on the virtual learning environment are extensive, vocationally relevant, and well used by staff and students to improve the quality of the learning experience (paragraph 40).

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

The team agreed a number of areas where the College is **advised** to take action:

- to carry out a mapping process to link unit and programme outcomes clearly for the Higher National engineering programmes (paragraph 16)
- to review annual reporting to reflect more closely practices in the higher education sector, in line with the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review* (paragraphs 20, 21).

53 The team also agreed the following areas where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

- to consider how best to disseminate all features of good practice identified in its higher education provision (paragraph 33)
- to consider adopting a branded approach to create a higher education identity when it next reviews its publications and the College website (paragraphs 38, 43)
- to adopt a more consistent approach to the production and content of programme handbooks, further developing the good practice on some programmes (paragraph 39).

54 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

55 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

56 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Central Sussex College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● there is a well-defined structure for the management of higher education in the College, with clear reporting arrangements to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities (paragraphs 13, 14, 26)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue with good practice</p> <p>Ensure new HE programmes are fully included</p>	Ongoing	HE Working Group	All HE programmes operating within HE structure for the management of higher education in the College ensuring the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review

Central Sussex College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009							
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Programme Validation Process provides a rigorous means for the consideration of new programmes (paragraph 18)</li> </ul>	Continue with rigorous consideration of new HE programmes	Ongoing	HE Working Group and Quality Department	All new HE programmes rigorously scrutinised	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there is an outstanding assessment strategy for the Higher National engineering programmes (paragraph 23)</li> </ul>	Share good practice across college HE programmes	November 2009	Technology HE Manager HE Working Group	Good practice shared	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>programme teams, in cooperation with central services, provide outstanding student support (paragraphs 29, 31, 32)</li> </ul>	Continue good practice	Ongoing	HE programme teams in cooperation with central services	Maintaining and improving learner feedback on student support	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review Learner feedback	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College responds quickly and effectively to student opinion to improve learning opportunities (paragraphs 30, 36)</li> </ul>	Continue good practice of seeking student opinion, and responding quickly and effectively	Ongoing	Executive Director - HE and Skills HE Working Group	Maintaining and improving learner feedback on improving learning opportunities	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review Learner feedback	

Central Sussex College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the materials on the virtual learning environment are extensive, vocationally relevant, and well used by staff and students to improve the quality of the learning experience (paragraph 40).</li> </ul>	Continue to develop the VLE and its use to improve the quality of the learning experience	Ongoing	HE programme teams	Maintaining and improving learner feedback on the VLE	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review Learner feedback

Central Sussex College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be <b>advised</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to carry out a mapping process to link unit and programme outcomes clearly for the Higher National engineering programmes (paragraph 16)</li> </ul>	Develop mapping process to link unit and programme outcomes clearly for the Higher National engineering programmes	December 2009	Technology HE Manager Technology Faculty Director	Mapping included in programme specification for the Higher National engineering programmes	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to review annual reporting to reflect more closely practices in the higher education sector, in line with the Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review (paragraphs 20, 21).</li> </ul>	Review and revise annual reporting of HE provision in the College	October 2009	HE Working Group	Revised annual reporting used for December 2009 reporting	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review



Central Sussex College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be <b>desired</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider how best to disseminate all features of good practice identified in its higher education provision (paragraph 33)</li> </ul>	Review and introduce a means of disseminating features of good practice identified	April 2010	Executive Director - HE and Skills	Good practice from peer lesson observation is shared	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to consider adopting a branded approach to create a higher education identity when it next reviews its publications and the college website (paragraphs 38, 43)</li> </ul>	Review, linked to university centre, adopting a branded approach to create a higher education identity	September 2010	Executive Director - HE and Skills	Enhanced higher education identity through branding changes	Executive Director - HE and Skills	College HE annual monitoring review

Central Sussex College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2009						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to adopt a more consistent approach to the production and content of programme handbooks, further developing the good practice on some programmes (paragraph 39).</li> </ul>	<p>Central editing of programme handbooks, which are to include standardised sections on cross college provision</p>	<p>January 2010</p>	<p>Executive Director - HE and Skills, Director of Learning Services Support</p>	<p>Revised text to include standardised sections on cross college provision available for HE handbooks for 2010-11</p>	<p>Executive Director - HE and Skills</p>	<p>College HE annual monitoring review</p>

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