



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Walford and North Shropshire College**

**April 2011**

**SR 49/2010**

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2011

ISBN 978 1 84979 306 3

All QAA's publications are available on our website [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

## 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 Walford and North Shropshire College carried out in April 2011

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:

- the Academic Precept in assessment, which was devised to assist with the use of the *Code of practice* and is embedded firmly in the approach of the staff to the students' learning
- the sharing of teaching and learning practice, which is identified and promoted through the work of the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee and disseminated through specific higher education staff development activity and the learning sets
- the effective tutorial process, which is timely and reflective and supports the development of students.

### Recommendations

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

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

- ensure that its management and checking procedures for the completeness and accuracy of public information are responsive, thorough and effective.

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

- adopt a coordinated cross-college approach and develop a strategy for employer engagement at higher education level to ensure the effective involvement of employers
- undertake a thorough review of induction procedures at the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee to identify and share best practice
- review how the College's virtual learning environment can be developed to improve its utilisation by students.

## 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 Walford and North Shropshire 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 Harper Adams University College and Staffordshire University. The review was carried out by Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, Mr David Gardiner (reviewers) and Mr Martin Hill (coordinator).

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

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

4 Walford and North Shropshire College is a general further education college based on two campuses in north Shropshire and three outreach centres across Shropshire. The Oswestry campus offers offers A level, vocational and essential skills programmes. The Walford campus offers specialist land-based provision in agriculture, animal care, equine studies, horticulture, engineering, countryside and sport. Students are recruited from Oswestry and its surrounding towns, Shrewsbury and Telford, as well as the dispersed rural community. The hinterland of the College extends into Wales. The College mission statement is: 'We aim to provide outstanding education and training opportunities in order to add value to the lives of all our learners and to advance the economic and social well being of the communities we serve'.

5 In 2010-11 there were 6,635 enrolments on further education programmes at the College. In March 2011 the College had 61 students following part-time higher education provision validated through the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) and 25 students following two full-time Foundation Degrees validated by Harper Adams University College. There are 14 staff teaching on the higher education provision. The College's higher education provision as of March 2011 consists of the following:

### Harper Adams University College

- Foundation Degree Animal Science with Health Management, full-time (16 students) (16 full-time equivalents (FTEs))
- Foundation Degree Equine Science with Breeding Management, full-time (9 students) (9 FTEs).

The last enrolment to these programmes was in September 2010.

### **Staffordshire University**

- HNC in Wildlife and Countryside, part-time (16 students) (8 FTEs)
- HND in Wildlife and Countryside, part-time (9 students) (4.5 FTEs)
- Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Countryside, part-time (8 students) (4 FTEs)
- BSc (top-up) in Wildlife and Countryside, part-time (6 students) (3 FTEs)
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, part-time (22 students) (11 FTEs)

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

6 There are three Foundation Degrees offered at the College. Two, on a full-time basis, are in partnership with Harper Adams University College. The part-time Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Countryside is offered in partnership with Staffordshire University, as part of the Staffordshire University Regional Federation. Other higher education provision, in wildlife and countryside and in education, is offered in partnership with Staffordshire University. Staffordshire University holds an Edexcel licence and the College offers the HNC and HND provision in wildlife and countryside through this arrangement. Responsibilities for the academic standards and the management of the provision are set out in the two awarding body agreements.

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

7 The Foundation Degree provision validated by Harper Adams University College has been withdrawn by the University College due to a reduction in the funding allocations. The last cohorts started in September 2010. Despite the restrictions on funding, the College will continue to work in partnership with Staffordshire University to deliver a range of locally accessible higher education courses, with a focus on part-time programmes for adults. A Foundation Degree in Small Business Management (Salon) validated by Staffordshire University did not enrol enough students to run in 2010-11. The market demand for a Foundation Degree in Sport is being assessed.

### **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. The student submission was compiled by two students from the Foundation Degree in Equine Science with Breeding Management. The document was assembled following discussions between these students and others on each of the higher education programmes who were asked about their experiences of their programmes. The team found the document helpful in identifying specific comments and concerns of students and were able to pursue some of these in meetings with three representative samples of students.

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

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

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

9 The higher education provision is managed effectively within the College's overall organisation structure, under the direction of the Deputy Principal and through the Head of the School of Land Based Studies and the Head of the School of Professional Studies. Heads of school and programme leaders are members of the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee. This is responsible for coordinating higher education provision within the College and for quality assurance and improvement at higher education level. This committee reviews practice, external examiner reports, school annual monitoring reports and checks that agreed actions are completed. The College acknowledges that this committee is still at a developmental stage and will refine its terms of reference and operational procedures. The work of the committee is reported to the Quality and Standards Committee of the Governing Body.

10 The College has formal partnership agreements with Staffordshire University and Harper Adams University College. Partnership coordinators have been appointed by the two awarding bodies and they take an active part in the College's quality management procedures. The operation of the partnership arrangements is clear to staff and students in the College. The partnership arrangements have also assisted the sharing of good practice through the teacher training collaborative meetings in the Staffordshire University Regional Federation.

11 Programme leaders within each school manage the individual programmes. Programme teams are responsible, with the awarding bodies, for the academic standards and the management and delivery of the students' learning experiences. Programme team meetings are used to review academic standards, improve on the learning experience and make full use of student representation. The College uses the awarding bodies' assessment regulations in the annual assessment boards.

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

12 In meeting the validation requirements of the awarding bodies the College engages with the FHEQ. Where there are appropriate subject benchmark statements, the programme specifications contain programme and awarding body generic intended learning outcomes. The programme specifications for the provision validated through Staffordshire University also contain the University's eight generic learning intended learning outcomes. These are designed to provide students with a rounded education experience as well as a subject-focused understanding of their chosen specialism.

13 The Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee is responsible for ensuring appropriate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. Through work by this committee, the College has reviewed the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. A document, based on the precepts and guidance of the *Code of practice*, has been produced, using College house style, as an Academic Precept. This has led to a good understanding and ownership of this aspect of the Academic Infrastructure. The Committee

has the intention of producing further customised documents based on the *Code of practice*. The team identifies the Academic Precept document as good practice.

14 The Foundation Degrees engage with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* by providing appropriate intended learning outcomes; clarification of the knowledge, understanding and skills required to gain the award; and work-based learning opportunities. However, the Foundation Degrees do not consistently address all defining characteristics such as a formal and systematic approach to employer involvement and the availability of explicit progression arrangements.

**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?**

15 Within the terms of its agreements with its awarding bodies, the College is required to submit annual reports. The manner in which these annual reports and associated action plans are completed by the College ensures that academic standards are considered fully both within the College and by the awarding bodies on a regular basis. Actions resulting from the plans are followed through in a rigorous manner.

16 Heads of school meet their higher education programme leaders to monitor the maintenance of academic standards and review action planning. The annual higher education programme monitoring reports are designed to ensure the successful completion of quality improvements in line with the curriculum area Self Assessment Reports and the Quality Improvement Plans. The annual College Self Assessment Report evaluates performance in both further and higher education. The higher education element is considered by the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee and the Quality and Standards Committee of the Governing Body.

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

17 Higher education lecturers attend both further and higher education training events within the College and are invited to attend professional development events at the awarding bodies. Staff development requests are raised at performance management meetings, where the outcomes from previous professional development are evaluated with line managers. Staff can request professional development, or be recommended to attend events by their line manager. Individual staff development activities are recorded using the reflective report approach of the Institute for Learning.

18 The Higher Education Delivery Committee identifies areas of good practice in higher education, and these are shared at Staff Development Days. There are also professional development events, following every standardisation meeting on the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector provision, attended by all colleges in the Staffordshire University Regional Federation. At these meetings the colleges review and agree the standard of achievement in assessed work. The colleges in the Federation rotate responsibility for leading further discussions on staff development topics at these events. They are considered by the staff to be valuable and interesting meetings.

**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?**

19 The terms of reference of the Higher Education Delivery Committee are to discuss all matters relevant to the delivery of higher education awards at the College and coordinate enrolment targets across all higher education programmes. Details of the structure and operation of the Higher Education Delivery Committee are in paragraphs 9 and 13. The committee also identifies best practice and promotes this through specific higher education staff development activities. It also organises the learning sets in the College, which offer dedicated time for staff to develop good teaching and learning practice. The team considers the sharing of teaching and learning practice through the work of the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee to be good practice.

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

20 The College has an effective quality assurance cycle for teaching and learning. This includes a thorough system of internal and external verification, an Internal Performance Inspection process and the involvement of students at higher education programme meetings. The external examiner's report for the first year of operation of the Foundation Degrees in Equine Science with Breeding Management and Animal Science with Health Management states that students demonstrate a high standard of performance. On the wildlife and countryside programmes the external examiner reports that the standard of student work and the level of assessment are excellent. Assessment activity was highlighted by Ofsted as a key strength on the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector provision.

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

21 In meetings with the team, staff involved in the delivery and management of higher education demonstrated awareness of the Academic Infrastructure. This was promoted initially during the College's preparation for the Developmental engagement in May 2010. The College subsequently prepared the Academic Precept on assessment. At the Summative review, the team noted that the content of the Academic Precept was embedded firmly in the approach of the staff to the students' learning, and is used as a regular source of reference.

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

22 The processes undertaken in the annual Internal Performance Inspection Policy are complemented by a rigorous assessment of students' work and review of programme management. As identified in the Developmental engagement, the good practice of internal teaching inspection has continued, with all higher education provision being inspected in 2010-11. Some lesson observations were attended and observed by staff from the awarding bodies.

23 Internal verification of assessment is effective and thorough. All student work is double marked. On the wildlife and countryside programmes the University Link Tutor undertakes this. The standardisation meetings of the Staffordshire University Regional

Federation provide an opportunity for internal verification on the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector. The assessed work on the Foundation Degrees in Equine Science with Breeding Management and Animal Science with Health Management is double-marked, and a sample is passed to the internal verifier and the external examiner.

24 Practical skills are developed and assessed across all programmes and transferable skills are made explicit in some modules. For example, in the Foundation Degrees Equine Science and Breeding Management and Animal Science with Health Management there are skills modules on academic and personal development and research methods devised by the awarding body. There are some examples of innovative teaching methods, such as the use made of electronic location systems in modules in the Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Countryside.

25 There is a clear focus on employer engagement for programme development, validation and work placement. This is thorough and in accord with the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. However, the College has found it difficult to engage employers in other ways. Employer involvement is based on individual links between programme tutors and individual employers. This is often sought informally and recorded inconsistently. The team considers it desirable that the College adopt a coordinated approach and develop a strategy for employer engagement for higher education programmes, to ensure the effective involvement of employers.

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

26 The application and interview process for entry to higher education at the College follows the requirements of the awarding bodies. There is provision for the accreditation of prior learning through a College policy which conforms to the awarding bodies' policies. Staff reported that there has been little demand, although the team noted that there is no mention of the policy in the College's higher education prospectus.

27 Induction processes ensure that students are aware of the expectations of the programmes and the awarding bodies. The team was informed by staff and students that at induction considerable time was taken up by administrative procedures. Students felt that the time involved in induction could have been better used. The aims and objectives of induction are considered by the Higher Education Delivery Committee. The team considers it to be desirable for the Higher Education Delivery Committee to review the operation of the induction processes annually to share best practice.

28 The provision of tutorials to support students is timely and offers opportunities for reflection by students on their progress. Students commented favourably on tutorials in the Foundation Degrees in Equine Science with Breeding Management and in Animal Science with Health Management, where tutors and learners meet for 30 minutes a week to consider common issues, which are then recorded on students' Individual Learning Plans. In the wildlife and countryside programmes scheduled tutorials take place midway through each module, and additionally on request. The Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector team ensures that students receive individual tutorials within one week of their assignment feedback. The team considers the timely and effective tutorial processes in the College to be good practice.

29 The learner voice is valued at the College. Student feedback is sought in a variety of ways including module evaluations and student representation at programme management meetings. The latter ensures that the concerns of students are recorded formally and can be dealt with appropriately. All student representatives confirmed that their views were taken seriously and they highlighted a number of actions taken as a result of their participation.

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

30 Arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities are contained in the Continuing Professional Development Policy. The College has developed teaching and learning sets with the aim of developing good teaching and learning and a variety of teaching styles. They allow staff to observe and discuss the teaching of colleagues. They work well and, in line with the recommendation from the Developmental engagement, have been extended to higher education.

31 The staff professional development records demonstrate both an individual and a College commitment to ensure the currency of knowledge, expertise and practice. There are effective arrangements for new staff teaching on higher education provision to be mentored by their Programme Team Leader, the Head of School and the Awarding Body Link Tutor.

### **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?**

32 Students who met the team had no complaints about the sufficiency of learning resources. Students have secured a higher education work area and dedicated computers. However, part-time students expressed concerns about the restrictions on the library opening hours at the Walford campus. Students also have access to the learning resources available at the partner universities and some take advantage of these.

33 The virtual learning environment is used fully on the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector where, as well as programme handbooks and assignments, there are extensive lesson materials. Students on this programme view the virtual learning environment as a valuable aid to their work. The other curriculum areas make less use of the virtual learning environment. On the Foundation Degrees in Equine Science with Breeding Management and Animal Science with Health Management notes are available for some, but not all, lessons. The team concludes that it is desirable for the College to review how the virtual learning environment can be developed to improve its utilisation by students.

**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?**

34 Public information for which the College has delegated responsibility includes prospectuses, flyers, press releases, banners, award ceremony materials, programme handbooks and prospectus information on the website. This information is available in different formats. The handbook and prospectus information is available in hardcopy and online. Programme-specific publicity material is targeted at potential students. Students felt that the information that they received before enrolling was helpful and accurate.

35 The College uses the awarding bodies' programme handbook templates, which are contextualised for the local campus arrangements. The programme handbooks and module guides specify clearly the intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria, allowing students to understand what is being assessed, how it is being assessed and how to achieve higher grades. Handbooks are given to students in hardcopy and are available through the virtual learning environment.

**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?**

36 The partnership agreement with Staffordshire University includes a policy on publicity. Approval of marketing material is the responsibility of the Dean of Students and the Academic Registrar at the University. Within the College, the accuracy of information is checked by programme leaders and forwarded to the Deputy Principal who, in liaison with the College Marketing Manager, takes final responsibility. Staffordshire University holds marketing partnership meetings in which partners are able to work together to develop marketing materials. This proactive approach ensures a thorough understanding of the issues and procedures.

37 The section of the College's Memorandum of Cooperation with Harper Adams University College on advertising and publicity requires that all external advertising and publicity relating to programmes validated by the University College must be reviewed and agreed jointly at the Annual Partnership Review. Outside this the consent of the University College's Academic Registrar is required for publicity. Permission is also required to use trademarks or other symbols owned by Harper Adams University College on promotional material. The Academic Registrar is responsible for checking this on behalf of the University College and the Deputy Principal on behalf of the College.

38 The *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* indicates that the identification of explicit progression routes from Foundation Degrees to honours degrees should be available to learners through course handbooks and prospectuses. The team found inconsistencies in the detail of progression routes in the programme specifications in the Foundation Degree handbooks for Equine Science with Breeding Management and Animal Science with Health Management. The handbooks were completed using the Harper Adams University College template. Following the production of the handbooks at the beginning of the year, a later version of the programme specification was released by the University College. This contained details of the progression routes. In discussions with the team, students on these Foundation Degrees indicated a lack of clarity about progression routes. The Foundation Degrees in Equine Science with Breeding Management and Animal Science with Health Management also produced factsheets for an Open Day. These included information about entry requirements and progression, but they had not been checked or approved by Harper Adams University College. The handbook for the Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Countryside contains clear details of the appropriate progression route. The team considers it advisable that the College ensure that its management and checking procedures for the completeness and accuracy of public information are responsive, thorough and effective.

**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 May 2010. The lines of enquiry reflected a broad range of assessment issues:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How does the College ensure that students understand the relationship between assessment and intended learning outcomes and how accessible is information on this?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How does the College's management of assessment help to secure academic standards?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How does the feedback which the College provides to students on their written work and work placement activities improve their learning opportunities?

40 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. These were the development of the internal performance inspection process in managing the quality of the students' learning experience in higher education, the clear and supportive assessment feedback on the Foundation Degrees in Animal Science with Health Management and Equine Science with Breeding Management, and the feedback on teaching practice on the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector programme. The promotion of this good practice has been led by the Deputy Principal and the Head of the School of Professional Studies through the higher education teaching sets. This has also enabled the sets to specifically focus on teaching in higher education.

41 The Developmental engagement team also made a number of recommendations. It considered it advisable for the College to ensure that a senior member of staff lead the management of quality and teaching and learning. The Deputy Principal holds this role. The College was also recommended to review the use of cover sheets on assessments to ensure consistency in the identification of intended learning outcomes. These actions were undertaken by the College in the autumn of 2010. This also meets the desirable recommendation of finding ways of making the current assessment policies for higher education operational to ensure the spread of best practice. The College was also recommended to ensure that the use of the virtual learning environment is more comprehensive across all subject areas. The Higher Education Development Days in 2010 focused on the spread of good practice in assessment and developing the use of the virtual learning environment. Finally, the College was recommended to discuss with the awarding bodies how students on all programmes could receive feedback and provisional grades on their assessed work before moderation; feedback to students on their assessments is now available before final moderation.

## D Foundation Degrees

The College offers three Foundations Degrees with two awarding bodies, namely the Foundation Degrees in Animal Science with Health Management, and Equine Science with Breeding Management, with Harper Adams University College. The Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Countryside is offered in partnership with Staffordshire University.

42 Following a reduction in the funding allocations, the Foundation Degree provision validated by Harper Adams University College has been withdrawn by the University College. The last cohorts entered in September 2010. A Foundation Degree in Small Business Management (Salon) validated by Staffordshire University did not enrol sufficient

students to run in 2010-11. The market demand for a Foundation Degree in Sport is being assessed.

43 The conclusions below apply to all the Foundation Degrees offered at the College.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

44 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Walford and North Shropshire 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, Harper Adams University College and the Staffordshire University.

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

- the Academic Precept in assessment, which was devised to assist with the use of the *Code of practice* and is embedded firmly in the approach of the staff to the students' learning (paragraphs 13 and 21)
- the sharing of teaching and learning practice, which is identified and promoted through the work of the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee and disseminated through specific higher education staff development activity and the learning sets (paragraph 19)
- the effective tutorial process, which is timely and reflective and supports the development of students (paragraph 28).

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

47 The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:

- ensure that its management and checking procedures for the completeness and accuracy of public information are responsive, thorough and effective (paragraph 38).

48 The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:

- adopt a coordinated cross-college approach and develop a strategy for employer engagement at higher education level to ensure the effective involvement of employers (paragraph 25)
- undertake a thorough review of induction procedures at the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee to identify and share best practice (paragraph 27)
- review how the College's virtual learning environment can be developed to improve its utilisation by students (paragraph 33).

49 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.

50 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes 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.

51 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes 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.

Walford and North Shropshire College action plan relating to the Summative review April 2011						
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 <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Academic Precept in assessment, which was devised to assist with the use of the <i>Code of practice</i> and is embedded firmly in the approach of the staff to the students' learning (paragraphs 13 and 21)</li> </ul>	All new HE lecturers will be inducted in the use of the College's Academic precept in assessment	Within one month of start date on HE teaching	Deputy Principal	All new HE lecturers inducted in the Academic Precept in assessment within one month of teaching start date	HE Delivery Committee	<p>Course Committee minutes</p> <p>HE Delivery Committee minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the sharing of teaching and learning practice which is identified and promoted through the work of the Higher Education</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review terms of reference of the HE Delivery Committee</li> <li>Combine the role of the HE Delivery Committee and the HE learning set</li> </ol>	November 2011	Deputy Principal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New terms of reference for the HE Delivery Committee produced</li> <li>HE Delivery Committee and HE learning set operate as one committee</li> </ol>	HE Delivery Committee	<p>HE Delivery Committee Minutes</p> <p>Internal Performance Inspection HE report</p>

Curriculum Delivery Committee and disseminated through specific higher education staff development activity and the learning sets (paragraph 19)						HE Lesson observation grade report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effective tutorial process, which is timely and reflective and supports the development of students (paragraph 28)</li> </ul>	Share good tutorial practice between HE courses	December 2011	Deputy Principal	Tutorial support identified as a strength on all HE courses in the annual student survey	HE Delivery Committee	HE Delivery Committee minutes  HE student survey
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that its management and checking procedures for the completeness and accuracy of public information are responsive,</li> </ul>	Audit trail checklist to ensure that all public information is accurate and complies with awarding body and Foundation Degree benchmark regulations - including sign-off of	September 2011	Deputy Principal	Audit checklist produced and in operation	HE Delivery Committee	HE Delivery Committee minutes  Audit checklist and marketing sign off documentation

thorough and effective (paragraph 38).	public information by Programme Leader, Head of School and Marketing Manager.					HE awarding body annual partnership review minutes
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopt a coordinated cross-college approach and develop a strategy for employer engagement at higher education level to ensure the effective involvement of employers (paragraph 25)</li> </ul>	Develop a strategy for employer engagement at higher education level to ensure the effective involvement of employers	December 2011	Deputy Principal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy produced</li> <li>Employers invited to input to FD course team meetings.</li> </ol>	<p>Course Committees</p> <p>HE Delivery Committee</p>	<p>Course Committees</p> <p>HE Delivery Committee</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake a thorough review of induction procedures at the Higher Education Curriculum Delivery Committee to identify and share best</li> </ul>	Review and share good practice on induction processes	October 2011	Deputy Principal	Review completed and good practice shared across all courses	HE Delivery Committee	<p>HE Delivery Committee minutes</p> <p>HE student survey</p> <p>Schemes of work</p>

practice (paragraph 27)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review how the College virtual learning environment can be developed to improve its utilisation by students (paragraph 33).</li> </ul>	Review and share good practice on the use of the virtual learning environment for HE delivery	January 2012	Deputy Principal	Review completed and good practice shared across all courses	HE Delivery Committee	HE Delivery Committee minutes  HE student survey  Schemes of work



**RG 741 07/11**

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Fax 01452 557070  
Email [comms@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)