

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

March 2010

Capel Manor 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 Capel Manor College carried out in March 2010

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 agreement, for the standards of the award it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or 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-managed learning and teaching process with an emphasis on developing higher-level skills, in particular for self-employment
- the engagement of employers and links with the land-based industry enhance the students' learning experiences
- there is good access to learning resources for students with disabilities and a clear policy for the general support they receive which facilitates their learning
- the high quality and effectively managed specialist learning resources make a particularly positive contribution to the provision
- the use of the College's virtual learning environment in enhancing students' learning.

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:

- ensure that the Programme Management Committee meets, records its meeting and produces an action plan, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement
- ensure that there is a written and signed agreement with the awarding body before accepting students on a programme
- ensure that for external examiners the procedures for nomination and appointment are followed and there is a written and signed agreement in place.

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

- finalise its articulation arrangements with other institutions to provide students with more opportunities to progress to undergraduate programmes
- take steps to familiarise teaching staff with the Academic Infrastructure
- the Programme Team should implement the process of peer review of teaching as required by the awarding body
- ensure that all written feedback links clearly to learning outcomes, includes more annotated comments and indicates how students can improve.

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 Capel Manor 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 Birkbeck College, University of London. The review was carried out by Mr Seth Crofts and Dr Hayley Randle (reviewers), and Mr Philip Markey (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 the awarding body, meetings with staff, students, employers and reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. As the College has fewer than 50 full-time equivalents, it elected not to have a Developmental engagement and the Summative review was conducted by a desk-based study. The team scrutinised samples of student work. 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 awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the programmes delivered at the College.

4 The College is a specialist land-based college with its largest campus at Enfield and four other centres at Regent's Park, Gunnersbury Park, Crystal Palace and within Barking College. The Enfield Campus, established in 1968, occupies an ancient manor estate established in the late thirteenth century. Lately, the College has expanded significantly and it is now a major tourist attraction, internationally known as a learning resource for all those interested in plants, animals and the environment.

5 The College's mission is 'to promote lifelong learning through the understanding and enjoyment of flowers, trees, plants and animals for career, business, educational and leisure purposes'. It is mainly a further education college, with a small higher education provision and with some short courses for the public. For its higher education provision, the College recruited to a single Higher National Diploma programme until 2006. Now it offers two Foundation Degrees, only one of which has recruited at the time of the review. The Foundation Degree (FdSc) Garden Design in Practice is a two-year full-time and four-year part-time programme. There are 19 full-time and three part-time students, making a total of 20.5 full-time equivalent students. The launch of the FdSc in Horticulture was deferred because of low recruitment.

6 The College offers the following programme:

Awarded by Birkbeck College, University of London

- FdSc Garden Design in Practice (with a sub award of Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) Garden Design) (18).

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

7 The College and Birkbeck College (University of London) have had a professional relationship since 2007, starting with the delivery of the CertHE in Garden Design. The Partnership Agreement for the development of two Foundation Degrees was finalised in March 2009. Both programmes are linked with the Department of Geography, Environment and Developmental Studies at Birkbeck College. Originally, the programme was directly funded by HEFCE but was transferred to Birkbeck College and indirectly funded in 2008. Students on the programme are enrolled as Birkbeck students.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 The decision to postpone the start of the Foundation Degree in Horticulture has caused the proposed expansion of the higher education provision to be delayed. The development of the FdSc Garden Design in Practice programme has been strongly influenced by developments with the land-based industries, particularly the challenging new developments in Urban Green Spaces and in focus of sustainability and biodiversity. The College is keen to meet the concerns over employee skills shortages in the land-based sector and employers' concerns over the lack of training opportunities. The College has produced a Higher Education Strategy that sets out clear quality and operational targets.

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. Students compiled a written submission which was produced by student representatives from both years of the programme plus a graduate from the previous year. The report says that the overwhelming majority of students enjoy a 'superb learning experience in a happy and harmonious atmosphere'. They did comment adversely on some issues which were then raised with the review coordinator at the preparatory meeting. Since the publication of the submission the students said that the College had addressed the issues.

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 College does not have a separate reporting process for managing its higher education programmes; it has a generic process covering all its provision from short courses to higher education. The College has a Higher Education Co-ordinator who has been in-post since 2004. The Co-ordinator has direct responsibility for the operational management of the FdSc in Garden Design in Practice and overall responsibility for both Foundation Degrees in the role as Programme Director for all the higher education provision. The Programme Director reports directly to the College's Academic Board. The Governing Body holds the ultimate responsibility for the strategic management of the quality of the provision. This responsibility is delegated to the College Governors' Curriculum and Quality Committee which meets once each term. This Committee monitors the academic health of the provision, considering issues such as recruitment,

student achievement and student feedback through evaluations and surveys. The Academic Board advises on the strategic development of all programmes and considers annual self-assessment reviews completed by programme leaders. This committee is responsible for addressing any concerns in relation to the student experience. The Academic Board advises on targets for student recruitment and student achievement which are ratified by the Governors' Curriculum and Quality Committee. Through the links with the Programme Director, the College's senior management have an overview of the higher education provision.

11 The College's Higher Education Strategy sets out a well-defined rationale for the acquisition of higher level skills in response to the needs of the local economy in relation to land-based occupations. There are three major drivers of quality: the Quality Policy, the Development Plan, and the Quality Improvement Policy. The three drivers are generic, covering all elements of provision from work-based learning to intensive full-time programmes, from entry level foundation provision to higher education. Within the overall structure, approaches to the continuous improvement informed by data and student feedback are tailored to the particular cohort.

12 The student voice is comprehensively captured through several processes and is used to enhance the provision. Module evaluations are completed and used to inform the annual self-assessment process. Meetings are held with student representatives to seek their views at the Staff-Student Exchange Committee. The Programme Team and the students produce an end-of-term review. Students give a very positive account of their experience at the College. They regard the staff as being responsive to their feedback and are able to cite developments that have been put in place as a result of student feedback. The College's virtual learning environment is well used to collect student evaluations.

13 The Programme Team is responsible for the management of assessment. It employs a range of strategies to make students aware of the module and programme learning outcomes. These were clearly outlined in the module descriptors and programme specification. The College produced a document showing how assessments are mapped with learning outcomes. The College uses the awarding body's assessment regulations. The self-evaluation makes no reference to how these regulations are applied, although the regulations are included in the individual module specifications. The Programme Specification states that student work is marked by the module tutor and moderated by the Programme Director, and that double-marking and agreement of the moderated marks takes place. The Programme Team operates a process of verification of the student marks awarded with the final mark verified by a second marker, usually the Programme Director. The student work scrutinised by the team demonstrated that these processes take place.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14 The FdSc Garden Design in Practice was developed in two stages, with students initially enrolling onto the CertHE in Garden Design in September 2007. Approval of the Foundation Degree occurred in Summer 2009, with students able to transfer onto the degree. The Sector Skills Council for the Environmental and Land-Based Sector does not have, as yet, a framework for Foundation Degrees and, in the future, the College will use the *Subject benchmark statement* for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer services (2009), when the degree is reviewed. During the validation, Birkbeck College provided clear guidance on the use of the various elements of the Academic Infrastructure. The Birkbeck-designed Programme Specification template requires explicit comment on how the programme embraces the Academic Infrastructure and, in particular, that the

programme is in line with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*.

15 The programme proposal/specification is detailed and comprehensive, and provides clear reference to learning outcomes and sets out subject, intellectual and practical outcomes which are transparent and mapped across the programme as a whole. The assessment strategy for the programme is well designed and provides a mixture of methods that support the testing of practical as well as academic skills. This approach to assessment is well received by the student body. The team finds that the design of assessments is in line with the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*.

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

16 The Partnership Agreement and the Programme Specification clearly set out the College's obligations for meeting the requirements of the awarding body. The overall management is the responsibility of the Partnership Steering Group comprising senior members of each institution, which meets annually to receive the College's responses to student feedback and the report from the Programme Management Committee. Birkbeck is responsible for the initial approval and subsequent reviews of the programme. The College provided a helpful checklist identifying the different responsibilities of each institution. The programme directors at Birkbeck College and at Capel Manor College provide the link between the two institutions.

17 The College is discharging many of the stated obligations, for example, the approval of teaching staff, the collection of student feedback and the management of assessment boards. The programme was sent for approval in October 2007 and was approved in September 2008. The document provides clear requirements for maintaining standards, the management of the programme and student support. There is a management structure of the Programme Team, Programme Management Committee and the Partnership Steering Group. There are clear terms of reference for these committees. In particular, it states that the Programme Management Committee should meet at least once each term, produce a written record of meetings and a detailed action plan. This Committee has not met since it was required to do so in September 2008. The College informed the team that meetings will commence in March 2010 and will share its action plans with the awarding body. It is recommended as advisable that the Programme Management Committee meets in accordance with the Partnership Agreement, records its meetings and provides an action plan.

18 The College states that the Partnership Agreement was in effect from August 2007, although it was not signed until March 2009 because of a delay in finalising financial arrangements. Students were accepted on the programme in September 2007 based on a verbal agreement and discussions by email between senior staff of both institutions. The College argues that there were no risks attached to this. The team regarded the absence of a legal agreement as a potential risk to the provision and the students. It is recommended as advisable that the College ensures there is a written and signed agreement with its awarding body before accepting students on a programme. The awarding body has taken steps to improve the monitoring its collaborative provision and the guidance given on the development of agreements.

19 Birkbeck College is responsible for the appointment of external examiners. There are two external examiners, one dealing specifically with the personal development planning

modules shared across several institutions, and the other specifically for the College. In the former report, while it is not always clear which comments apply to which institution, the Birkbeck College template requires that external examiners comment on whether the programme meets the requirements of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Both examiners confirm that the programme does, and their comments are detailed and undertaken with some thoroughness to demonstrate alignment.

20 The current external examiner was appointed for the Foundation Degree in September 2009, but was external examiner for the CertHE which commenced in September 2007. Students on this programme were transferred through to the second year of the FdSc in 2008-09. There is no signed written agreement for this examiner to be responsible for the period 2007-08 and part of 2008-09. Moreover, the person appointed for the CertHE programme in September 2007 (for which there is no nomination form) had only left the College, as a Head of Department from which the programme is delivered, in August 2007. This fails to consider fully the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining* that refers to institutional procedures ensuring there is no potential conflict of interests, and that these are resolved prior to the appointment. A note from the awarding body stated that the external examiner was appointed because there were few other suitably qualified candidates available, and that the awarding body was aware that the examiner had recently worked at the College but had not taught any of the students. However, this does not explain the lack of documentation for the appointment for the CertHE in 2007, and the lack of documented approval for the period when there were two intakes for the FdSc during 2008-09. The lack of documentation is explained as being due to an administrative error. It is recommended as advisable that the College (with its awarding body) ensures that the procedures for the nomination and appointment of external examiners are followed and there is a written and signed agreement in place.

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

21 The College has a staff development policy with some positive features. For example, a staff development coordinator takes an overview of all staff development activity and manages the operational delivery. Plans for staff development are linked to the College's corporate objective and student feedback from programme evaluation. Staff development activity is an agenda item at all major deliberative groups within the College where the aim is to prioritise the acquisition of higher-level qualifications. Staff development records and curricula vitae show that staff have taken up the opportunities for recent development activity for higher education. Staff also have access to a wide range of development activities at Birkbeck College where they can study alongside university colleagues. The opportunities for staff development are relevant and appropriate to a range of subject-specific pedagogic needs.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the management and

delivery of the standards of the award it offers on behalf of its awarding body.

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 management of the quality of learning opportunities involves the same process described in paragraphs 11, 12 and 13. The Programme Manager/Higher Education Co-ordinator is responsible for the management of learning opportunities. The annual course reviews include items on learning opportunities. These are evaluated and action points are identified and checked. End-of-year module evaluations refer to learning opportunities and staff respond to student evaluations.

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

23 The process of how the College assures itself that students receive appropriate learning opportunities is described in paragraphs 11, 12 and 13. The Partnership Agreement refers to the College's obligations to provide appropriate learning opportunities including staffing, progression arrangements and resources.

24 The Partnership Agreement states that once students complete the approved programme they are eligible for consideration for entry to higher-level study. Currently, students are able to progress to the BA (Hons) Professional Studies at Birkbeck College or to any other recognised programme. The self-evaluation refers to negotiations to provide more opportunities for students to top up their Foundation Degrees. It is recommended as desirable that the College finalises its articulation arrangements with other institutions to provide students with more opportunities to progress to undergraduate programmes.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

25 The validation document for the FdSc Garden Design in Practice programme and the programme specification make full reference to those elements of the Academic Infrastructure relevant to the quality of learning opportunities. As indicated in paragraph 15, the awarding body provides rigorous checks for ensuring programmes are aligned with the Academic Infrastructure. At the preparatory meeting, which involved a meeting with staff, it was not always clear that staff were familiar with the Academic Infrastructure. It is recommended as desirable that the College takes steps to familiarise teaching staff with the Academic Infrastructure.

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

26 The College ensures that students receive appropriate learning experiences through the effective management of the learning experiences and the design of the curriculum. The programme provides students with opportunities to develop higher-level skills that will prepare them for both employment and self-employment, with the latter being the more common destination for students. There is a well thought out learning and teaching strategy that takes into account the characteristics of the industry and has links with mainly self-employed businesses. Through their extensive knowledge of the land-based industries,

staff have focused on providing students with opportunities to gain knowledge of new developments in urban green spaces and increasing focus on sustainability and biodiversity. The Professional Portfolio and Land-based Industry Project enable students to either experience garden design processes from start to finish, as if they were self-employed, or to specialise in any area of land-based studies with a view to seeking employment. Learning opportunities are enhanced through visiting speakers, visits to various land-based organisations and overseas visits. The well-managed learning and teaching process with its emphasis on developing higher-level skills, in particular for self-employment, makes a particularly positive contribution to the provision and is good practice.

27 Staff delivering the programme are appropriately well qualified and experienced in the land-based sector through running their own businesses or working in land-based companies. Students spoke highly of the staff who they said provide an informal and enriching experience for them. However, challenges occurred when a key member of staff (the Programme Director) was on extended sick leave. Although some interim arrangements were put in place some important policies were not implemented during this period. For example, the introduction of peer review of teaching, which is a requirement of the awarding body, was delayed, although it will be started in March 2010. It is recommended as desirable that the Programme Team implements the process of peer review of teaching as required by the awarding body.

28 Employer engagement is developing and includes work with former students, part-time staff who work in the industry and local small companies. The College is taking these developments seriously as a way of ensuring that the programme is current and that students are provided with appropriate learning opportunities. Staff are also active in the London Skills Group, the London Parks and Green Space Forum and the Society of Garden Designers. These links enable staff to bring work-related expertise to the students' learning experiences. The Programme Team's efforts to engage employers and establish links with the land-based industry enhance the students' learning experience and are an example of good practice.

29 Assessments are intended to develop students' learning and enable students to relate their knowledge to real life situations. The use of student self-assessment is a valuable learning experience for students. Assessments are mapped with learning outcomes and these are identified in assignments briefs and are understood by students. However, written feedback to students does not always refer to the learning outcomes and there are sometimes no annotated comments on students' work. The best examples of written feedback to students are fairly detailed and provide a practical commentary on the assessment tasks being undertaken. Students are generally positive about the written and oral feedback they receive. However, some students said that written feedback could be more helpful and detailed. The external examiner states 'whilst all tutors give wonderful supportive feedback there is often no information within the feedback about what the student needs to do to improve and gain a higher mark'. In order to enhance student learning it is recommended as desirable that all written feedback links to learning outcomes, includes more annotated comments and indicates what students need to do to improve.

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

30 The College has a well-established tutorial system in which students are allocated a personal tutor and have one scheduled tutorial each term. Despite earlier reports that the system was not working fully, efforts have been made to improve the matter. The formal

arrangements are supplemented by a relaxed and informal relationship between staff and students, which students appreciate, saying that staff are always readily available to offer personal and academic support. The College's induction programme includes sessions on learning resources, information technology, learning support and the links with Birkbeck College. Two members of the support administrative staff work closely with students on matters relating to finance and accommodation. The College has a clear and well-developed policy on disability and is committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with learning difficulties, are treated fairly. There is good access to resources for students with disabilities and the clear policy on support they receive, which facilitates their learning, is good practice.

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

31 The College's staff development process is described in paragraph 22. With reference to learning opportunities, some staff have enhanced their knowledge through successfully completing master's programmes in specialist areas relevant to the delivery of the programme. Much of the staff development occurs through teaching staff working in the land-based industries and running their own businesses, which enables them to bring expert knowledge to the programme.

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

32 Learning resources are monitored through the validation process, student feedback, external examiners' reports and annual programme reports. The College has extensive and well-managed learning resources, which provide an inspirational atmosphere for students. Specialist resources are of the highest quality including the 30 acres of parkland, theme and wooded/wilderness gardens, water features and a range of trial gardens. Students also have access to a working farm. These resources are greatly appreciated by students and they are used effectively to support their learning, especially independent learning.

33 Students have access to an extensive range of professional and specialist journals. There are also sets of key textbooks related to the modules on the programme. Staff ensure that these resources are updated. The provision of a computer-aided drawing facility enables students to develop their design skills. This resource is well used and much appreciated by students. Teaching and learning take place in well-equipped specialist rooms such as a designated design studio, computer suite and a science laboratory. The high quality and effectively managed specialist learning resources make a particularly positive contribution to the provision and are good practice.

34 The College has invested in the development of its virtual learning environment, Capella. It acts as a depository for learning materials, assessments and support and as a means of communication between staff and students. It is easily accessible and widely used by staff and students. Staff ensure that its content is regularly updated, including module and assessment information, study skills guidance, useful websites and plant identification lists. It is also used to provide feedback on assignments. The use of the College's virtual learning environment in enhancing students' learning experiences is good practice.

Core theme 3: Public information

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

35 The framework for advertising and publicity is set out in the Partnership Agreement. It provides detailed guidance on the production of advertising materials and the approval of any such materials by Birkbeck College. The process for approval is working effectively and the College has a clear sense of its responsibilities for public information, some of which it shares with the awarding body. The College is responsible for the prospectus and programme pamphlets, its own website, the Student Charter, the Higher Education Strategy and policy documents on equal opportunities and disability.

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

36 The College has a system that ensures all externally published information is circulated to senior managers including the Head of College prior to publication. For internal public information such as programme material, the Programme Team takes the lead in producing programme handbooks; the Programme Director then checks these. The handbooks require approval from the Programme Director at Birkbeck College before being produced for students. The handbooks are clearly written, with accurate and complete information for students on areas such as assessment, support, referencing and the modules.

37 The College prospectus includes a section for higher education programmes. The information on the content and the articulation arrangements are clear and checked by the Programme Director. Students said that the prospectus and other information is helpful and fully reflects their experiences.

38 A well produced website offers students clear and accurate information about the provision offered by the College. The website is regularly checked for accuracy and information on assessment, resources and support, and is updated annually by information technology staff following proposals by teaching staff. The College provides advice sessions for prospective students to reinforce the messages delivered by written and web-based information. The virtual learning environment provides extensive information for students in relation to learning outcomes, module guides and specific class sessions. This is well designed and very accessible and provides an effective repository to store essential information.

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 programme it delivers.

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

39 As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

D Foundation Degrees

Good practice

40 The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- there is a well-managed learning and teaching process with an emphasis on developing higher-level skills, in particular, for self-employment (paragraph 26)
- the engagement of employers and links with the land-based industry enhance the students' learning experiences (paragraph 28)
- there is good access to learning resources for students with disabilities and a clear policy for the general support they receive which facilitates their learning (paragraph 30)
- the high quality and effectively managed specialist learning resources make a particularly positive contribution to the provision (paragraph 32)
- the use of the College's virtual learning environment in enhancing student learning (paragraph 34).

Recommendations

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

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

- ensure that the Programme Management Committee meets, records its meeting and produces an action plan, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement (paragraph 17)
- ensure that in future there is a written and signed agreement with the awarding body before accepting students on a programme (paragraph 18)
- ensure that for external examiners the procedures for nomination and appointment are followed and there is a written and signed agreement in place (paragraph 20).

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

- finalise its articulation arrangements with other institutions to provide students with more opportunities to progress to undergraduate programmes (paragraph 24)
- take steps to familiarise teaching staff with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 25)
- the Programme Team should implement the process of peer review of teaching as required by the awarding body (paragraph 27)
- ensure that all written feedback links clearly to learning outcomes, includes more annotated comments and indicates how students can improve (paragraph 29).

44 The whole report refers to the College's Foundation Degree.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

45 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Capel Manor's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the award the College offers on behalf of its awarding body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, Birkbeck College, University of London.

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

- there is a well-managed learning and teaching process with an emphasis on developing higher-level skills, in particular, for self-employment (paragraph 26)
- the engagement of employers and links with the land-based industry enhance the students' learning experiences (paragraph 28)
- there is good access to learning resources for students with disabilities and a clear policy for the general support they receive which facilitates their learning (paragraph 30)
- the high quality and effectively managed specialist learning resources make a particularly positive contribution to the provision (paragraph 32)
- the use of the College's virtual learning environment in enhancing students' learning (paragraph 34).

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

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

- ensure that the Programme Management Committee meets, records its meeting and produces an action plan, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement (paragraph 17)
- ensure that in future there is a written and signed agreement with the awarding body before accepting students on a programme (paragraph 18)
- ensure that for external examiners the procedures for nomination and appointment are followed and there is a written and signed agreement in place (paragraph 20).

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

- finalise its articulation arrangements with other institutions to provide students with more opportunities to progress to undergraduate programmes (paragraph 24)
- take steps to familiarise teaching staff with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 25)
- the Programme Team should implement the process of peer review of teaching as required by the awarding body (paragraph 27)
- ensure that all written feedback links clearly to learning outcomes, includes more annotated comments and indicates how students can improve (paragraph 29).

50 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 award of its awarding body.

51 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.

52 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 the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programme it delivers.

Capel Manor action plan relating to the Summative review, March 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 is a well-managed learning and teaching process with an emphasis on developing higher-level skills, in particular for self-employment (paragraph 26) 	<p>Establish more formal links with Society of Garden Designers and invite representatives in annually to Capel's HE Careers Advice event</p>	November 2010	HE Co-ordinator	Positive evaluation from students during programme reviews	Academic Board, Programme Team meetings, Joint Programme Management Committee	Student and tutor feedback, Society of Garden Designers feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the engagement of employers and links with the land-based industry enhance the students' learning experiences (paragraph 28) 	<p>Commit fully to HEFCE's 'Higher Ambitions' initiative and produce 'Employability statements' for prospective students</p>	By 2011 cycle	HE Co-ordinator, Programme Director	Positive evaluation from students, employers and Landex	Student Registry, Programme Team meetings, Joint Programme Management Committee	Student and employer feedback

Capel Manor action plan relating to the Summative review, March 2010							
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is good access to learning resources for students with disabilities and a clear policy for the general support they receive which facilitates their learning (paragraph 30) 	<p>Ensure representation of HE at Capel's Disability Focus Group</p>	<p>Immediate (next meeting June 2010)</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Positive evaluation from students and academic tutors</p>	<p>Programme Team Meetings</p>	<p>Feedback on individual and group tutorials</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the high quality and effectively managed specialist learning resources make a particularly positive contribution to the provision (paragraph 32) 	<p>Further develop learning resources to include additional IT facilities in HE Design Studio together with more licences for CAD</p>	<p>September 2010</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator, Head of School of Garden Design, IT Department</p>	<p>Positive responses from students and Garden Design/ CAD tutors</p>	<p>Academic Board, Programme Team meetings, Joint Programme Management Committee</p>	<p>Student Feedback</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of the College's virtual learning environment in enhancing students' learning (paragraph 34). 	<p>Establish staff training for those members of programme team who request/require additional VLE skills. Initiate a discussion with HE students about how VLE could be further improved</p>	<p>September 2010</p>	<p>School of Garden Design VLE Champion</p>	<p>Positive responses from students, tutors and VLE Manage</p>	<p>Programme Team Meeting IT Co-ordinators Committee</p>	<p>Programme and end of module evaluations</p>	

Capel Manor action plan relating to the Summative review, March 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The team agreed the following areas where it would be advised for the College to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the Programme Management Committee meets, records its meeting and produces an action plan, in accordance with the Partnership Agreement (paragraph 17) ensure that there is a written and signed agreement with the awarding body before accepting students on a programme (paragraph 18) 	<p>Capel to initiate meeting with HEI</p>	<p>Soon as possible (has now been set for 28th June 2010)</p>	<p>HE Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>Head of College, Partnership Steering Group, Academic Board</p>	<p>Outcomes arising from Programme Management Committee Action Plan</p>
	<p>This advice will be followed in the event of Capel seeking validation of new HE programmes with our current HEI, or any others in the future</p>	<p>As applicable</p>	<p>Head of College</p>	<p>Partnership Agreement fulfilling the advice</p>	<p>Governing Body, Future QAA Reviews</p>	<p>Documentation agreed by both institutions in place</p>

Capel Manor action plan relating to the Summative review, March 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that for external examiners the procedures for nomination and appointment are followed and there is a written and signed agreement in place (paragraph 20). 	<p>Capel will continue to work closely with its HEI on these procedures as they arise and help to ensure that the appropriate paperwork is in place</p>	As applicable	Joint Programme Directors	External examining arrangements in place and working as required	Joint Programme Management Committee, Partnership Steering Group	External examiners appointment documentation

Capel Manor action plan relating to the Summative review, March 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where it would be desired to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> finalise its articulation arrangements with other institutions to provide students with more opportunities to progress to undergraduate programmes (paragraph 24) 	Capel initiate contact with West London Lifelong Learning for update on Progression Agreements	January 2011	Programme Director/HE Co-ordinator	PAs signed by Capel and identified HEIs	Academic Board Partnership Steering Group, joint Programme Management Committee	Analysis of student progression Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take steps to familiarise teaching staff with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 25) 	To be introduced as a training event	June 2010	Programme Director/HE Co-ordinator	Tutor feedback	Joint Programme Management Committee	Tutor evaluation of training event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Programme Team should implement the process of peer review of teaching as required by the awarding body (paragraph 27) 	Annual programme of peer review of teaching to be compiled and published	With immediate effect. Some tutors have/ are being visited during	Programme Directors, initially expanding to other members of the team	Completed templates recording classroom visits	Head of College, Governors Curriculum and Quality Committee	Student and tutor feedback

Capel Manor action plan relating to the Summative review, March 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
		Spring/ Summer 2010. All will receive peer reviews next academic year onwards				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that all written feedback links clearly to learning outcomes, includes more annotated comments and indicates how students can improve (paragraph 29). 	Re-design of Assignment Briefs and Feedback sheets. Careful monitoring of annotated comments through IV process	Sept 2010 Immediate	Programme Team Programme Director and External Examiner	Positive Student and tutor feedback	Joint Programme Management Committee	Evaluation of processes at annual programme review

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