

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

April 2010

King George V College, Southport

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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 King George V College, Southport, carried out in April 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 awards 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 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.

- The College makes a significant investment in underwriting the responsibilities of the Higher Education Manager through a generous remission of hours arrangement.
- There is an effective additional layer of scrutiny and ownership of quality by the College staff whereby, prior to submission to the university Programme Boards, annual monitoring reports are peer reviewed by the Higher Education Quality Panel.
- There is a well-furnished and equipped base room for higher education students that they can use for meetings, socialising and private study.
- There is good access to the Academic Infrastructure to students through an excellent public display and explanatory materials in the higher education student base room at the College.

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:

- provide more information to assist students in finding placements and improve and monitor contact with work placement mentors
- work with the University to ensure greater consistency in information on grading and marking criteria in the programme handbooks, which at the present time are not aligned consistently.

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

- ensure the prompt return of marked assessments to facilitate student progress and development
- continue to focus on addressing issues and reviewing the outcomes of any improvement points arising from reports or reviews

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- increase the emphasis on staff development activities relevant to higher education issues such as embedding of the Academic Infrastructure, and higher-level teaching and learning skills
- take more account of the mature nature of the student group in the induction to programmes, particularly the variation in skills such as IT, academic writing and presentation skills
- extend the use of the virtual learning environment to all programmes.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at King George V College, Southport (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 Edge Hill University. The review was carried out by Mr Jonathan Baker and Ms Jane Durant (reviewers), and Mr Alan Nisbett (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted this desk-based review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for an integrated quality and enhancement review*, (the handbook) published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, the partner institution, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. The College chose not to have a Developmental engagement. 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 King George V College is a sixth-form college, established in 1978, located in a largely residential area close to the centre of Southport and within the Sefton local authority. Since incorporation in 1993, the College has extended its catchment area and widened the range of programmes it offers. The College now draws students from a radius of 15 miles. The College provides GCSE, AS/A2, IB, Edexcel First/National Certificate/Diploma and specialised diplomas in a wide range of subjects and has offered Foundation Degree programmes since 2007 in collaboration with Edge Hill University. The College's mission is to provide excellence within a vibrant and supportive community. In 2008-09, there were 1,602 full-time students aged 16 to 18, plus 113 part-time or full-time adult students. Students aged 16-18 accounted for 93 per cent of the total enrolments and 95 per cent of daytime students. Of the adult students, 24 per cent were on Foundation Degrees at level 4.

5 The College higher education provision is shown below, with enrolments for 2009-10. All programmes are validated by Edge Hill University:

- FdSc Public Health level 4 (6)
- FdSc Working with Vulnerable Adults level 4 (8)
- FdA Counselling levels 4 & 5 (15)
- FdSc Information Technology levels 4 & 5 (3)

6 The total number of students enrolled on Foundation Degree programmes at the College in 2007-08 was 6, in 2008-09 was 28 and in 2009-10 is 47, which is an encouraging growth in recruitment for the first three years of offering higher education courses. The FdA Theatre, Applied Drama and Creativity did not recruit in 2008 or 2009 and has subsequently been withdrawn from partner colleges. The FdSc Information Technology has recruited small numbers in its first year.

| Recruitment Numbers | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| FdSc Public Health | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| FdSc Working with Vulnerable Adults | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| FdA Theatre, Applied Drama & Creativity | | 0 | 0 |
| FdA Counselling | | 18 | 15 |
| FdSc Information Technology | | | 3 |
| Total | 6 | 28 | 32 |

Partnership agreements with the awarding body(ies)

7 The College has a single higher education partner, Edge Hill University, with whom it has a clear and comprehensive partnership agreement that sets out mutual responsibilities for matters relating to academic standards and awards. The College's responsibilities are specified in the Collaborative Delivery Plans for each programme. The Memorandum of Cooperation is updated annually. The Higher Education Manager, appointed in 2006, is responsible for ensuring all aspects of the collaborative delivery plan are met. Institutional validation of the College as a collaborative partner of the University took place in 2006 and was preceded by visits from Faculty staff, Learning Services, Careers and Student Support staff of the University to assess the College's ability to meet the University's quality standards. The College abides by the Academic Regulations, Policies and Appendices of the University and the Collaborative Delivery Plans from enrolment to student support, assessment, and complaints and appeals procedures. The HE Manager works closely with the Collaborative Provision Officer for each Faculty and their administrative teams to manage enrolment and to meet assessment deadlines, and she and programme leaders attend Faculty Assessment and Progression Boards throughout the year to confirm students' results and consider students' claims for mitigating circumstances.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Following the rise in applications to higher education for 2009 entry, the capping of funded numbers by HEFCE has caused Edge Hill University to withdraw the FdA Theatre, Applied Drama and Creativity and to suspend recruitment to the FdSc Information Technology. Targets of zero growth on other courses have been decided. The College Senior Management Team was kept informed of the capping of student numbers and the Institutional Annual Monitoring Report 2009 highlighted the College's concern. A complete rebuild of the College was cancelled in February 2009 by the Learning and Skills Council just as building was due to start and with planning costs already committed. The funding to modify the existing dance studio to provide a therapy suite for FdSc Complementary Therapies to commence delivery in 2010, and for which an initial proposal had been approved by Edge Hill University in 2009, was no longer available and the application was deferred.

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 Summative review team. Students on all programmes were canvassed for their views and the results compiled by a first-year student into a written submission to the team. Although limited somewhat in scope, this provided a helpful basis for the subsequent valuable meeting held by the coordinator with students at the preparatory meeting.

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 roles and delegated responsibilities for managing academic standards within the College are clearly articulated. The College Principal and members of the Board of Governors have overarching responsibility for managing standards. Members of the College Senior Management Team decide policy in relation to higher education provision. The Vice Principal (Quality and Curriculum) delegates operational responsibility for, and management of, quality to the Higher Education Manager. Within the College the Higher Education Manager takes an active, central and influential leadership role in establishing and monitoring standards. She reports to and liaises regularly with colleagues at Edge Hill University. She attends meetings of the College's Senior Management Team on matters relating to higher education and reports to the Board of Governors on strategic developments for the College's higher education provision in relation to national funding constraints and local economic and educational influences. The College awards a generous level of support to the Higher Education Manager in recognition of her responsibilities across a relatively small provision; her timetable is divided 30:70 between higher education management duties and FE and HE teaching. This is a significant investment and considered by the team to be good practice.

11 Clear and comprehensive delegated operational responsibilities for members of the College's staff are provided through the standard Collaborative Delivery Plans. Behind this, the detailed quality management handbook and the academic regulations of Edge Hill University provide explicit definitions and explanations of requirements for quality assurance, student admissions and assessment boards. Formal reporting on standards to the University is undertaken through annual monitoring, staff-student consultative meetings, and Programme Boards. Progress on planned improvement is recorded and maintained.

12 Within the College, standards on programmes are reviewed collectively by members of the Higher Education Quality Panel. Chaired by the Vice Principal (Quality and Curriculum) and attended by the Higher Education Manager and members of programme teams, this forum monitors academic standards and identifies actions for improvement in practices. In addition, formal and informal communication between the Higher Education Manager and members of programme teams ensures the free flow of daily activity relating to programme planning, marketing, recruitment, learning support, delivery, assessment, moderation and evaluation. Programme leaders exercise an appropriate degree of autonomy and responsibility for academic standards and communication with colleagues from the University.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13 The processes of programme design, development and validation take account of relevant subject benchmark statements. The College and its programmes have been subject to rigorous validation by the University which included scrutiny of the College's engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. Definitive documents define programme specifications; these include intended learning outcomes aligned with the FHEQ. Students confirm that assignments briefs include clear information and that the information on intended learning outcomes provided in programme and module handbooks is accessible.

14 Rigorous procedures for the moderation of assessed work are published in programme handbooks in line with the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 6*. Arrangements for student assessment and the assurance of assessment procedures and decisions support fair and rigorous assessment. Assessment decisions are subjected to internal moderation and external examination, with the additional opportunity for third marking if required. Examination of external examiner reports reveals that the process provides final assessment decisions and relevant developmental feedback for College staff.

15 Programme handbooks include brief sections on arrangements for work-based learning and work placements. Some students report difficulties in securing work placements, indicating that there had been a lack of clarity relating to responsibilities for securing placements prior to starting their programme.

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 the awarding body?

16 The programmes offered by the College are subject to a rigorous validation process prior to delivery. Each validated award has a comprehensive set of definitive documents and validation reports. The Collaborative Delivery Plans outline clearly the detailed responsibilities of the College in respect to requirements for quality assurance and standards. These include the responsibility of the College to contribute to periodic review at the University. These plans are overtly structured around programme delivery, the programme learning infrastructure, and the management of quality.

17 The Higher Education Manager works closely with the University Faculty Collaborative Provision Officers to ensure access to and understanding of current university policies and regulations. The College undertakes an extensive system of review and monitoring which is led and overseen by the Higher Education Manager. She reports on academic standards to members of the College Higher Education Quality Panel and to the relevant university committees. The team is of the view that her role is effective in supporting appropriate academic standards.

18 The University adopts a risk-based approach to the management of quality and standards with its collaborative partners. Shared ownership of risk is promoted, together with mutual responsibility. Each programme team produces a detailed annual monitoring report which considers student views and external examiners' reports among other appropriate sources of data. Prior to submission to University Programme Boards, annual monitoring reports are peer-reviewed by the Higher Education Quality Panel; the team considers that this additional layer of scrutiny and ownership of quality by College staff is good practice. Peer review is used extensively by the College to assure standards. Further examples of peer review activities relate to the observation of practice and products, feedback, and moderation of assessment. Appropriate actions for improvement

are identified. The Higher Education Manager joins members of the University Risk Assessment Sub-Committee to discuss the College annual monitoring reports. These reports feed into the Academic Quality and Standards Committees at Edge Hill University. University colleagues scrutinise any issues requiring attention by the University. At this point issues are also communicated to members of the College Senior Management Team. Actions arising are monitored by College teams and members of faculty Programme Boards.

19 The College acknowledges a need to develop further quality assurance systems on programmes at levels 4 and 5. Structures and actions have been implemented to address some of these issues. The team considers it to be desirable that the College continue to focus on addressing issues and reviewing the outcomes of any improvement points arising from reports or reviews. Student involvement in the review of quality and standards is well developed with engagement at staff-student consultation meetings, module and placement evaluations, and attendance at Programme Boards. College staff members are responsible for assessing student work. Assessment decisions are ratified at the university Examination Boards. Responsibility for the moderation of assessment lies with members of the hosting university faculty.

20 Within the context of a relatively new higher education provision, small student cohorts on two programmes and larger cohorts on the FdA Counselling, analysis of student progression and achievement data is limited. However, data shows progression by seven students on the FdA Working with Vulnerable Adults from level 4 to level 5 over two years and progression of three students to level 6. Progression rates for students on the FdA Counselling from level 4 to level 5 are very good. Retention rates vary across programmes: 87 per cent on the FdA Counselling in 2008, but 62 per cent (of eight students) on the FdA Public Health. Progress over the past two years indicates that student achievement, measured by high grade profiles, is improving.

21 External examiners' reports and internal verifiers' reports for the College and University report on assessment, marking and grading, teaching and learning, staffing and quality assurance. This ensures that assessments are linked to bench marks and that grading is fair and consistent. There is evidence that the quality assurance and Academic Infrastructure process is explained to students.

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

22 The continuing professional development requirements of staff delivering higher education programmes are aligned to those for staff delivering further education programmes and to the appraisal system. Staff development opportunities focus on information and processes of the University, such as training in the use of the virtual learning environment. There are limited opportunities for staff to engage in scholarly activity due to teaching commitments on further education programmes. Review of staff curriculum vitae confirms that staff members are generally well qualified at higher levels. The majority of staff continue to develop vocational experience and breadth of subject knowledge through continuing scholarly activity. A small number of staff members delivering higher education are currently engaged in, or planning to embark on, study at master's level.

23 The need for additional staff development in order to develop further quality assurance systems on programmes at levels 4 and 5 is recognised and has been identified in the College Strategic Plan and the Higher Education Quality Panel. Content of the College staff training programmes suggests a greater focus on generic rather than specific higher education sessions. The team considers it desirable that the College increases the emphasis on staff development activities relevant to higher education issues such as embedding of the Academic Infrastructure and higher-level teaching and learning skills. The Higher Education Manager and members of programme teams have attended national development events and conferences. Module leaders and the Higher Education Manager have taken advantage of support provided by the University in training on assessment issues and credit frameworks. Staff have also attended additional support sessions on access to materials on the University's virtual learning environment, but they consider these to have been of limited value.

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 awards it offers on behalf of the 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?

24 As described in paragraph 9 above, the Senior Management Team is responsible for managing standards of higher education at the College. This includes the Principal, Vice Principal (Quality and Curriculum), Assistant Principal (Student Services) the Finance Director and the Human Resources Manager, who decide policy. Quality management for higher education is the responsibility of the Higher Education Manager. A Higher Education Quality Panel chaired by the Vice Principal (Quality and Curriculum) and attended by the Higher Education Manager and programme teams meets twice a year to consider quality issues and identify actions. The Higher Education Manager has a central role in managing quality and monitoring academic standards and reporting and liaising with the University. In terms of reporting there are module and placement evaluations that involve student feedback, held by the programme leaders and attended by a Faculty Liaison Tutor from the University. Minutes of these meetings are submitted to the Faculty Programme Board three times a year. External examiners' reports are fed into an Annual Monitoring Review for each programme; these are submitted to the Vice Principal (Quality and Curriculum) and Edge Hill University's Academic Quality Unit. There are clear Collaborative Delivery Plans for each programme detailing roles and responsibilities and a well-designed quality management framework, culminating in the Annual Monitoring Review process.

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

25 The College follows a quality process that details assessment practice and resource requirements as well as teaching and learning. Learning opportunities can be monitored by programme Annual Monitoring Reviews, student module evaluations and external examiner reports. Employer engagement and work practice modules enhance the learning opportunities and allow theory to be applied appropriately; employer input into course content is beneficial. Work-based learning forms an important part of the Foundation

Degree programmes and information is published in the practice assessment handbooks. The practice assessment handbooks identify the requirements of the students and the assessment of work-based learning; they also identify the role of the work-based learning facilitator and the work-based mentor.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 Programmes are validated in accordance with university validation processes through the University Quality and Standards Committee. There is also an Institutional Validation Panel involved in assessment of the ability of partner institutions to deliver programmes; this panel examines resources including staffing, programme management and student support, admissions and the Academic Infrastructure in terms of award titles and descriptors, levels, benchmarks and external engagement. All these procedures ensure due compliance with the Academic Infrastructure and in particular ensure that matters relating to assessment, intended learning outcomes and opportunities for learning are subject to appropriate rigour and review.

27 Staff induction procedures give information on the Academic Infrastructure together with qualification descriptors and benchmark statements. The FHEQ and the various levels of qualification at higher education level are also explained. Work-based learning is involved in the Foundation Degree programmes and information in relation to this is contained within programme specifications and handbooks.

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

28 To assure the quality of teaching and learning the College undertakes teaching observations and peer review related to the University's Institutional Teaching and Learning Strategy. The peer review process involves meeting twice a year to discuss generic issues in a cross-faculty forum and to provide support and challenge. It also involves an observation of teaching and consideration of the role of the teacher of higher education, including marking and moderation. Peer review teaching observations identify strengths and areas for development and areas of good practice in teaching and academic activity, together with reflective practice and an action plan. The observations are not graded, as this is designed to be developmental. Lesson observations conducted by the College are graded and based more on further education teaching delivery.

29 Each module is evaluated by students, covering aspects of teaching and learning, assessment, resources and support. There are also module summary reports and a Staff Student Consultative group, which gives students the opportunity to feedback on teaching and learning and assessment within their programmes. Learning and teaching is considered by students to be appropriate, with a range of teaching methods used in all programmes. Students did, however, suggest that the induction to programmes should take more account of the variation in skills, such as IT, academic writing and presentation skills, of the mature nature of the student groups. The team agrees that some greater degree of differentiation in the induction programme would be desirable.

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

30 Students are given comprehensive information about support from the College and University in programme handbooks including a University Guidance and Support CD. These detail how to access support of an educational, pastoral and financial nature at both institutions. Programme handbooks give details of intended learning outcomes and course structure together with guidelines for marking criteria for different levels and types of assessment. Students also have access to library facilities at the College and Edge Hill University.

31 Students have regular tutorials and individual interviews. In terms of assessment, students reported clear information on assignment briefs including intended learning outcomes and understood the grading scheme given in the programme handbook. Students stated that they had to wait a considerable time for assessment feedback and that in some cases they did not receive the actual work they had done - only a feedback sheet. The team considers it desirable to ensure the prompt return of marked assessments to ensure student progress and development.

32 Students indicated that they were responsible for finding their work placements and for those new to the sector this was difficult. Students also felt it had not been made clear to them before the start of the course that they had to find their own placements. Contact with work placement mentors has been and continues to be difficult. The team considers it advisable that there should be more information to assist students in finding placements and that contact with work placement mentors should be improved and monitored.

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

33 The importance of staff development, including staff induction, is articulated clearly in the Collaborative Delivery Plans for programmes. Staff CVs and documentation relating to induction of new tutors and College staff development weeks demonstrate engagement with continuing professional development.

34 Higher education staff induction procedures provide good information on the Academic Infrastructure, together with qualification descriptors and benchmark statements. The FHEQ and the various levels of qualification at higher education level are also explained.

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

35 Learning resources are considered at the validation stage of programmes and taken into account within the Collaborative Delivery Plans. Resources are also outlined in the module descriptors. Module evaluations are completed by students and external verifier reports also provide feedback on resource issues. Students can avail themselves of College and University resources. There are good library facilities at both locations and some students visit the University library. The remote access to library facilities including electronic journals works well and students reported their satisfaction with the resources and facilities at both institutions. Higher education students have a well-furnished and equipped base room that they can use for meetings, socialising and private study. The team considers this to be good practice.

36 The established virtual learning environment provides students module details, lecture notes and assignments, although this was primarily by first-year students and it was noted that FdA Counselling staff do not use the virtual learning environment or any IT for delivery. The team considers it to be desirable that the use of the virtual learning environment should be extended fully to all programmes.

37 The University audited college learning resources in 2006. It covered programme-specific resources, together with library, IT and student support special needs. The audit was positive in its findings.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for of 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 is responsible for publishing publicity material including the prospectus and website information. This must be approved by the University and checked annually. Staff induction procedures provide programme team members with information relating to the Academic Infrastructure. Qualification descriptors appropriately inform programme design, as do *the Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and the *Code of practice*. Access to the Academic Infrastructure is made available to students through an excellent public display and explanatory materials in the higher education student base room at the College. This is considered by the team to be good practice.

39 Public information provided by the College also includes promotional materials in local press, programme leaflets and course handbooks. Students reported that the information in the programme handbooks is comprehensive and accurate and that they were getting the experience they expected. Students did report, however, that the pre-entry information was variable, with IT students receiving a leaflet listing modules and a timetable for attendance, Public Health students receiving a timetable and Counselling students not receiving anything.

40 In general, public information is accurate and reliable. Programme handbooks are comprehensive and accurate, a view shared by students. However, the team considers it to be advisable that the College works with its University partner to ensure greater consistency of information on grading and marking criteria in the handbooks for the two institutions. At the present time these are not aligned consistently, raising issues of equity and compatibility.

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

41 The University requires all public information relating to franchise programmes to be submitted by the College for approval prior to release in the public domain. In addition, there is an annual cycle for the review of documentation generated in the College by the University. These requirements are articulated in the Collaborative Delivery Plans for all programmes.

42 Information relating to higher education programmes publicised on the College's website is provided by the Higher Education Manager. It is checked for accuracy by programme leaders and updated by a web technician as required. The Higher Education Manager checks the University website annually and informs the Marketing Manager of any necessary changes. Hard copy promotional materials, such as articles for the local press, flyers, and programme leaflets are designed centrally and sent to the Marketing Manager at the University for approval. Course leaflets are updated annually by the Higher Education Manager. Programme and module handbooks are checked by the faculty Administration and Quality Assurance Team prior to printing. Currency of reading texts within programme specifications is checked by the Information and Research Division.

43 Students report that student handbooks are comprehensive and accurate; that local press advertising is effective in attracting students to apply for College places; and that core course information uploaded to the College's virtual learning environment for the FdA Information Technology, FdSc Public Health and FdSc Working with Vulnerable Adults is useful.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

44 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

45 The College has been involved in the development of four Foundation Degrees: the FdA Counselling and FdA Theatre, Applied Drama and Creativity, both validated in 2008, and the FdSc Public Health and FdSc Working with Vulnerable Adults validated in 2007. The last three of these were developed in conjunction with Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire Lifelong Learning Network, who had identified health and social care and creative arts and media as strands where there is employer demand and for which additional student numbers were available. The Foundation Degree programmes which the College currently has approval to deliver are awarded by Edge Hill University:

- FdSc Public Health level 4
- FdSc Working with Vulnerable Adults level 4
- FdA Theatre, Applied Drama & Creativity levels 4 & 5
- FdA Counselling levels 4 & 5
- FdSc Information Technology levels 4 & 5.

46 The total number of students enrolled on Foundation Degrees in 2007-08 was six, in 2008-09 it was 28 and in 2009-10, 47.

47 Following the rise in applications to higher education for 2009 entry, the capping of funded numbers by HEFCE has caused Edge Hill University to withdraw the FdA Theatre, Applied Drama and Creativity and to suspend recruitment to the FdSc Information Technology. Targets of zero growth on other courses have been decided.

48 All the conclusions and judgements in this report apply to the Foundation Degree programmes currently running at the College.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

49 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in King George V College, Southport'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 body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, Edge Hill University.

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

- the significant investment by the College in underwriting the responsibilities of the Higher Education Manager through a generous remission of hours arrangement (paragraph 10)
- the additional layer of scrutiny and ownership of quality by the College staff whereby, prior to submission to the university Programme Boards, annual monitoring reports are peer reviewed by the Higher Education Quality Panel (paragraph 18)
- the well-furnished and equipped base room for higher education students that they can use for meetings, socialising and private study (paragraph 35)
- the access to the Academic Infrastructure to students through an excellent public display and explanatory materials in the higher education student base room at the College (paragraph 38).

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

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

- provide more information to assist students to find placements and improve and monitor contact with work placement mentors (paragraph 32)
- work with its university partner to ensure greater consistency in information on grading and marking criteria in the programme handbooks, which at the present time are not aligned consistently (paragraph 40).

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

- ensure the prompt return of marked assessments to ensure student progress and development (paragraph 31)
- continue to focus on addressing issues and reviewing the outcomes of any improvement points arising from reports or reviews (paragraph 19)

Integrated quality and enhancement review

- increase the emphasis on staff development activities relevant to higher education issues such as embedding of the Academic Infrastructure and higher-level teaching and learning skills (paragraph 23)
- take more account of the mature nature of the student group in the induction to programmes, particularly the variation in skills such as IT, academic writing and presentation skills (paragraph 29)
- extend the use of virtual learning environment to all programmes (paragraph 36).

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

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

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

| King George V College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 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"> the significant investment by the College in underwriting the responsibilities of the Higher Education Manager through a generous remission of hours arrangement (paragraph 10) | Provide HE Manager with 30% remission from teaching to manage College's HE delivery. | 23/8/2010 | Vice Principal (Quality and Curriculum) | Published staff timetables | HE Manager | Appraisal of HE Manager by line manager Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective additional layer of scrutiny and ownership of quality by the College staff whereby, prior to submission to the university Programme Boards, annual monitoring reports are peer reviewed by the Higher Education | Twice yearly HE Quality Panel meetings timetabled for all HE staff to attend. | 7/7/2010 | Human Resources Manager | Published calendar | HE Manager | Attendance of full programme teams at HE Quality Panel meetings reported in minutes sent to Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) |

| King George V College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|------------|--|--|--|
| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| Quality Panel (paragraph 18) | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the well-furnished and equipped base room for higher education students that they can use for meetings, socialising and private study (paragraph 35) | Monitor use of base room to ensure adequate space and facilities. | At weekly intervals from 13/9/10 | HE Manager | Staff-student consultative forums report good base room facilities. | Edge Hill University Liaison Tutor & Foundation Degree Programme Boards at University HE Quality Panel | Annual Monitoring Reviews External verifier report |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the access to the Academic Infrastructure to students through an excellent public display and explanatory materials in the higher education student base room at the College (paragraph 38). | Refresh Academic Infrastructure display as required and check definitive course documents are available for all programmes. Stocks of student forms and leaflets checked. | 13/9/10 7/1/11 | HE Manager | Staff-student consultative forums report availability of required information. | Edge Hill University Liaison Tutor & Foundation Degree Programme Boards at University HE Quality Panel | Annual Monitoring Reviews External verifier report |

| King George V College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Advisable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide more information to assist students to find placements and improve and monitor contact with work placement mentors (paragraph 32) | Lists of audited placements are sent to all students. Session time is provided for students to discuss placement choice with tutors. | 21/6/10 5/7/10 for FdA Counselling 20/9/10 FdSc Public Health/ Working with Vulnerable Adults | HE Manager Programme leaders | Email sent to students Programme calendars/ timetables | External verifier Edge Hill University Liaison Tutor HE Manager HE Quality Panel | External verifier report Annual Monitoring Review |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with its university partner to ensure greater consistency in information on grading and marking criteria in the programme handbooks , which at the present time are not aligned consistently (paragraph 40). | Liaise with university Academic Quality Unit to address consistency of grading criteria provided by each university faculty for their programmes. | December 2010 | HE Manager | Item on agenda of University Collaborative Provision Forum for discussion | HE Quality Panel | Academic Quality Unit |

| King George V College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|-------------------|--|--|---|
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| The team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the prompt return of marked assessments to ensure student progress and development (paragraph 31) | Policy of returning all scripts to students promptly on receipt from the niversity in college assessment policy circulated to all staff. | 5/7/10 | HE Manager | Staff-student consultative forums report return of scripts. | External verifier Edge Hill University Liaison Tutor | External verifier report Annual Monitoring Review |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to focus on addressing issues and reviewing the outcomes of any improvement points arising from reports or reviews (paragraph 19) | Minute all programme team meetings identifying all actions to be addressed. | 23/8/10 | Programme leaders | Minutes and responses to action points as evidence of actions addressed. | Foundation Degree Programme Boards University Academic Quality Unit HE Quality Panel | Annual Monitoring Reviews HE Quality Panel minutes |

| King George V College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase the emphasis on staff development activities relevant to higher education issues such as embedding of the Academic Infrastructure and higher-level teaching and learning skills (paragraph 23) | <p>Circulate Edge Hill continuing professional development programme to all HE staff.</p> <p>Encourage identification of HE development in staff appraisal.</p> | 23/8/10 | HE Manager | Increased evidence of HE-related staff development on tutors' continuing professional development records. | <p>Foundation Degree Programme Boards</p> <p>University Academic Quality Unit</p> <p>HE Quality Panel</p> | <p>Annual Monitoring Reviews</p> <p>HE Quality Panel minutes</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take more account of the mature nature of the student group in the induction to programmes, particularly the variation in skills such as IT, academic writing and presentation skills (paragraph 29) | <p>Assess each applicant using Quickscan.</p> <p>Provide introductory IT and academic writing sessions prior to start of course.</p> | <p>23/8/10</p> <p>20/9/10</p> | Learning Resources Manager | <p>Students achieve improved results on modules.</p> <p>Staff-student consultative forums.</p> | <p>HE Manager</p> <p>Programme leaders</p> <p>Learning Support Manager</p> <p>HE Quality Panel</p> <p>FD Programme Boards</p> | <p>Annual Monitoring Reviews</p> <p>HE Quality Panel minutes</p> <p>FD Programme Board minutes</p> |

| King George V College action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010 | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the use of the virtual learning environment should be fully extended to all programmes (paragraph 36). | Provide training and time for Counselling tutors to set up Moodle virtual learning environment for their programme. | 16/12/10 | HE Manager Moodle Manager | Counselling module materials on Moodle virtual learning environment. Staff-student consultative forums | HE Quality Panel FD Programme Board | Annual Monitoring Reviews HE Quality Panel minutes FD Programme Board minutes |

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