



QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

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Canterbury 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 Canterbury College carried out in January 2010

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in Canterbury College's (the College) 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 agreement(s), 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 are mature policies and processes for the management and delivery of higher education in the College which assure overall standards
- staff development systems support the achievement of higher qualifications and encourage scholarly activity
- the higher education peer observation system helps to enhance teaching and learning approaches and build confidence in new staff
- the appointment of an academic mentor addresses the identified need to improve retention in some areas of provision
- well qualified and experienced full-time, fractional and sessional staff ensure relevance and currency in teaching and learning
- the Higher Education Study Centre provides excellent dedicated resources for higher education students.

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:

- work with the University of Greenwich to ensure that the arrangements for work-based learning within Foundation Degrees more fully reflect the requirements of the *Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark* and the recommendations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*.

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

- implement the College employer engagement strategy more rigorously in order to support the development of the Foundation Degree portfolio
- 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

- encourage a higher level of student ownership of tutorial outcomes to create a stronger link between tutorial processes and personal development planning
- continue to disseminate developing practice in the use of the virtual learning environment in order to establish more interactive approaches to learning through this medium
- improve pre-course information on the College website about the distinctive features of Higher National, Foundation Degree and honours degree provisions in order to provide more specific information about work-based learning
- clarify the relationship of the electronic prospectus to current website information and ensure that current information is presented clearly and consistently.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Canterbury College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Canterbury Christ Church University, University of Greenwich and the University of Kent. The review was carried out by Mrs Jane Durant, Mr David Gardiner, Professor Gillian Grant (reviewers) and Dr John Hurley (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*, published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers 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 general further education college, situated near the centre of Canterbury. Higher education provision has expanded substantially over the last 10 years. A separate faculty of the College, based in a higher education centre, provides higher education. Higher education teaching staff are normally contracted exclusively to higher education and have staffroom accommodation at the centre. As one of a number of higher education providers in Canterbury, the College concentrates on widening opportunities and providing progression routes for its own level 3 students.

5 During the academic year 2008-09, 796 higher education students funded by HEFCE were enrolled, 497 of whom were full-time. This represents 621 full-time equivalent students, constituting just over 8 per cent of the College full-time student equivalents. Student enrolments are increasing, from 726 in 2007-08, to 813 in 2009-10, largely in part-time provision. The restriction on student numbers funded by HEFCE is causing the College to rationalise its provision and not all programmes that are validated are currently being run. The College delivers 15 Higher National Diplomas or Certificates (HND/Cs), six Foundation Degrees, and nine BA/BSc 'top-up' degrees.

6 The programmes being run in 2009-10 are:

Canterbury Christ Church University

- HND Music Performance
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector

University of Greenwich

- BA Business (Marketing Management)
- BA Business (Human Resources Management)
- FD Management
- HND Tourism Management
- BA Business (Tourism Management)
- FD Electrical/Electronic Engineering
- HNC Electrical/Electronic Engineering
- FD Mechanical Engineering
- HNC Mechanical Engineering
- FD Computer-Aided Design
- HNC Computer-Aided Design
- HNC Building Surveying
- FD Art Practice
- HND Graphic Design and Advertising
- BA Visual Arts
- FD Moving Image Production
- BA TV Production & Moving Image Cultures
- HND Music Technology
- BA Creative Music Technology and Production
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector

University of Kent

- HND Business (Marketing)
- HND Business (Law)
- HND Business (Finance)
- HND Retail Management

- BA Health and Social Care Management
- HND Public Services
- BA Public Services Management
- HND Applied Animal Science
- BSc Animal Science.

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 While the partnership agreements with the awarding bodies differ in detail they all state that ultimate responsibility for validation, academic standards, appointment of external examiners and awarding of qualifications rests with the university. The mature arrangements with Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent devolve assessment and verification systems to the College, subject to scrutiny by the Universities. The University of Greenwich reserves the overall responsibility for assessment arrangements but, in practice, these are carried out jointly with Canterbury and other college partners. Operational responsibility for the enrolment, teaching, assessment and support of students rests with the College. Canterbury Christ Church staff teach on parts of some of the College programmes validated by the University, and the University of Greenwich approves staff teaching on its programmes. In practice there is a high degree of delegation to the College reflecting the strong confidence expressed by awarding body representatives in the College systems.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 The College higher education provision was formerly located in a higher education building a short distance from the main College site. A planned relocation to a new building on the main site has been disrupted by the withdrawal of funding by the Learning and Skills Council. While alternative funding has been secured for the building programme, it has been delayed. The higher education provision is currently located in temporary accommodation on the main College site. The higher education centre has, nevertheless, benefited from improved access to the College communications network and learning resource facilities as a result of this move.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The resulting submission used *IQER and the student written submission (2009)*, published by QAA, as a source document and guide. The work to develop the submission was coordinated by a Students' Union officer supported by the higher education Curriculum Development Officer. A student questionnaire was based on the core issues suggested in the guide. The survey was designed to be completed from any internet-enabled computer. An email was sent to all higher education tutors asking them to communicate the web designation to their students to allow them to complete the questionnaire. A response rate of 19 per cent was achieved. The students who responded were overwhelmingly positive about curriculum currency, teaching assessment and student support. Students also met the team during the course of the visit. Although awareness of the online survey was low the views expressed by the students closely mirrored those identified in the survey.

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?

10 The self-evaluation outlines coherent management structures and processes for higher education. All higher education provision is located in the Directorate of Higher Education and International Provision. The Director is a member of the College's senior management team and reports to the Principal and Chief Executive. The Director makes regular and specific issue reports to the senior management team about the strategic development of higher education in the College. These include an analysis of future trends and developments of the portfolio in response to external economic and educational factors and internal progression. The Director also attends termly meetings of the College's Corporation Board.

11 Within the Directorate is a Faculty of Higher Education led by a Faculty Head and two faculty leaders for Business and Technology, and Arts, Education and Science respectively. Academic staff teams responsible for day-to-day delivery and management of the College higher education programmes report to the faculty leaders. Programmes are reviewed in detail in a process that is completed each term, leading to an Annual Course Review, which is reported through the Faculty and College structures. The Director, together with the Head of Faculty, faculty leaders, the Faculty Senior Administrator and the higher education Curriculum Development Officer, attend the meetings that manage the College's higher education provision. The team considers that there are clear responsibilities for decision-making and reporting within this structure. A Directorate quality information bulletin is produced each month to update and inform higher education staff on quality matters and as a forum for sharing good practice.

12 The Directorate works with more than one awarding body, and has developed its own quality management policies and procedures, distinct from those of one or other of its three partners. This helps to ensure equivalent standards and quality of learning opportunities for students. The policies and processes for the management and delivery of higher education at the College demonstrate a high degree of maturity. The team considers that these constitute good practice.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13 The College employs a full-time higher education Curriculum Development Officer, responsible to the Director. The post involves advising on use of the Academic Infrastructure and, in liaison with awarding bodies, overseeing the progress of revalidation and programme revision in collaboration with the delivery team. The Curriculum Development Officer oversees development of new higher education programmes, assessment strategy of higher education programmes and quality monitoring and enhancement to ensure that appropriate reference is made to the FHEQ, subject benchmark statements and the *Code of practice*. The officer also supports staff in their understanding of the components of the Academic Infrastructure through training. The College's higher education Assessment Policy and higher education Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy take fully into account the Academic Infrastructure in their provisions.

14 Nevertheless, the team has some concerns about the extent to which these policies and processes are evident in the design of Foundation Degrees. While the College operates the programmes as validated by the awarding body, the evidence presented about the design, delivery and information to students on learning outcomes in respect of Foundation Degrees, suggests that work-based learning is not strongly developed within the programmes. The College acknowledged that work-based learning presents them with some difficulty and this has influenced the proposals they have developed for validation. The team recommends that the College works with the University of Greenwich to ensure that the arrangements for work-based learning within Foundation Degrees more fully reflect the requirements of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the recommendations of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*.

15 While the College has developed an employer engagement strategy, the reviewers are concerned that its effective implementation has not yet been realised fully to support the development of its Foundation Degree portfolio, resulting in some of the difficulties identified above. A handbook for work-based learning for Foundation Degrees was produced to support the delivery of a Foundation Degree in Retail Management, developed in partnership with two major retail firms. The programme is not, however, currently running, although a full-time HND continues.

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

16 Awarding body requirements for quality assurance are detailed in the partnership agreements made with the College. There is continuous informal contact through link tutors and awarding body liaison personnel. The awarding body representatives expressed a high degree of confidence in the College systems for meeting these requirements.

17 A robust system of quality assurance and enhancement is detailed in the College's higher education Internal Quality Processes Flow Chart and higher education Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy. Programmes are reviewed in detail each year in the annual course reviews, which are drawn up using a wide range of appropriate evidence. Each annual review has a termly action plan for improvement at programme level and is validated and graded by the Director at the end of each year to ensure an appropriate standard of reporting. These action plans form the basis of annual reporting to the awarding bodies through annual monitoring reports. Copies are sent to the relevant awarding bodies to assist each with its own quality assurance procedures.

18 The head of faculty produces a short report once a term for the College Quality Committee, which indicates current performance and improvements against plans. In addition the whole higher education team meets annually with College senior management when its performance during the previous year, reported in the self-assessment report, is graded.

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

19 The professional development needs of staff who teach on higher education programmes are identified through appraisal. The College holds a number of specific higher education development days. The number has increased since the Development engagement, with two days devoted to sharing the good practice that was identified. Other development days have focused on aspects of quality improvement and delivery in higher education and presentations on both national policy and operational requirements. These opportunities are available to all, including sessional staff. While good appreciation of awarding body and general College requirements was expressed at meetings with the team, not all staff were entirely confident in explaining the implementation of the College higher education policies. The team recommends the College continues to ensure, through development that staff, particularly new and sessional staff, are aware of, and implement fully, the College higher education specific policies and processes.

20 The College provides staff members teaching in higher education with an extensive range of opportunities to focus on individual development. These include remitted contact teaching hours and financial support for higher degrees. Higher education teachers on substantial contracts are expected to hold qualifications at master's level or above. A substantial number of staff have completed, or are completing, higher degrees or initial teacher training awards.

21 Staff records reveal good levels of participation in scholarly activity, subject-specific updating, joint development with and attendance at awarding body events. A wide range of subject updating activities, including conference attendance in the United Kingdom and abroad, is supported. In addition, records indicate that a relatively high number of staff publish articles, while others exhibit their own work, deliver papers at conferences and provide subject specialist consultancy for other agencies. A number of staff act as external examiners to higher education programmes delivered in other higher education institutions. Furthermore, a number of part-time appointees work elsewhere in higher education or in industry. This helps to ensure currency in programme delivery and comparability of academic standards with other providers. The review team considers the overall approach to staff development represents good practice through the strong emphasis on support for qualifications and scholarly activity.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

22 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities at strategic and operational levels are the same as those for managing the delivery of academic standards outlined in paragraph 11. The recently developed higher education strategic plan provides a framework for the effective management of the quality of the students' learning; the aim of providing 'excellent and inclusive' teaching is emphasised.

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

23 Responsibility for the daily operation of the teaching and learning on programmes is assigned to the College. Quality assurance processes outlined in paragraph 17, which include detailed annual programme reviews, are used as the basis for scrutiny and dialogue on the quality of learning opportunities with awarding bodies. The corresponding scrutiny and exchange of external examiner reports facilitates further assurance of quality of learning opportunities.

24 Representatives from the awarding bodies confirmed to the team their confidence in the quality of learning opportunities the College delivers on higher education programmes. Memoranda of agreements with Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Greenwich make explicit their requirements to assure the quality of the College staff who teach on their programmes, through consideration of curriculum vitae at validation and on the subsequent appointment of new members of staff.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

25 The strengths of the College approach to the Academic Infrastructure are identified in paragraph 13, while scope for development is identified in the approach to work-based learning in paragraph 14. In general, the systems ensure that appropriate account is taken of those aspects which impact on the quality of learning opportunities. The Curriculum Development Officer and partner awarding bodies check that alignment with the Academic Infrastructure has been made by the College while planning programmes for validation. Scrutiny of validation documentation confirms that consideration of relevant sections of the *Code of practice* underlies, for example, approaches to student support. Handbooks and specifications include a section on indicative approaches to teaching and learning.

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

26 A variety of strategies is used to monitor and review the quality of teaching and learning opportunities. Meetings at programme team, section and directorate levels provide appropriate forums for the staff to monitor programme delivery. A culture of continuous professional dialogue between teachers provides effective informal support.

27 A comprehensive system of lesson observations, undertaken by staff with experience in delivering higher education programmes, provides three distinct opportunities for teachers and managers to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is maintained and enhanced. Supportive observations give teachers feedback on their practice and focus on development strategies for individual improvement. Outcomes of annual graded observations, linked to formal staff appraisal procedures, are also used to influence staff development opportunities. The recent introduction of a peer observation scheme for teachers of higher education is a successful initiative, recognised by staff as a valuable mechanism for the transfer of good practice. It enhances teaching and learning approaches and helps to build confidence in new staff. In these ways teaching and learning is subject to a consistent review with reference to the specific needs of higher education.

28 The student voice is central to the review and management of the quality of teaching and learning. Formal procedures provide a range of opportunities for students to engage with staff in dialogue about the quality of teaching and learning. The College's Quality Management Committee considers the responses to module evaluations, induction and exit

questionnaires in the annual course reviews. Outcomes of regular student group meetings with a personal tutor also contribute to annual course reviews.

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

29 The College provides an extensive range of support services in order to support the aim of widening opportunity on higher education programmes. An effective referral system is used to ensure that students in need are directed to appropriate services, for example finance, hardship, advice and guidance. Members of the Higher Education Student Support Group, which coordinates support services for students, undertake reviews of services for students. Membership comprises managers from relevant College service areas and curriculum leaders. The group provides an effective forum for the exchange of information pertinent to wider student support issues and individual student circumstances. The student support services are monitored as part of student feedback mechanisms.

30 The College has recognised the need to improve retention and progression in a number of higher education programmes. It has recently created a post of Academic Mentor to provide support for students with specific needs. The role is highly valued by students who report receiving effective support by these means. The team considers that this demonstrates good practice in managing students' experience, but note that no assessment of impact has yet been made.

31 Tutorial support is provided through an 'open door' approach for immediate academic and pastoral needs, and around a clearly documented tutorial system which covers a review of academic progress, action planning and target setting, as well as support for additional study skills, support with coursework, and personal guidance. Tutorial records with individual learning plans are available in hard copy. The quality of records and target setting is variable and there is only limited reference to personal development plans. The team considers it desirable that the College considers ways to increase the level of student ownership of targets and create stronger links between tutorials and personal development planning.

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

32 Overall strategies and procedures for staff development are outlined in paragraph 19 and following paragraphs. In addition, the College has clear strategies for supporting new staff and inducting them into their teaching and tutorial roles. For staff new to teaching on higher education programmes, staff development support includes a four-day induction into College policies and procedures. Each new member of higher education staff is assigned a mentor. A higher education Quality Manual has now been developed in draft but is not yet adopted fully by all staff

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?

33 There is no evidence to suggest the temporary accommodation arrangements for higher education are detrimental to the quality of teaching and learning. The benefit of staff from different subject areas working in shared staffrooms was recognised as a mechanism for the increased transfer of good practice and ideas among teachers, as was the benefit for students of easier access to central College support services.

34 Within the College, initial consideration of capital resource for new programme developments is made prior to validation at the Higher Education Strategic Planning Group. Detailed requirements relating to the sufficiency and accessibility of learning resources, including staffing and physical resources, are scrutinised and approved at programme validation by the awarding bodies. They subsequently review the adequacy of staff resources and the qualifications and experience of new staff as they join the College. The adequacy of physical resources is reviewed by the College through the annual cycle of application and allocation of the designated higher education budget. Decisions for expenditure are agreed by the Director for Higher Education and International Provision.

35 Staff records indicate that teaching staff are highly qualified in their specialist subject areas. In particular the employment of a large number of fractional staff who are active practitioners provides strong support for ensuring vocational relevance and currency in teaching and learning. The team considers this to be good practice.

36 The main College building has high quality, spacious rooms and laboratories available to higher education. Well-equipped specialist facilities such as art, media and music studios are shared with further education programmes. The Higher Education Study Centre situated in the College Learning Resource Centre provides a valuable area for students to work independently, with access to specific course texts, and dedicated staff support for study, research, numeracy and literacy skills. The team considers the provision of these resources, and particularly the Higher Education Study Centre, to be good practice.

37 There has been substantial investment in the College network since the Developmental engagement. The College has been delivering staff development sessions in the use made of the virtual learning environment in readiness for deployment of the new system in December 2009. Review of use of the virtual learning environment indicates that it is mainly a repository for course materials. While this enhances learning for student, it is recommended that staff work together to transfer and extend the initial use of the virtual learning environment to enable a more interactive approach to learning.

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

Core theme 3: Public information

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

38 The College takes full responsibility, subject to the approval of its awarding bodies, for pre-course and on-course student information and the provision of public information to other stakeholders, notably employers. The College guides the provision of public information through a Higher Education Communication Policy formulated in 2008. The policy specifies the provision of pre-course and on-course information, outlines the ways in which it should be provided, and outlines management processes to ensure that appropriate communications between students and the College take place. The policy identifies 10 points for student information and communication. Some, such as the provision of student handbooks and a College diary to all registered students, are completely fulfilled. Others such as the provision of all programmes of study on the College virtual learning environment, are at different stages of development and completion according to the programme.

39 Pre-course information and higher education marketing is provided through a traditional paper-based prospectus, which is also available electronically from the higher education area of the College website. The Director of Higher Education and the Curriculum Development Officer devise the promotional materials using processes, outlined in paragraphs 44 and 45, to ensure accuracy. The College marketing team advises on the format of the design. The resulting prospectus provides reasonably comprehensive and attractively presented information to intending students. A telephone number is provided to admissions staff working in student services who can provide additional advice and guidance.

40 The higher education area of the website is easy to navigate. It has links with current events, advice and guidance, faculties and departments as well as specific links for services for employers and community involvement. The links to programme details provide more extensive information than the prospectus. Information on a range of HNC/Ds, Foundation Degrees and honours programmes were sampled and, in general, provide sufficient information to assist and encourage student enquiries. There is little information about the distinctive and different features of the HNC/Ds, Foundation Degrees and honours degrees. For example, work-based learning is given little emphasis in many Foundation Degree descriptions and there is little information on the opportunity to accredit prior experience or learning.

41 On-course information is provided through student handbooks, which are produced to a consistent format for all programmes irrespective of awarding body, ensuring all students have parity of information. All handbooks contain awarding body specific material. There is also a work-based learning handbook for Foundation Degrees. Student handbooks are furnished in printed copies at induction and are placed on the College intranet to be accessed electronically by students at home.

42 Handbooks provide details of programme content and structure, the way in which the programme will be taught and assessed and a teaching and assessment timetable. Handbooks also make it clear who will be teaching, tutoring and assessing. It provides comprehensive information on College services including personal tutorial and academic support services. Advice is given on study skills and good academic practice, including quoting, citation and referencing, and how to avoid plagiarism. All handbooks identify knowledge and skills that are required to complete the course although the level of detail varies. Professional skills are clearly indicated in those programmes where they are integral to the qualification. The College Diary, distributed to every higher education student at induction, provides comprehensive details on student rights and responsibilities detailed in the Student Charter and Services as well as general information, advice and guidance. Students expressed their satisfaction with, and confidence in, these sources of information.

43 The College sets high standards for itself through its published Employer Charter. This document seeks to assure investing employers of minimum standards designed to drive forward the progress of the individual student/employee and the business. There is also a letter to employers and work-placement providers that defines the respective roles and responsibilities of the employer and the College.

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?

44 Communication with awarding bodies to assure the accuracy of information is conducted through the College higher education Curriculum Development Officer. One

of the duties of this post is to check and coordinate information between the individual awarding bodies and the College. Information is cross-checked between College and awarding body programme leaders, link tutors and marketing systems, before being formally approved.

45 The Universities of Greenwich, Canterbury Christ Church and Kent have effective procedures in place with the College to review and oversee all promotional material initiated by the College, including the Prospectus and website material. The University of Greenwich annually reviews student handbooks developed by the College. Canterbury Christ Church University develops student handbooks jointly with the College while the Partnership Development Officer at the University of Kent reviews the student handbook annually. The awarding bodies expressed a high level of confidence in this system which ensures that the information published by the College and awarding bodies is accurate and identical.

46 While the information provided is comprehensive and its accuracy is assured there is some possibility for confusion. The prospectus (in printed or electronic form) retains the same content during the course of the academic year, but the website is updated on a more regular basis to provide definitive current information. It is recommended that the respective status of each is more clearly explained on the website and more consistently implemented. At the time of the review a number of Foundation Degrees that had failed to recruit including those in Retail Management and Integrative Counselling, were listed on the website. It is recommended that information on programmes currently running in the first or second year and those not currently being offered is distinguished more clearly.

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

47 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in November 2008. The lines of enquiry allowed a very broad consideration of the management of assessment in the College. The lines of enquiry were:

Line of enquiry 1: Does Canterbury College have robust systems for the management of quality and standards across the range of its awarding bodies in relation to assessment?

Line of enquiry 2: Does the quality of feedback to students assist them to attain appropriate standards and promote improvement?

Line of enquiry 3: Does published information match assessment practices? Is it clear and complete in its guidance to students?

48 Substantial good practice was found in the policies and processes for managing and assuring the quality of assessment which ensured consistency in assessment practice. Assignments were found to promote learning effectively and student learning was supported by constructive formative feedback. Comprehensive handbooks and assessment materials reinforced good academic practice in writing, referencing and quotation. There were examples of successful innovation in development of assignments and the use of the College virtual learning environment.

49 Recommendations included improved management of cover for teaching absences. Assessment loads were recommended for reduction on some programmes. Further staff development effort was recommended for disseminating good practice, strengthening scholarship and subject updating, and familiarising more staff with the potential and use of the virtual learning environment. All these matters were adequately addressed in the College action plan responding to the report.

D Foundation Degrees

50 There is a small portfolio of Foundation Degrees validated by the University of Greenwich, which often run alongside established HNC/D qualifications. Currently, Foundation Degrees are being offered in management, engineering, computer aided design, art and media areas. There are a number of programmes that are validated but are not being run, and a number of programmes including early years and event management have been withdrawn. The College continues to adopt a cautious approach to the extension of its Foundation Degree portfolio.

51 The College has developed an employer engagement policy but acknowledges difficulties in engaging employers at higher education level. Partly in consequence the team found that work-based learning is not strongly developed within the programmes. Foundation Degrees as validated did not reflect fully the requirements of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the recommendations of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. In all other respects Foundation Degrees enjoy the same framework of strong quality assurance maintaining standards, effective teaching and student support, good resources and staffing as HNC/D and honours degree provision in the College.

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

- there are mature policies and processes for the management and delivery of higher education in the College which assure overall standards (paragraphs 12, 17, 23)
- staff development systems support the achievement of higher qualifications and encourage scholarly activity (paragraphs 20, 21)
- the higher education peer observation system helps to enhance teaching and learning approaches and build confidence in new staff (paragraphs 27, 32)
- the appointment of an academic mentor addresses the identified need to improve retention in some areas of provision (paragraph 30)
- the well qualified and experienced full-time, fractional and sessional staff ensures relevance and currency in teaching and learning (paragraph 35)
- the Higher Education Study Centre provides excellent dedicated resources for higher education students (paragraph 36).

The College is **advised** to:

- work with the University of Greenwich to ensure that the arrangements for work-based learning within Foundation Degrees reflect more fully the requirements of the *Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark* and the recommendations of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* (paragraph 14).

The team considers it **desirable** for the College to:

- implement the College employer engagement strategy more rigorously in order to support the development of the Foundation Degree portfolio (paragraph 15)
- 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 (paragraph 19)
- encourage a higher level of student ownership of tutorial outcomes to create a stronger link between tutorial processes and personal development planning (paragraph 31)
- continue to disseminate developing practice in the use of the virtual learning environment in order to establish more interactive approaches to learning through this medium (paragraph 37)
- improve pre-course information on the College website about the distinctive features of HNC/D, Foundation Degree and honours degree provision in order to provide more specific information about work-based learning (paragraph 40)
- clarify the relationship of the electronic prospectus to current website information and ensure that current information is presented clearly and consistently (paragraph 46).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

53 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Canterbury 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, Canterbury Christ Church University, the University of Greenwich and the University of Kent.

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

- there are mature policies and processes for the management and delivery of higher education in the College which assure overall standards (paragraphs 12, 17, 23)
- staff development systems support the achievement of higher qualifications and encourage scholarly activity (paragraphs 20, 21)
- the higher education peer observation system helps to enhance teaching and learning approaches and build confidence in new staff (paragraphs 27, 32)
- the appointment of an academic mentor addresses the identified need to improve retention in some areas of provision (paragraph 30)
- the well qualified and experienced full-time, fractional and sessional staff ensures relevance and currency in teaching and learning (paragraph 35)
- the Higher Education Study Centre provides excellent dedicated resources for higher education students (paragraph 36).

55 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:

- work with the University of Greenwich to ensure that the arrangements for work-based learning within Foundation Degrees reflect more fully the requirements of the *Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark* and the recommendations of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* (paragraph 14).

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

- implement the College employer engagement strategy more rigorously in order to support the development of the Foundation Degree portfolio (paragraph 15)
- 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 (paragraph 19)
- encourage a higher level of student ownership of tutorial outcomes to create a stronger link between tutorial processes and personal development planning (paragraph 31)
- continue to disseminate developing practice in the use of the virtual learning environment in order to establish more interactive approaches to learning through this medium (paragraph 37)
- improve pre-course information on the College website about the distinctive features of HNC/D, Foundation Degree and honours degree provision in order to provide more specific information about work-based learning (paragraph 40)
- clarify the relationship of the electronic prospectus to current website information and ensure that current information is presented clearly and consistently (paragraph 46).

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 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.

57 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.

58 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/or completeness of the information the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there are mature policies and processes for the management and delivery of higher education in the College which assure overall standards (paragraphs 12, 17, 23) 	Continue to consistently implement and regularly review the policies and procedures in place for the management and delivery of higher education	Annual review (July of each year)	Director of Higher Education and International Provision	Policies and processes remain robust and fit for the purpose of assuring overall standards, evidenced in External examiner reports and external reviews	Partner universities Quality Committee of the Corporation Quality Management Committee	External Examiner reports Annual Institutional Review Quality reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff development systems support the achievement of higher qualifications and encourage scholarly activity (paragraphs 20, 21) 	Continue to devise and implement CPD plans annually for each area, taking into account	Annual CPD plans (written in September of each year) Regular applications	Head of Faculty for Higher Education Head of Faculty for Higher Education and	Continued improvement in the level of qualifications held by higher education staff	Partner universities Establishment Panel Senior	CPD plans Self-Assessment Reports on staff development Establishment

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>current staff qualifications and to prioritise scholarly activity</p> <p>Continue to organise specific HE staff development days which encourage the sharing of good practice and discussion</p> <p>Encourage HE team to source and apply for appropriate events which arise</p>	<p>to the Establishment Panel for staff development</p> <p>At least five days spent annually on HE development events</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Faculty Leaders</p> <p>Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders</p> <p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision</p> <p>Faculty Leaders</p>	<p>Higher education staff continue to be up to date with current scholarly debate in their subject area to inform their teaching</p>	<p>Management Team</p>	<p>Panel papers</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the higher education peer observation system helps to enhance teaching and learning approaches and build 	<p>Continue to implement system of peer observations across the</p>	<p>To be completed each year by the end of March</p>	<p>Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders</p>	<p>Improvements in teaching and learning and open discussion between</p>	<p>Principal and Senior Management Team in Self-Assessment</p>	<p>Self-Assessment Reports</p> <p>Appraisal documents</p>

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
confidence in new staff (paragraphs 27, 32)	faculty		Higher education team	colleagues Integration of new members of staff	Reports Higher Education management team in team meetings	Team meeting minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the appointment of an academic mentor addresses the identified need to improve retention in some areas of provision (paragraph 30) 	Review of effectiveness of post of academic mentor, support methods and continued strategies to improve retention on some programmes	Review of post April 2010 Ongoing use of support implementation of strategies	Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders Higher education team	Improved retention in areas of concern	Principal and Senior Management Team in Self-Assessment Reports and fortnightly meetings Director of Higher Education and International Provision Partner universities	Self-Assessment Reports Quality Committee reports Monthly retention reports Annual Course Reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the well qualified and experienced full-time, fractional and 	Continued implementation of effective	Ongoing	Director of Higher Education and	Employment of well qualified and	Principal and Senior Management	Self-Assessment Reports

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
sessional staff ensures relevance and currency in teaching and learning (paragraph 35)	recruitment practices and procedures and CPD planning to recruit and retain a well qualified staff team		International Provision Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders	experienced team who are effective in their teaching and learning	Team Quality Committee	Quality Committee reports CPD plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Higher Education Study Centre provides excellent dedicated resources for higher education students (paragraph 36) 	Continued use of a dedicated study centre for higher education students and ongoing review of resources for higher education students	Ongoing	Director of Higher Education and International Provision Director of Student Support Services	Dedicated resources for higher education students to enhance their learning in an appropriate environment Student satisfaction	Principal and Senior Management Team Re-development and Estates team	Re-development SMT meeting minutes Student Reps meeting minutes Student feedback questionnaires

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed an area where the College should be advised to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to work with the University of Greenwich to ensure that the arrangements for work-based learning within Foundation Degrees more fully reflect the requirements of the <i>Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark</i> and the recommendations of the <i>Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning</i> (paragraph 14) 	<p>Closely review the AI relating to work-based learning for requirements</p> <p>Meet with University of Greenwich on regular basis to review arrangements</p> <p>Review of work-based learning on current FDs</p>	<p>April 2010</p> <p>Initial meeting March 2010, no less than termly thereafter</p> <p>May 2010</p>	<p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision and Head of Faculty for Higher Education</p> <p>Faculty Leaders and programme leaders</p> <p>Faculty Leaders and programme leaders</p>	<p>Full knowledge of and compliance with the requirements for work-based learning in the Code of Practice</p> <p>Joint effort to strengthen arrangements for work-based learning on the College's Foundation Degrees</p>	<p>Principal and Executive Director</p> <p>Partner university</p>	<p>Reports to Senior Management Team</p> <p>Minutes of meetings and HE Committee, Annual Institutional Review</p>

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Strengthen links with employers for design, review and assessment of FDs in line with requirements of the <i>Code of practice</i> Meet with <i>fdf</i> for advice on improving work-based learning	July 2010 February 2010	Faculty Leaders and programme leaders Director of Higher Education and International Provision	More and improved links with employers contributing to the programmes Improved knowledge of requirements of work-based learning	Quality Committee Principal and Executive Director	Quality Committee reports

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010							
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<p>The team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement the College employer engagement strategy more rigorously in order to support the development of the Foundation Degree portfolio (paragraph 15) 	<p>Thorough review of the College's employer engagement strategy and alignment with higher education requirements</p> <p>Strengthen links with employers for design, review and assessment of FDs (as above)</p> <p>Close work with the College's Business</p>	<p>May 2010</p> <p>July 2010</p> <p>July 2010</p>	<p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision and Head of Faculty for Higher Education</p> <p>Faculty Leaders and programme leaders</p> <p>Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders</p>	<p>Employer engagement strategy which is a clear focus of the faculty's activities</p> <p>More and improved links with employers contributing to the programmes</p> <p>Access to wider bank of employers which have</p>	<p>Principal and Executive Director</p> <p>Partner university</p> <p>Director of Higher Education and International</p>	<p>Self Assessment Reports</p> <p>HE Committee minutes and Annual Institutional Review</p> <p>Team meetings and monthly review meetings</p>	

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Development Unit for sourcing suitable employers and facilitating links			existing links to the College to link with higher education	Provision	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (paragraph 19) 	Dissemination of the new Higher Education Quality Handbook to all staff	March 2010	Director of Higher Education and International Provision	Improved knowledge of the College's policies and processes for higher education delivery for all staff	Principal and Executive Director	Self Assessment Report
	Effective use of the mentor system for new staff	Ongoing	Higher education team	Strong support for all new lecturers	Director of Higher Education and International Provision	Reports for Quality Committee and Quality Management Committee
	Effective use of team meetings for sharing information	Monthly	Faculty Leaders	Sharing of good practice amongst the higher education team	Director of Higher Education and International Provision	Minutes of HE team meetings

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Effective support and management of new staff by Faculty Leaders	Ongoing	Faculty Leaders			
	Improve induction system for new staff to incorporate more information specific to higher education delivery	May 2010	Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders	Improve awareness of new staff of the policies and processes in place	Director of Higher Education and International Provision	Feedback from new staff
	'Welcome' half day to be arranged for all new and sessional staff before the start of the new academic year	September 2010	Faculty Leaders	Specific induction to highlight key policies and processes and better integration of new team members	Director of Higher Education and International Provision	Feedback from new staff

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage a higher level of student ownership of tutorial outcomes to create a stronger link between tutorial processes and personal development planning (paragraph 31) 	<p>Complete review of tutorial system and documentation including discussion with other colleges</p> <p>Consultation with students on findings of review</p> <p>Implementation of new tutorial system and documentation</p>	<p>April 2010</p> <p>May 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p>	<p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision and Head of Faculty for Higher Education</p> <p>Higher education team</p>	<p>Tutorial system with more student ownership, high levels of support and effective target setting for students which is better aligned to personal development planning</p>	<p>Principal and Executive Director and Quality Management Committee</p>	<p>Quality Management reports</p> <p>Minutes of Student Reps meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to disseminate developing practice in the use of the virtual learning environment in order to establish more interactive approaches to learning through this 	<p>Consult with JISC on new interactive technologies</p>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision and Head of Faculty for Higher</p>	<p>More effective use of the College's virtual learning environment as an active tool for teaching</p>	<p>Principal and Executive Director and Quality Management Committee</p>	<p>Staff development plans and agenda for HE Development Days</p>

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
medium (paragraph 37)	<p>Pilot of more interactive uses of VLE</p> <p>Discussion and sharing of practices amongst HE team</p> <p>Continued staff development in the use of the VLE</p>	<p>September 2010</p> <p>November 2010</p> <p>July 2010 onwards</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>Higher education tutors</p> <p>Head of Faculty for Higher Education and Faculty Leaders</p>	<p>and learning</p> <p>Teaching team with the skills to make use of the VLE</p> <p>Higher level of student use and engagement with the VLE</p>	<p>Establishment Panel (staff development)</p> <p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision</p>	<p>Annual Course Reviews</p> <p>Establishment Panel reports and staff development evaluations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve pre-course information on the College website about the distinctive features of Higher National, Foundation Degree and honours degree provisions in order to provide more specific information about work-based learning (paragraph 40) 	<p>Review information on the website</p> <p>Provide additional web information on the distinctive characteristics of the faculty's qualifications</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>April 2010</p>	<p>Curriculum Development Officer</p> <p>Curriculum Development Officer</p>	<p>Improved information for applicants about the distinctiveness of the qualifications delivered in the faculty</p>	<p>Quality Management Committee</p> <p>Partner universities</p>	<p>Quality Management reports</p> <p>Annual Institutional Review</p>

Canterbury College action plan relating to the Summative review: January 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Improve information to students at interview	March 2010	Course tutors	Better information about the requirements for work-based learning for FD applicants		Annual Course Reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify the relationship of the electronic prospectus to current website information and ensure that current information is presented clearly and consistently (paragraph 46) 	<p>Clearly signpost on the website which is the most current information</p> <p>Ensure the information is current and clearly presented</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Curriculum Development Officer</p> <p>Curriculum Development Officer</p> <p>Faculty Leaders</p>	<p>Visitors to the website clear which is the most current source of information</p> <p>Information up-to-date, accurate and clearly presented</p>	<p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision</p> <p>Director of Higher Education and International Provision</p>	<p>Website pages</p> <p>Student induction questionnaire</p>

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