

# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

May 2010

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

### Good practice

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

- moderation procedures are effective so ensuring that assessments are set and marked in a way that fully reflects the intended learning outcomes
- staff development activity provides effective support for the delivery of the provision
- the College provides a range of effective academic and pastoral support which assists students in their 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 staff who deliver higher education programmes are fully engaged with the appropriate quality assurance and enhancement activities
- ensure that all committees relevant to higher education meet regularly and fulfil their terms of reference.

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

- provide guidance on the information required for stakeholders to support work-based and placement learning
- encourage the increased use of the virtual learning environment by staff so supporting student learning
- ensure that public information in the prospectus and in publicly available leaflets is correct
- make Edexcel student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and ensure students receive all the information they need.

## 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 Tyne Metropolitan 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 Edexcel, Northumbria University and the University of Sunderland. The review was carried out by Mr David Fallows, Dr Roger New, Ms Jenny Rice (reviewers), and Dr Peter Steer (coordinator).

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

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

4 Tyne Metropolitan College is the only general further education college in North Tyneside, one of the five metropolitan districts that make up the Tyne and Wear conurbation. It was established in March 2005 as the result of an amalgamation between Tynemouth Sixth Form College and North Tyneside General Further Education College. North Tyneside is a district of considerable contrasts and includes the relatively affluent areas in the north-east coastal area as well as urban areas of social deprivation. The College operates from two main sites: the Coast Road Campus in Wallsend, where almost all the higher education provision is based, and the sixth-form academy Campus in North Shields. Recently some FD Education and Care provision has been located at Riverside Children's Centre in North Shields, owned by North Tyneside Council. The Coast Road Campus is situated approximately five miles from Newcastle city centre. College provision covers all 15 sector subject areas. In 2009-10, about 8,400 learners were enrolled on Learning and Skills Council-funded programmes. Just over 1,700 are aged 16 to 18, 97 per cent of whom are studying full-time. Nearly 6,700 are adult learners, with 65 per cent studying part-time. About eight per cent of the learners are from minority ethnic groups: twice the proportion in the local population. The College has Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for Mechatronics.

5 Since September 2007 all higher education, with the exception of the HNC Engineering, has been managed by the Head of Higher Education as a department within the Directorate of Adult and Employer Engagement. Previously, management was spread between several of the curriculum areas. HEFCE-funded provision was 387 full-time

equivalents (FTEs) in 2008-09 and is 394.67 FTEs in 2009-10, comprising 84 full-time and 410 part-time learners. The higher education provision offered by the College is:

#### **Edexcel**

- HNC Computing (0.5 FTEs)
- HND Computing (12 FTEs)
- HNC Electrical and Electronic Engineering (8.5 FTEs)
- HNC Manufacturing Engineering (12.5 FTEs)
- HNC Mechanical Engineering (18 FTEs)
- HNC Graphic Design (2.5 FTEs)
- HND Graphic Design (13 FTEs)
- HNC Media (0.5 FTEs)
- HND Media (Moving Image) (11 FTEs)

#### **Northumbria University**

- FD Computing (16.67 FTEs)
- FD Fine Art (17.5 FTEs)

#### **University of Sunderland**

- Certificate in Education (30 FTEs)
- FD Counselling (83 FTEs)
- FD Education and Care (59 FTEs)
- FD Leadership and Management (33 FTEs)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (21 FTEs)
- FD Service Management (4 FTEs)
- FD Sports Coaching (26 FTEs)
- FD Working with Young People (26 FTEs)

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

6 Edexcel programmes are subject to the standard contract, with assessment strategies developed and validated with the College and subject to external examiner oversight. For the University of Sunderland, assessment strategies are developed by the University. Work is assessed and moderated within the College and is then subject to standardisation boards administered by a consortium. For Northumbria University programmes, assessment strategies are determined by the relevant University programme. Assessments are set within the College and moderated by the University. Assessed work is marked and moderated by the College, with the nature of University input dependent on the programme. All the agreements put the main responsibility on the College to provide the resources to support learning. All the partnership agreements provide clear guidance as to the responsibilities of the partners.

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

7 Although there have been some changes in job titles and committee names, higher education is still organised as a department, now in the Directorate of Adult and Employer Engagement. The Higher Education Quality Committee mentioned in the Developmental engagement has been disbanded. Quality issues are mostly dealt with as part of the general requirements of the College covering both further and higher education. A Higher Education and Skills Committee has been formed.

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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team and did so in February 2010. Aided by College staff, seven volunteer course representatives undertook the writing of the student written submission. They collated information from the student forums to which all student representatives are invited. The final document was sent to all higher education students. Students met the team during the review and contributed to the preparatory meeting. The team found the student written submission useful.

# **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?**

9 The College management of the provision accurately reflects the requirements of its partnership agreements. Higher education programmes are managed by the Department of Higher Education except for the HNC programmes in engineering, which are managed directly by the Department of Engineering. The College takes an institution-wide approach to the management of academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement, which is the same for all its programmes irrespective of level. The main vehicle in this approach is the termly self-assessment report which is completed for each programme and then compiled at departmental level. The departmental self-assessment report is reviewed by the College's Quality Improvement Group, chaired by the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Business Development. This Group oversees the production of a college-level self-assessment report covering further and higher education, which is presented to the Standards and Quality Committee of the College and thence to the governors. The departmental and programme-level self-assessment reports show that a range of factors appropriate to higher education provision are considered and discussed. However, there is considerable variation in the extent to which all relevant issues, such as comments from external examiners, have been addressed in programme self-assessment reports. Staff engagement with the self-assessment process has been variable.

10 The Head of the Department of Higher Education plays an important role in managing the quality processes for the higher education provision in the College, for example by chairing the departmental meetings; by producing information for quality reviews; in the provision of support for programme leaders and module tutors; and in the approval of publicity material. The formal link between the higher education provision in the Department of Engineering and the Department of Higher Education is through

membership of the Department of Higher Education Committee by the Head of Engineering. Staff development activities available to Department of Higher Education staff are also open to members of staff from the Department of Engineering. However, staff in the Department of Engineering do not benefit from all the dissemination of information and effective practice available to staff in the Department of Higher Education.

11 During the academic year 2008-09, the College had a Higher Education Quality Committee, which provided strategic oversight of higher education, including, for example, approval of the quality assurance procedures for verification of assessments. The Committee met frequently and operated effectively as considered desirable by the Developmental engagement. It has been replaced by the Higher Education and Skills Committee, which has appropriate terms of reference to oversee academic standards and other quality aspects of programmes. Its first meeting was in March 2010, well into the present academic year. More meetings are planned. However, a pattern of regular meetings with detailed outcomes has not yet been established. The team considers that while the purposes of this committee are appropriate, it is too soon since its establishment to assess its effectiveness.

12 Quality enhancement is a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the Department of Higher Education. Recent discussions have covered topics such as the oversight of quality management in higher education at the College, peer observation, personal learning plans and the nature of the provision. Staff development sessions are determined with reference to these discussions. Department of Engineering staff do not fully participate in these activities. It is advisable to ensure that staff who deliver higher education programmes are fully engaged with the appropriate quality assurance and enhancement activities.

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

13 The Head of the Department of Higher Education has produced an accurate mapping of the College's activities for academic standards against the *Code of practice*. Staff delivering higher education programmes have had training in the Academic Infrastructure. They are able to use subject benchmarks, the benchmark for Foundation Degrees, the FHEQ, and the sections of the *Code of practice* relevant to academic standards, in an effective manner. The Quality Assurance Handbook, which has been modified to ensure relevance to higher education in the light of the Developmental engagement recommendation, provides staff with valuable guidance. External examiners affirm that the standards achieved by students on the College's programmes are appropriate to the level of the qualifications.

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

14 The College has an internal approval process for all new programmes. For university programmes the standards of higher education awards are also assured at validation events. Subsequent processes include the annual reviews the College produces for the programmes validated by the partner universities and an annual self-assessment produced for Edexcel programmes. Minor programme changes are made through the formal committee procedures at Northumbria University and the University of Sunderland after informal discussions between College and university staff. A full revalidation is required every three years by Northumbria University and every six years by the University of Sunderland. These processes work effectively.

15 The Developmental engagement team found that there were effective moderation procedures, and this is confirmed by the team. Each assessment has a quality assessor, whose role is defined in the Quality Assurance Handbook, and who provides feedback both on the setting and on the marking of assessments for all awarding bodies. Moderation procedures are effective, so ensuring that assessments are set and marked in a way that fully reflects the intended learning outcomes. This is good practice. External examiner comments are very supportive of the College's moderation processes and sometimes single the College out for praise in reports on programmes delivered across a consortium of colleges. The College ensures that external examiner reports are fully considered. External examiners indicate they are satisfied that their comments have been acted upon appropriately by the College. Assessments for programmes validated by the university partners are also moderated at the university. For programmes delivered by a consortium of colleges, there are university moderation meetings that are well thought of by external examiners.

16 The Developmental engagement identified the high quality of feedback given to students and the generally rapid return of work. The team agrees with this. Students met by the team indicate that they get prompt and good-quality feedback on assessment in both oral and written format which allows them to prepare properly for their next assessment. On the FD Education and Care, however, feedback takes rather longer due to University of Sunderland processes.

17 The Developmental engagement found that the College was working closely with employers. Students met by the team say that their programmes are enriched by employer involvement. Examples include the way in which education programmes are related to the students' employment, the value of the placement on the FD Counselling, and the provision of live, employment-related briefs on the HNC/D Graphic Design.

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

18 Academic staff have an annual personal development activity plan which is agreed with their line manager. Activities include subject updating, attendance at seminars, workshops and meetings at other higher education institutions and study for higher degrees. The College provides some financial support for the latter. Agency staff, who are sometimes used by the College, have access to the same staff development activities as permanent staff. They are able to bring their own subject expertise that may not otherwise be available to students and is useful to other staff. In engineering, employer input provides further staff development opportunities. The College maintains individual records of staff development.

19 Staff attend sessions at the College at which important topics in higher education are discussed. Recent sessions have covered the Academic Infrastructure and, specifically, the FHEQ, and the IQER process. These sessions are also used as part of the induction process for new staff. The College is very successful in supporting the achievement of appropriate academic standards by enabling staff to develop subject expertise and engage with recent developments in higher education.

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

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

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

20 The College's approach to learning opportunities is highlighted in its 'Living the College Values' and the 'Higher Education Strategy' documents, which focus on the needs of individual students, giving them 'a highly supportive and nurturing environment'. A number of committees, for example the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, support the executive decision-making processes. For current expenditure, the College allocates to each head of department a delegated budget determined by the business review process. All heads of department can make capital bids, which are evaluated by senior management. The library holds a budget for online resources and books, with part of the budget allocated solely to higher education. Requests for additions to the library resources are made as part of a routine end-of-year process through the heads of department. The HEFCE capital grant funds are used for projects related to higher education. College-wide budgets are used to fund major developments covering all students and also emergencies.

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

21 The College is responsible for all the teaching for the provision, together with student support, and for ensuring that learning accommodation and resources are appropriate and that the programmes are delivered by appropriately qualified teaching staff. Self-assessment reports and extensive student feedback provide data for the processes described in paragraphs 9 to 12 and 20. There is a central role for heads of department in dealing with both academic and resource matters at the programme level.

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

22 The *Code of practice* has been mapped against the College's processes and procedures in relation to the quality of learning opportunities. In general, this demonstrates a comprehensive and constructive response to the *Code of practice*. In the case of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*, however, the College's approach is less thorough. The College provides general information and guidance on areas relevant to placement and work-based learning, like health and safety. There is, however, a lack of detailed College guidance on the minimum amount of information to be given to all stakeholders, including students, mentors and employers. This results in a variety of practice at the programme level, with some stakeholders getting a limited amount of guidance. It is desirable to provide guidance on the information required for stakeholders to support work-based and placement learning.

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

23 The new Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee has appropriate terms of reference to ensure that the quality of learning opportunities is maintained and enhanced. This committee has met once, and its Higher Education and Research sub group is particularly relevant for higher education, although it has not yet met. It is advisable to ensure that all committees relevant to higher education meet regularly and fulfil their terms of reference. Managers and teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities for teaching

and learning, which are clearly identified in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy 2009-2010 and also in the Learning and Teaching Procedures@TyneMet document.

24 The Directorate of Quality Improvement oversees enhancement in learning and teaching. Within the Directorate of Quality Improvement, the Teaching, Learning and Professional Development Department gives valuable support to staff, for example by promoting the activities of the learning coaches who help teaching staff to develop their skills and knowledge. The learning coach in the Department of Higher Education has extensive experience in higher education. The Directorate of Quality Improvement plans and records the compulsory lesson observations and actively promotes peer observation of teaching within the departments. The College sees peer observation as a key mechanism for sharing good practice. In the Department of Higher Education all staff are part of the peer observation process and they value the experience. Heads of department act on the student questionnaires, which cover teaching and learning. Students met by the team value the teaching they receive.

25 The College is looking to develop its use of the virtual learning environment in order to support learning and teaching. Some students indicate that there have been problems with the virtual learning environment this year. Staff provision of materials on the virtual learning environment for supporting learning and teaching is variable. The College recognises this and will be providing more staff development. It is desirable to encourage the increased use of the virtual learning environment by staff, so supporting student learning.

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

26 The Learner Services Directorate provides a range of academic and pastoral support. It provides valuable paper-based and electronic information about what is available. Students can access various aspects of cross-college student support, including finance, counselling and careers, through The Gateway. Students value the support they receive from The Gateway throughout their programmes, including that provided for applications and enrolments. A higher education progression officer supports students wanting to progress internally and to university. Students can also be referred to the additional support team, which caters for students with disabilities and provides basic skills development. Learning mentors provide general literacy and numeracy skills support, with tutors in the Department of Higher Education being the main source of help with academic skills for higher education.

27 Students met by the team find the tutorial system very effective in supporting their learning. They value the compulsory nature of some sessions. Staff also provide an extensive range of flexible and accessible support outside the tutorial system. The new Student Forum gives the opportunity for the College to receive feedback on all types of student support. The College provides a range of effective academic and pastoral support which assists students in their learning. This is good practice.

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

28 All staff participate in weekly teaching and learning sessions. These sessions are planned by each head of department and the relevant learning coach. The learning coaches also support staff on an individual basis. There are also three compulsory staff development days, which are either departmental or college-focused. The awarding bodies also provide

staff development opportunities and joint activities, particularly in the context of consortium provision. New members of staff participate in the Developmental Induction Programme, which includes the Head of the Department of Higher Education delivering sessions specifically on higher education. Staff development activity provides effective support for the delivery of the provision. This is good practice.

**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?**

29 The College provides suitable accommodation and computing facilities through the central College budget. Students on programmes with university partners have access to resources at the university including the virtual learning environment. The College has invested in online texts and databases, which are valued by most students met by the team.

30 The College has provided various specialist resources. These include engineering facilities developed with the help of a major international company, refurbishment of the Teaching and Learning Centre, used for staff development, and the Higher Education Centre, which includes a quiet area and a social space. Students were very positive about this facility. Departments have funded some smaller projects including purchase of some specialist sports coaching equipment.

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

**Core theme 3: Public information**

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

31 The College is responsible for the production of a prospectus and website information, programme leaflets and general information for employers and students. It is also responsible for the information provided to the UCAS admissions system. In the case of university partners, this responsibility is shared for particular types of information. Each university signs off publicly available information according to the detail of the partnership agreements. For programmes provided through a consortium, a considerable amount of the information given to students and employers may be common to all members.

32 On enrolment, students are all provided with a comprehensive College welcome pack which acts as a learner handbook, a programme handbook, and, where appropriate, a university student handbook. Students met by the team value the information they receive at induction. Awarding universities issue module guides for franchise programmes, some with College staff input. These are distributed by the College. The College produces unit guides for Higher National programmes, based on Edexcel guidance.

33 The College's website has a dedicated higher education section, which is updated regularly and is easy to navigate, including the facility to increase font sizes. It provides the ability to download the higher education prospectus, individual programme guides and the part-time prospectus that the College publishes annually. On enrolment, students have access to the College virtual learning environment. In its current form, this has been operating only since the start of the 2009-10 session. For all programmes, it has been

populated with a basic set of programme and module information. For some programmes there is more extensive information. The College recognises that use of the virtual learning environment is still developing. Where applicable, there are electronic links to awarding bodies' websites to provide students with the details of the regulations and rules of assessment that apply specifically to their programme of study.

**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?**

34 Under the partnership agreements with awarding universities, the College is required to comply with branding and marketing conditions. The relevant university agrees programme definitive documentation at validation and the College is required to gain university agreement to any changes and for any related publicity material. All programme specifications, including those produced within the College for Edexcel programmes, meet QAA guidelines.

35 For all information produced by the College, the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Business Development takes final responsibility. Programme teams provide the information about the detail of their programmes after checks with the relevant university, where appropriate. The Head of the Department of Higher Education has a final check before passing the information to the Marketing Department.

36 Prior to the date of the review, higher education marketing material was outsourced to an independent company, working to the direction of the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Business Development. The College has since decided to bring the marketing operation in-house, to exert a greater control over the material. The team found a number of errors and omissions in the prospectus and other publicly available leaflets, including cases where there is no clear indication of the awarding body or the incorrect assignment of academic levels to awards. It is desirable to ensure that public information in the prospectus and in publicly available leaflets is correct.

37 Programme teams are also responsible for the production of guides and handbooks for students and their publication on the virtual learning environment. This material is monitored by heads of department. There is a guidance checklist produced by the Head of the Department of Higher Education. The student handbooks for university programmes are comprehensive and helpful. Those developed for the Edexcel programmes are not so comprehensive or user-friendly. This is particularly so for those produced by the Department of Engineering. Handbooks provide information about impropriety, complaints and appeals as recommended by the Developmental engagement, although sometimes there is little detail. It is desirable to make Edexcel student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and to ensure students receive all the information they need. There were also some inconsistencies between hard copy and electronic versions in the HNC/D Computing programmes. The College provides appropriate module information which is valued by students met by the team.

38 The College adopts learner surveys to evaluate the accuracy and helpfulness of programme information. Results from the surveys inform self-assessment reviews and actions are undertaken. Students met by the team stated that they were well informed prior to starting their programmes and that their experience on the programme had matched what they were led to expect.

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**

39 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in December 2008. It addressed the following lines of enquiry agreed with the College:

- the variety and appropriateness of assessment methods used to test the achievement of learning outcomes
- the quality of feedback to learners on formative and summative assessment and how this is considered and managed within the College
- the information learners receive about assessment.

40 The areas of good practice identified during the Developmental engagement were: effective internal verification procedures; an appropriate variety of assessments; close involvement with employers at programme and strategic levels; valuable staff development opportunities on assessment; extensive and valuable formative feedback; timely feedback on student work; effective teaching observation, informing staff development activity on assessment; and some comprehensive handbooks.

41 The Developmental engagement indicated that it was advisable to: develop some of the quality documentation to more fully support the higher education provision; ensure all handbooks provide information on the procedures for complaint, appeal and academic impropriety; and make the procedures for checking public information more effective. It was considered desirable to clearly specify the role of the newly formed Higher Education Quality Committee and to ensure its effective implementation.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

42 The College delivers eight Foundation Degrees, six awarded by the University of Sunderland and two by Northumbria University, with 231 and 34.17 full-time equivalents (FTEs) respectively. It is planning to maintain most of the existing Foundation Degree provision, although in some cases with the addition of more flexible pathways. Computing provision is reverting to HNC/D programmes from the Foundation Degree. There are also plans for the development of Foundation Degrees in engineering, reflecting a regional priority.

43 Foundation Degrees are central to the College Higher Education Strategy and are discussed in detail in that document. However, significant expansion of any of its higher education provision, a College priority, depends on the availability of additional student numbers. With the valuable support of the awarding bodies, Foundation Degrees are provided effectively with appropriate aims and objectives and suitable provision of work-related learning. There are few aspects of the effectiveness of the management of the College's provision that are applicable solely to Foundation Degrees.

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

- moderation procedures are effective so ensuring that assessments are set and marked in a way that fully reflects the intended learning outcomes (paragraph 15)
- staff development activity provides effective support for the delivery of the provision (paragraphs 18, 19, 28)
- the College provides a range of effective academic and pastoral support which assists students in their learning (paragraphs 26, 27).

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

- ensure that staff who deliver higher education programmes are fully engaged with the appropriate quality assurance and enhancement activities (paragraphs 9, 10, 12)
- ensure that all committees relevant to higher education meet regularly and fulfil their terms of reference (paragraphs 11, 23).

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

- provide guidance on the information required for stakeholders to support work-based and placement learning (paragraph 22)
- encourage the increased use of the virtual learning environment by staff so supporting student learning (paragraph 25)
- ensure that public information in the prospectus and in publicly available leaflets is correct (paragraph 36).

## **E Conclusions and summary of judgements**

47 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Tyne Metropolitan College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies Edexcel, Northumbria University, and the University of Sunderland.

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

- moderation procedures are effective so ensuring that assessments are set and marked in a way that fully reflects the intended learning outcomes (paragraph 15)
- staff development activity provides effective support for the delivery of the provision (paragraphs 18, 19, 28)
- the College provides a range of effective academic and pastoral support which assists students in their learning (paragraphs 26, 27).

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

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

- ensure that staff who deliver higher education programmes are fully engaged with the appropriate quality assurance and enhancement activities (paragraphs 9, 10, 12)
- ensure that all committees relevant to higher education meet regularly and fulfil their terms of reference (paragraphs 11, 23).

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

- provide guidance on the information required for stakeholders to support work-based and placement learning (paragraph 22)
- encourage the increased use of the virtual learning environment by staff so supporting student learning (paragraph 25)
- ensure that public information in the prospectus and in publicly available leaflets is correct (paragraph 36)
- make Edexcel student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and ensure students receive all the information they need (paragraph 37).

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 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.

53 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.

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, 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.

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010							
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<p>In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moderation procedures are effective so ensuring assessments are set and marked in a way that fully reflects the intended learning outcomes (paragraph 15)</li> <li>• staff development activity provides effective support for the delivery of the provision (paragraphs 18, 19, 28)</li> </ul>	<p>Hold termly meetings of the Assessment/Internal Verification (IV) subgroup of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee to disseminate good practice identified through IQER Summative Review</p> <p>i) Hold termly meetings of the HE and Research subgroup of the Teaching, Learning and</p>	<p>First Term – by 30 November 2010                      Second Term – by 28 February 2011                      Third Term – by 31 May 2010</p> <p>i) 5 July 2010</p>	<p>Director of Quality Improvement in conjunction with HE Quality Co-ordinator</p> <p>i) Head of Learning and Teaching and Professional Development</p>	<p>Discussion of good practice at each of the termly meetings of Assessment/IV subgroup</p> <p>i) Discussion of bespoke CPD opportunities for teachers of HE in FE at the HE and</p>	<p>Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p> <p>i) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>	<p>Via monitoring the Minutes of the Assessment/IV sub-group of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p> <p>i) Via monitoring the Minutes of the HE and Research subgroup of</p>	

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>Assessment Committee to identify bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for teachers of HE in FE</p> <p>ii) Introduce cyclical process of input, implementation and reflection into weekly timetabled teaching and learning hour – for staff teaching HE in FE reflections will address suitability of strategies for this provision</p>	<p>ii) Weekly teaching and learning hours throughout year</p>	<p>ii) Head of Learning &amp; Teaching and Professional Development</p>	<p>Research subgroup meeting</p> <p>ii) CPD activity through teaching and learning hour leads to cyclical reflections by HE staff regarding strategies for HE provision</p>	<p>ii) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>	<p>the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p> <p>ii) Recording of outcomes of cyclical CPD activities via teaching and learning hour</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>iii) Subject-specific CPD and industrial updating for HE staff supported through individual CPD plans</p> <p>iv) Induction of staff new to HE in relation to Academic Infrastructure updates, codes of practice, benchmarking, via individual CPD plans</p>	<p>iii) July 2011</p> <p>iv) Within one month of commencement of post</p>	<p>iii) Head of Department</p> <p>iv) Head of Department</p>	<p>iii) Individual CPD plans in place</p> <p>iv) Individual CPD plans in place</p>	<p>iii) Higher Education and Skills Committee</p> <p>iv) Higher Education and Skills Committee</p>	<p>iii) Via monitoring of individual CPD plans</p> <p>iv) Via monitoring of individual CPD plans</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College provides a range of effective academic and pastoral support which assists students in their learning (paragraphs 26, 27).</li> </ul>	<p>i) Introduce online e-Personal Learning Plan (ePLP) product to review academic and pastoral support and plan learning, from September 2010 onwards</p>	<p>i) 30 June 2010</p>	<p>i) Deputy Principal Curriculum and Business Development</p>	<p>i) ePLP product purchased and online</p>	<p>i) Curriculum Breakfast Meeting 21 June 2010</p>	<p>i) Product purchased and installed</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>ii) Train teaching staff members to use ePLP</p> <p>iii) Introduce clear guidance via Personal Tutor Handbook 2010-11, for providing academic and pastoral support</p> <p>iv) Share good practice in supporting learners within HE provision with wider College community via teaching and learning hour CPD cyclical activity where every fourth week has been identified for sharing best practice in personal tutorials</p>	<p>ii) 31 July 2010</p> <p>iii) 31 July 2010</p> <p>iv) Every fourth week of teaching and learning hours throughout year</p>	<p>ii) Head of Learning &amp; Professional Development</p> <p>iii) Head of Learning &amp; Teaching and Professional Development</p> <p>iv) Members of teaching staff facilitated via Learning Coaches</p>	<p>ii) Members of staff trained in use of ePLP</p> <p>iii) Personal Tutor Handbook circulated to all Personal Tutors</p> <p>iv) Discussions around sharing of good practice via cyclical teaching and learning CPD activity facilitated via Learning Coaches</p>	<p>ii) Curriculum Breakfast Meeting 21 June 2010</p> <p>iii) Curriculum Breakfast Meeting 28 June 2010</p>	<p>ii) Staff training undertaken</p> <p>iii) Personal Tutor Handbook draft presented 21 June 2010 – further amendments to be approved by 5 July 2010</p> <p>iv) Recording of personal tutorial outcomes of cyclical CPD activities via teaching and learning hour</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010							
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation	
<p>The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be <b>advised</b> to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that staff who deliver higher education programmes are fully engaged with the appropriate quality assurance and enhancement activities (paragraphs 9, 10, 12)</li> </ul>	<p>i) Staff development undertaken by Director of Quality Improvement with HE staff, Tuesday 4 May 2010, to develop staff re quality assurance and enhancement activities such as Programme Review, Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</p> <p>ii) Hold termly meetings of the HE and Research subgroup of the</p>	<p>i) 4 May 2010</p> <p>ii) 5 July 2010</p>	<p>i) Director of Quality Improvement</p> <p>ii) Head of Learning &amp; Teaching and</p>	<p>i) Improvements in the completion of quality assurance and enhancement activities, eg Programme Review SAR/QIP documentation for 2009-10</p> <p>ii) Staff from Engineering Department will be</p>	<p>i) HE Quality Improvement Review Meeting, 21 May 2010</p> <p>ii) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>	<p>i) The outcomes of the Quality Improvement Review Meeting, 21 May 2010 demonstrate improved Programme Review/SAR/QIP documentation for 2009-10</p> <p>ii) Via monitoring the Minutes of the HE and Research</p>	

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and ensure representation from across all HE programmes		Professional Development	represented within HE and Research subgroup		subgroup of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all committees relevant to higher education meet regularly and fulfil their terms of reference (paragraphs 11, 23).</li> </ul>	<p>i) Publish schedule of meetings for 2010-11 for the Higher Education &amp; Skills Committee, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee and the HE and Research subgroup of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>	<p>i) 1 September 2010 (schedule to be published)</p>	<p>i) Appropriate member of Senior Leadership Team – Higher Education &amp; Skills Committee (Deputy Principal Curriculum &amp; Business Development Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (Director of Quality Improvement), and HE and Research</p>	<p>i) Schedule of meetings published, showing meetings held at regular meetings</p>	<p>i) Executive</p>	<p>i) Agendas and Minutes of Committee and subgroup meeting</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>ii) Ensure that Agenda items cover all aspects identified within Terms of Reference within annual cycle</p>	<p>ii) Termly Agendas</p>	<p>subgroup (Head of Learning &amp; Teaching and Professional Development)</p> <p>ii) Appropriate member of Senior Leadership Team (as above)</p>	<p>ii) Agenda items over the course of the academic year cover all aspects identified with Terms of Reference</p>	<p>ii) Executive</p>	<p>ii) Agendas and Minutes of Committee and subgroup meeting</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The team agreed the following areas where it would be <b>desired</b> to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide guidance on the information required for stakeholders to support work-based and placement learning (paragraph 22)</li> </ul>	<p>Handbook to be developed to provide guidance on the information required for stakeholders to support work-based and placement HE learning; the handbook will provide generic guidance for all HE programmes as well as bespoke guidance where appropriate to the subject specialism</p>	<p>1 September 2010</p>	<p>Deputy Principal Curriculum and Business Development</p>	<p>Handbook produced and disseminated to all stakeholders to support work-based and placement learning</p>	<p>Higher Education and Skills Committee</p>	<p>Minutes of Higher Education and Skills Committee reflect development and dissemination of handbook</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage the increased use of the virtual learning environment by staff so supporting student learning (paragraph 25)</li> </ul>	<p>i) Offer scheduled training activities within the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee in relation to e-learning and the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE)</p> <p>ii) Set and monitor targets for course teams to upload their Schemes of Work (SoW) and LPs onto the VLE, via random sampling/audit by the E-Learning subgroup of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>	<p>i) 1 September 2010</p> <p>ii) Report on sampling of course team SoW and LPs to be agenda item on each E-Learning subgroup meeting</p>	<p>i) Head of Learning &amp; Teaching and Professional Development</p> <p>ii) Head of Learning &amp; Teaching and Professional Development</p>	<p>i) Training activities re VLE undertaken by members of HE staff</p> <p>ii) Targets set and monitored against in terms of uploading SoW and LPs to VLE</p>	<p>i) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>	<p>i), ii) and iii) Via monitoring the Minutes of the E-Learning subgroup of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</p>

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that public information in the prospectus and in publicly available leaflets is correct (paragraph 36)</li> </ul>	iii) Monitor VLE useage of HE staff and HE learners	iii) At each E-Learning sub group meeting	iii) VLE Administrator	iii) Statistical report produced, analysed and presented to E-Learning subgroup meeting	Higher Education and Skills Committee	Monitoring of all publicity information
	All public information for prospectus, website, and publicity material to be checked for accuracy using the flowchart documented within the self-evaluation document, with details checking by Course Tutor, Programme Leader (from University), Head of	Date for checking accuracy of public information will be dependent upon dates of publication and flowchart detailed left	Head of Department (final sign-off responsibility)	All public information published to be 100% accurate		

Tyne Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make Edexcel student handbooks more comprehensive and consistent and ensure students receive all the information they need (paragraph 37).</li> </ul>	Department, Marketing and final copy via Head of Department  Review all course handbooks for HE provision and ensure all are comprehensive and consistent in relation to the information they provide	1 September 2010	Course Leaders for individual HE programme (monitored via Head of Department)	Revised handbooks for September 2010 distribution to students, with consistent information	Higher Education and Skills Committee	Monitor the revised handbooks for consistency of information

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