



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Stratford-upon-Avon 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 (FHEQ)*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*
- 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 Stratford-upon-Avon College carried out in May 2012

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:

- feedback on student work assessment is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement
- the HND Musical Theatre tutor self-evaluation of assessment process enables tutors to review and enhance their assessment practice
- the informing of teaching and learning through widespread scholarly and professional activity and employer engagement enhances student learning and employability
- high quality physical resources are used effectively to support and enhance student learning and employability.

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 it has a clear understanding of the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and engages with it fully to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides
- ensure that staff new to higher education teaching receive an appropriate formal induction to ensure their understanding of the academic standards expected at this level
- ensure that it has the means to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching and learning on its higher education programmes
- to produce programme specifications for its Edexcel programmes to ensure that students and other stakeholders have a central reference point for definitive programme information.

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

- review its management structure to clarify responsibilities for academic standards
- strengthen the remit of the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum to include responsibility for monitoring responses to external examiners' reports and review of scholarly activity
- consider ways in which staff teaching on higher education programmes can be made better aware of their responsibilities for the achievement and maintenance of academic standards
- encourage more consistent content and quality of material on its virtual learning environment to support and enhance teaching and learning across all programmes.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Stratford-upon-Avon 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, the University of Warwick and the University of West London. The review was carried out by Professor Chris Gale, Mr Peter Hymans, Mr Colin Stanfield (reviewers) and Mr Jeffery Butel (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 its awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, and 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*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4 Stratford-upon-Avon College was first founded as a School of Art in 1877. It became South Warwickshire College of Further Education in 1958 and assumed its current title in 1993. It is a medium-sized college providing education and training in South Warwickshire, Leamington Spa and Warwick, where around three-quarters of its students come from. The College provides programmes from entry level to bachelor's honours degree and offers provision in most curriculum areas. The College has around 6,000 students, approximately half of whom are aged 16-18 years undertaking further education programmes up to level 3. Adult provision is diverse, with many students studying on a part-time basis and/or in their workplace. The College has a town centre main campus and three satellite centres.

5 There are 234 (145.5 full-time equivalent) students enrolled on higher education programmes which are delivered by 31 staff representing 8.5 full-time equivalents. Many of the students on the hospitality management programmes are from France, for whom the initial phase is delivered at L'Ecole Hoteliere de Savignac.

6 The College currently offers HEFCE-funded full-time awards validated by Edexcel and part-time awards validated by the University of Warwick and the University of West London. The programmes offered are shown below with full-time equivalent student numbers in parentheses.

Edexcel

- HND Creative Media Production (43.0)
- HND Performing Arts (Musical Theatre) (14.0)

University of Warwick

- FdA Early Years and Learning Support (part-time) (14.0)

University of West London

- FdA Hospitality Management (part-time) (45.5)
- BA (Hons) Hospitality Management (part-time) (28.0)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The College has a well-established partnership arrangement with two universities, the University of West London and the University of Warwick. The University of West London agreement currently covers the FdA and BA (Hons) top-up in Hospitality Management. The three-way partnership between the College, the University and L'Ecole Hoteliere de Savignac provides hotel management students with experience of two differing education systems and an opportunity to progress to master's programmes in France. This partnership evolved from a Leonardo-funded project researching quality assurance procedures for work-based learning. The College has worked with the University of Warwick on a number of projects, including the West Midlands Centre of Excellence in Teacher Training and the International Higher Education Foundation. The current agreement covers the University of Warwick's FdA Early Years and Learning Support which complements the College's level 3 and work-based provision, provides local progression for learners, and meets demand from local employers. The College also runs two HND programmes, in media production and performing arts, under the Edexcel Standard Note arrangement.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 In November 2010 the College created the post of Assistant Principal - International and Higher Education who, from May 2012, is assisted by the Head of International Studies and Commercial Development. In January 2012 the College was awarded 25 additional higher education places by HEFCE which will be used to increase its provision in 2012-13. These additional students will be recruited to HND programmes in Performing Arts (Acting), Performing Arts (Dance), Music, Business Studies and Photography. The first three programmes last recruited in 2009-10; Business Studies and Photography will be new programmes. There are no current plans for further Foundation Degree provision.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The College re-submitted the document from the Developmental engagement. No Summative review submission was made. Students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the team during the review visit. They made a useful contribution to the review.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

10 Under the terms of the agreements with its awarding bodies, each of the universities retains responsibility for the oversight of academic standards. Both universities have close relationships with the delivery teams which ensures that the College complies with university systems and procedures for the management of academic standards. For the Edexcel programmes the College is required to take more responsibility and is largely reliant on its own systems and procedures.

11 The Deputy Principal has overall responsibility for quality and the curriculum across the College. The College has appointed an Assistant Principal for International and Higher Education who has a coordinating role and who is being assisted by the recently appointed Head of International Studies and Commercial Development. The Assistant Principal, who is also responsible for some international recruitment at another college, reports to the Deputy Principal and also to the Vice Principal responsible for the College's international provision.

12 Reporting to the Deputy Principal are five curriculum area managers. Reporting to the curriculum area managers is a number of programme area managers and programme area coordinators who have operational responsibility for the programmes. The Programme Area Manager for Hospitality Management reports directly to the Assistant Principal for International and Higher Education because of the international nature of the programme. Responsibility for the management of academic standards is not included explicitly within the job descriptions of curriculum area managers, programme area coordinators or the Assistant Principal for International and Higher Education. It is desirable that the College reviews its management structure to clarify responsibilities for academic standards.

13 All higher education programmes are included in the College's quality improvement system. Curriculum area managers and programme area managers or coordinators meet the Assistant Principal for International and Higher Education three times a year at management review meetings. At these meetings progress against action plan targets and retention rates are monitored and emerging strengths and areas for development identified. The outcome of each management review meeting is an updated programme report that feeds into the Annual Self-Assessment Report for Higher Education. Staff state that matters relating to academic standards, were they to arise, would be discussed at these meetings but there is no specific evidence that this has happened.

14 A number of committees consider the operation of the College's programmes. These include the Executive Committee, the Quality and Staff Development Committee, the Academic Consultative Committee and the Curriculum Management Team. The terms of reference for these committees are clear, but matters relating to the maintenance of academic standards of higher education do not appear in the minutes. There is no committee which deals specifically with higher education.

15 In response to the Developmental engagement in assessment, the College formed the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum to monitor the performance of its higher education provision and share good practice between delivery teams. The forum is chaired by the

Assistant Principal for International and Higher Education and reports to the Curriculum Management Team and the Quality and Staff Development Committee. A working party is tasked with the development of cross-college documentation for Edexcel programmes including standardised programme handbooks, unit study guides, student feedback sheets, and processes for internal verification and assessment.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

16 The College has had limited engagement with the Academic Infrastructure as exemplified by the absence of any reference to it within the self-evaluation. Awarding bodies take into account the FHEQ and other aspects of the Academic Infrastructure. The College has relied on its awarding bodies to ensure that its awards reflect the Academic Infrastructure, with the result that College staff are not always fully aware of their responsibilities for academic standards. It is advisable that the College ensures that it has a clear understanding of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and engages with it fully to assure and enhance academic standards.

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 awarding bodies?

17 For University programmes there are a number of formal meetings at which academic standards are monitored, including Module Assessment Boards and Programme Assessment Boards. Module leaders' reports, external examiners' reports and Collaborative Programme Annual Reports are considered at these meetings as well as at annual programme reviews at the universities. College staff and managers attend these meetings and take an active part in these processes. For Edexcel programmes the external examiner for each programme visits the College at least once in an academic year with a focus on assessment and the quality processes that support and assure effective assessment.

18 There is no single point of receipt for external examiners' reports in the College. The College does, however, track receipt to ensure that all reports have been received. Reports are considered at programme and institutional level and are subject to comment in link tutor and annual partnership and collaborative reports. The College states that external examiner reports are discussed at management review meetings which inform the Annual Self-Assessment Report for Higher Education, however there is no explicit reference to external examiner reports in the minutes of these meetings or the subsequent Self-Assessment Report. The Higher Education Practitioners' Forum has the consideration of external examiners' reports within its remit but as yet has not received any. The remit does not include responsibility for monitoring responses to the reports. It is desirable for the College to strengthen the remit of the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum to include responsibility for monitoring responses to external examiners' reports.

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

19 The College has a number of means of sharing good practice including an annual Teachers' Fayre and other events where teams work across disciplines. However, matters relating to academic standards have not been included in the agendas for these events. Staff have limited understanding of the ways in which they are responsible for the assurance of academic standards. The College has a comprehensive staff development policy which is linked to staff appraisal but the policy is aligned primarily to further education provision. Records of staff training show that, while all staff engage in professional development and some attend training events at the awarding bodies, there has been no specific activity

directed towards the assurance of academic standards. It is desirable that the College considers ways in which staff teaching on higher education programmes can be made better aware of their responsibilities for the achievement and maintenance of the academic standards of their programmes.

20 Newly appointed College staff receive a thorough College induction. The induction is aligned to the needs of further education and it is left to programme managers to ensure that staff new to higher education teaching are given the information and supervision necessary to ensure that they operate at the appropriate level. It is advisable that the College ensures that staff new to higher education teaching receive an appropriate formal induction to ensure their understanding of the academic standards expected at this level.

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?

21 Responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities are as those set out for academic standards in paragraphs 1 to 8.

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

22 The quality of learning opportunities provided by the College is subject to the quality enhancement processes of the awarding bodies, as set out in paragraph 17, within which teaching and learning is a key consideration. For university programmes, link tutors act as a point of reference for programme managers and module leaders at the College. The links are long-standing and the close, constructive working relationships that have developed are highly valued by College and university staff. College staff take an active role in these processes.

23 Link tutors from the University of West London complete detailed annual reports which comment positively on the students' learning experience. Additionally, the University of West London Collaborative Annual Report and the Partnership Annual Report from the University of Warwick comment favourably on the quality of the students' learning experience.

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

24 Higher education programmes are included within the College's quality improvement system. There is a clear and concise schedule of quality monitoring and improvement activity which includes specific reference to the quality of teaching and learning. Cross-college support areas that impinge on the quality of teaching and learning, such as Learner Services and staff development, are considered within this system. There is no specific provision for the consideration of higher education.

25 The College Learning and Teaching Strategy is comprehensive and sets out the means by which the College aims to provide a high quality learning experience for its students. The College quality improvement system sets observation of teaching and monitoring of performance at the heart of its strategy to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The observation process is detailed in the Quality Improvement Manual and there is an extensive set of grading criteria, but there is no differentiation for higher education in either the strategy or the observation and performance monitoring process. All lecturers have a formal College observation at least once a year, although the College recognises this may not be an observation of a higher education session. Some peer observations of higher education teaching are undertaken, by both managers and lecturers, but these are not a formal requirement and there has been no collective consideration of higher education teaching and learning. It is advisable for the College to ensure that it has the means to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching and learning on its higher education programmes.

26 Students provide valuable feedback on teaching and learning through the Higher Education Student Forum and college-wide Learner Conferences, held three times a year. Further feedback is obtained through the Student-Staff Liaison Committee held in conjunction with the University of Warwick and through surveys and programme representation. Students are generally very positive about their learning experience, citing enthusiastic teaching and extensive engagement with industry practice and relevant skills.

27 Students comment favourably on the quality of feedback they receive on their work and how clear indications of strengths and areas for development help them to improve their learning and subsequent assessment performance. External examiners also noted the high quality of feedback on student work, a view endorsed by the team's review of student work. Feedback on student work is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement, which represents good practice. Feedback is generally prompt but some students reported occasional delays in the return of work. HND Musical Theatre tutors have adopted the use of a tutor self-evaluation of assessment documents, which some have completed in detail to review and enhance their assessment practice. The HND Musical Theatre tutor self-evaluation of assessment process enables tutors to review and enhance their assessment practice and represents good practice.

28 Staff undertake a wide range of scholarly and professional activity including industrial practice, research and delivery of papers at international conferences. Students confirm that these staff activities have a positive impact on their learning experience and preparation for employment. The informing of teaching and learning, through widespread scholarly and professional activity, and employer engagement, enhances student learning and employability and represents good practice. However, these activities are not always recorded formally. The Higher Education Practitioners' Forum could usefully be extended to provide an opportunity for formal review of such activity and to facilitate sharing of good practice across programmes.

What account is taken of the academic infrastructure?

29 College engagement with the Academic Infrastructure is as set out in paragraph 16. The College has not sought to consider, in any detail, those sections of the *Code of practice* that relate to the quality of learning opportunities it provides. It is advisable that the College ensures that it has a clear understanding of the emerging Quality Code and engages with it fully, to assure and enhance the quality of the learning opportunities it provides.

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

30 Prior to enrolment all students are given a personal interview by a member of the academic staff. Tutors involved in interviewing students undertake annual training, including how to identify students who may have additional needs, to enable them to perform this role effectively. Tutors new to interviewing and admissions may shadow more experienced colleagues. Students found this interview to be a valuable source of initial information, advice and guidance. Programme induction encompasses a range of useful academic and social activities. Formal diagnostic assessment is not a standard requirement although some tutors undertake this.

31 The College has a wide range of student support including access to finance and progression advice and guidance. Students with disabilities or other specific learning needs have numerous opportunities to disclose their particular requirements, at which point Learner Services is informed and takes the necessary actions. Students indicate that they are aware of the support available to them and how they can access it. Students who had cause to use additional support commented very positively on their experience, noting that the College had provided the necessary support in advance of funding becoming available. The effectiveness of support services is closely monitored. The Learner Services manager submits an annual self-assessment report and Learner Services provision performance is considered at Management Review Meetings three times a year.

32 Students are assigned a personal tutor to provide academic and pastoral support while university staff provide further support and advice on progression opportunities. Tutorial time is identified formally on staff and student timetables and students value the readily available support from subject and personal tutors.

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

33 The Deputy Principal, assisted by the Quality and Staff Development Manager, is responsible for implementing the College Staff Development Policy which aims to provide opportunities in accordance with strategic objectives. A Staff Performance Management and Appraisal Scheme seeks to identify individuals' professional development needs through an annual performance review. The College Executive Committee Core Group receives reports from the Quality Assurance and Staff Development Committee. The latter contributes to the College's annual Continuous Professional Development plan and informs staff development budgets. Such budgets are allocated to curriculum areas; there is no specific higher education staff development budget.

34 The curricula vitae of staff new to higher education teaching are forwarded to the universities for approval. There is no formal College requirement for staff new to higher education teaching to have a dedicated induction process, but programme area managers may undertake a review of the schemes of work and session plans of new tutors and may undertake peer observation at an early stage. Staff new to the College are assigned a mentor.

35 Staff development and scholarly activity to support teaching and learning is extensive. Many staff engage with employers, either in a part-time professional capacity or with sector bodies. For example, tutors on the HND programmes in Media and Musical Theatre have highly productive links with the local, regional and national broadcasting and theatrical performance companies. Hospitality Management and Early Years tutors have excellent relationships with local organisations in the sector, often developed and maintained

through student placements. Tutors are encouraged and supported by the College to undertake academic professional development and there are numerous examples of such activity which are commensurate with teaching, learning and assessment at higher education level, including obtaining master's and doctoral degrees and professional qualifications. The relationships with the University of Warwick and the University of West London provide scope for further scholarly activity through staff engagement with peers, including partnership review meetings and assessment boards. Tutors on Edexcel programmes take part in an annual Edexcel Day where they are updated on specifications and processes.

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?

36 Resources are allocated to programme areas on an annual basis. There is no specific budget for higher education except for the FdA and BA (Hons) Hospitality Management programmes in partnership with the University of West London and L'Ecole Hoteliere de Savignac. Programme area managers submit annual bids for capital resources and there is an impressive range of subject-specific resources available, many of which have a commercial function which helps to promote student employability. For example, there is a diverse range of performance space on site which exposes students to the demands of working in a variety of settings comparable with those found in the sector. The College makes good use of well established relationships with organisations to augment and enhance the range of resources available to support teaching and learning. Students speak highly of the resources available to them and recognise their value in supporting teaching and learning and preparing them for employment. The effective deployment of high quality physical resources in supporting and enhancing student learning and employability represents good practice.

37 Programme area managers submit annual bids for library resources and liaise directly in-year with the Library Manager to ensure their availability and suitability. Students expressed some dissatisfaction with the number and availability of key texts at peak times. The Library Manager and tutors are aware of such concerns and address them by limiting lending rights and by the provision of additional copies held by tutors.

38 Students have access to partner University resources, both in person and online. This includes access to the virtual learning environment at the University of West London and its plagiarism detection software. Students on the FdA Early Years have an introduction to the University of Warwick during their induction period. Students find access to these electronic resources useful, although there can be setting-up difficulties.

39 The College has appointed an E-learning Coordinator to promote the development of its own virtual learning environment, Learn Zone. Reporting weekly to the College Management Team, the E-learning Coordinator supports subject tutors in developing their engagement with Learn Zone. The College has not set any minimum requirement for content with the result that its use as an effective tool to support teaching and learning is variable within and across programmes. It is desirable that the College encourages more consistent content and quality of material on its virtual learning environment to support and enhance teaching and learning across all programmes.

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?

40 The College is responsible for publishing a wide range of material to inform current and prospective students and other stakeholders. The collaborative partnership agreements with the two universities state respective responsibilities clearly. Supplementary documents and guidelines provide details of responsibilities for matters such as assessment, handbook content, promotional and marketing literature. For its Edexcel higher national programmes, the College has responsibility for the preparation and publication of publicity and programme information under the terms of the standard Edexcel higher national guidance and companion guidelines.

41 College-produced information includes a College Higher Education Prospectus, College, programme and module handbooks, assessment information, a range of policies and procedures, and promotional and marketing literature. The College website has a dedicated higher education section which is maintained by the Marketing Department according to the College's Public Information Policy and Procedure. The College also publishes a number of important generic documents on its website, including policies on equality and health and safety, which apply equally to higher and further education. Students appreciate the comprehensive nature of College information.

42 At the start of their studies, students on university programmes receive two handbooks in hard copy. The first, a generic College student guide, gives extensive details of the College and its services including contacts, term dates, regulations and other essential guidelines. The second, a programme handbook customised for College use, contains programme-specific information, including intended learning outcomes for each unit, programme specifications, assessment regulations, and schedules. Electronic versions of these documents are available on the virtual learning environment for some, but not all, programmes. More generally, the extent and detail of programme and module information available on the College virtual learning environment differs between programmes. It is desirable that the College encourages and supports provision of more consistent programme content on the virtual learning environment. The College has not produced programme specifications for its Edexcel programmes, relying solely on Edexcel-produced specifications. It is advisable for the College to produce programme specifications for its Edexcel programmes to ensure that students and other stakeholders have a central reference point for definitive programme information.

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?

43 The College's new Public Information Policy and Procedure covers information published, in electronic or printed form, relating to all academic and vocational education and training programmes, services, corporate strategy, and policies. It sets out clearly the

responsibilities for ensuring accuracy and completeness. Procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of public information vary according to its type and format. Handbooks and assessment documents for Edexcel programmes are checked by programme teams, while on university programmes these are provided by partners. Uploading to the website is the responsibility of staff who teach on each Edexcel module with similar material being available on university programmes through the partners' virtual learning environment.

44 Marketing literature produced by the College for both partner universities requires their approval before publication. This includes the use of images, programme information and website information. In the case of Edexcel programmes, material is produced by the College or reference made to Edexcel. Version control and uploading of material to the website is the responsibility of the Marketing Department.

45 The report of the Developmental engagement in assessment considered it desirable for the College to ensure that all college-produced programme handbooks provide students with consistent guidance on feedback expectations. The College has developed a template in order to do this and it will be implemented for the academic year 2012-13.

46 The College demonstrated limited awareness of the provisions of the *Code of practice* and the provisions of the emerging Quality Code in relation to public information. The College will need to engage fully with the Quality Code to ensure that its public information meets the expectations contained within it.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

47 The Developmental engagement in assessment visit took place in June 2011. The three lines of enquiry agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit are set out below. The lines of enquiry reflect a broad range of assessment issues.

Line of enquiry 1: How effective are the processes and procedures for assessment in maintaining academic standards?

Line of enquiry 2: How effectively does the College use collaborative partnerships and employer links to provide assessment opportunities that enhance students' learning?

Line of enquiry 3: How effective is the quality and range of feedback given to students in promoting learning and supporting future improvement?

48 The Developmental engagement report identified good practice in the College's proactive approach to identifying and managing assessment opportunities provided by employers, its engagement in a partnership with a French institution and the quality of feedback on student work. The team considered it advisable for the College to ensure that all students receive timely feedback and desirable that it establish a higher education practitioners' forum and consider integrating direct employer involvement in formal assessment of students.

49 The College has responded by establishing the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum but it has decided against incorporating formal employer input to summative assessment. While the quality of feedback on student work remains of high quality and some is very timely, occasionally timeliness is not achieved.

D Foundation Degrees

50 The College offers two Foundation Degrees, one in hospitality in conjunction with the University of West London and the other, in education, with the University of Warwick. The College has a long-established relationship with the University of West London and although the FdSc Computer Systems Management has been discontinued, the College's other University of West London programme, the FdA Hospitality Management, has expanded considerably as a result of the College's participation in a Leonardo-funded project researching and developing specialist provision for the hospitality industry. Following this, the College entered into a partnership with L'Ecole Hoteliere de Savignac in France which involves French students studying and working in the UK. The College offers a top-up from the FdA to a BA (Hons) in Hospitality Management. The College also has a long-standing partnership with the University of Warwick for the provision of teacher training and international programmes. Although the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector has been discontinued, the Foundation Degree in Early Years and Learning Support has been introduced to meet local employer needs. There are no current plans for further Foundation Degree provision.

51 The College has engaged effectively with employers to ensure that students' experience on both programmes, within and outside the College, prepares them well for further study and employment.

52 In the course of the review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** in relation to Foundation Degrees:

- feedback on student work assessment is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement (paragraph 27)
- the informing of teaching and learning through widespread scholarly and professional activity and employer engagement enhances student learning and employability (paragraph 28)
- high quality physical resources are used effectively to support and enhance student learning and employability (paragraph 36).

53 The team considers it **advisable** for the College to:

- ensure that it has a clear understanding of the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and engages with it fully to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides (paragraphs 16, 29 and 46)
- ensure that staff new to higher education teaching receive an appropriate formal induction to ensure their understanding of the academic standards expected at this level (paragraphs 20 and 34)
- ensure that it has the means to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching and learning on its higher education programmes (paragraph 25).

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

- review its management structure to clarify responsibilities for academic standards (paragraph 12)

- strengthen the remit of the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum to include responsibility for monitoring responses to external examiners' reports and review of scholarly activity (paragraphs 18 and 28)
- consider ways in which staff teaching on higher education programmes can be made better aware of their responsibilities for the achievement and maintenance of academic standards (paragraph 19)
- encourage more consistent content and quality of material on its virtual learning environment to support and enhance teaching and learning across all programmes (paragraphs 39 and 42).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

55 The team has identified a number of features of good practice in the 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, the University of Warwick and the University of West London.

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

- feedback on student work assessment is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement (paragraph 27)
- the HND Musical Theatre tutor self-evaluation of assessment process enables tutors to review and enhance their assessment practice (paragraph 27)
- the informing of teaching and learning through widespread scholarly and professional activity and employer engagement enhances student learning and employability (paragraph 28)
- high quality physical resources are used effectively to support and enhance student learning and employability (paragraph 36).

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

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

- ensure that it has a clear understanding of the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and engages with it fully to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides (paragraphs 16, 29 and 46)
- ensure that staff new to higher education teaching receive an appropriate formal induction to ensure their understanding of the academic standards expected at this level (paragraphs 20 and 34)
- ensure that it has the means to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching and learning on its higher education programmes (paragraph 25)
- to produce programme specifications for its Edexcel programmes to ensure that students and other stakeholders have a central reference point for definitive programme information (paragraph 42).

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

- review its management structure to clarify responsibilities for academic standards (paragraph 12)

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- strengthen the remit of the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum to include responsibility for monitoring responses to external examiners' reports and review of scholarly activity (paragraphs 18 and 28)
- consider ways in which staff teaching on higher education programmes can be made better aware of their responsibilities for the achievement and maintenance of the academic standards (paragraph 19)
- encourage more consistent content and quality of material on its virtual learning environment to support and enhance teaching and learning across all programmes (paragraphs 39 and 42).

60 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

61 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

62 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

Stratford-upon-Avon College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2012

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 good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feedback on student work assessment is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement (paragraph 27) 	<p>Examples of feedback on student work to be exchanged between lecturers within various higher education programmes</p> <p>Review of feedback exchanges, comments made and actions taken</p> <p>Ensure that all lecturers new to higher education are provided with samples of feedback on student work that is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement as part of their induction</p>	<p>July 2013</p>	<p>Curriculum and Programme Area Managers</p> <p>Higher Education Practitioners' Forum</p> <p>Curriculum and Programme Area Managers</p>	<p>Improved feedback that is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement</p>	<p>Higher Education Practitioners' Forum</p> <p>Curriculum Management Team</p> <p>Executive Team</p>	<p>Annual programme of feedback exchange that is monitored at Management Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the HND Musical Theatre tutor self-evaluation of assessment process enables tutors to review and enhance their assessment practice (paragraph 27) 	All programmes pilot the tutor self-evaluation process for assessments	July 2013	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers Tutors	Improvement in assessment practice	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual programme of enhanced assessment practice that is monitored at Management Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the informing of teaching and learning through widespread scholarly and professional activity and employer engagement enhances student learning and employability (paragraph 28) 	Record and review scholarly and professional activity and employer engagement	July 2013	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers Tutors	Student learning and employability is enhanced	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual programme of scholarly and professional activity that is monitored at Management Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high quality physical resources are used effectively to support and enhance student 	Review the quality of physical resources used to effectively support and enhance student learning and employability	July 2013	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers Tutors	Student learning and employability is enhanced	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual programme review of quality of physical resources that is monitored at Management

learning and employability (paragraph 36).						Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that it has a clear understanding of the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and engages with it fully to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides (paragraphs 16, 29 and 46) 	All staff teaching on higher education programmes to be provided with training opportunities in relation to Quality Code	December 2012	Assistant Principal - International and Higher Education	All staff teaching on higher education programmes have a clear understanding of the Quality Code	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual programme review of quality of engagement with the Quality Code to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides that is monitored at Management Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report
	Map College policies and procedures in relation to higher	July 2013	Head of Learner Services and Admissions	All policies and procedures compliant		Annual programme review of policies and

	education against the Quality Code to ensure compliance					procedures to ensure compliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that staff new to higher education teaching receive an appropriate formal induction to ensure their understanding of the academic standards expected at this level (paragraphs 20 and 34) 	<p>All staff new to higher education teaching will receive a higher education induction to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> UK Quality Code for Higher Education briefing Academic Standards at higher education level <p>Good practice on giving feedback on student work that is extensive, detailed and focused on improvement</p>	December 2012	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers	All staff new to teaching at higher education level will have received the enhanced induction	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual review of quality of performance of staff new to teaching at higher education level in respect of academic standards, feedback to students and quality of learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that it has the means to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching and learning on its higher education programmes (paragraph 25) 	All staff teaching on higher education programmes to be observed as part of the College's Quality Assurance procedures and Lesson Observation process teaching on higher education programmes	March 2013	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers	Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning on higher education programmes	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual review of quality of teaching and learning on higher education programmes that is monitored at Management Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education

						Self-Assessment Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to produce programme specifications for its Edexcel programmes to ensure that students and other stakeholders have a central reference point for definitive programme information (paragraph 42). 	Programme Specifications to be in place for all programmes	December 2012	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers	All Programme Specifications in place to ensure that students and other stakeholders have a central reference point for definitive programme information	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual programme review of quality of Programme Specifications
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review its management structure to clarify responsibilities for academic standards (paragraph 12) 	Produce management structure to clarify responsibilities for academic standards of all programmes.	December 2012	Assistant Principal - International and Higher Education	A clear management structure is in place that is understood by all stakeholders	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual programme review of higher education management structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen the remit of the 	Ensure that all external examiner reports for HND programmes are	July 2013	Assistant Principal - International and	External examiner reports and scholarly activity	Quality Standards and staff Development	Annual review of performance of Higher Education

<p>Higher Education Practitioners' Forum to include responsibility for monitoring responses to external examiners' reports and review of scholarly activity (paragraphs 18 and 28)</p>	<p>received and monitored by the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum and that responses and actions have been followed up</p> <p>Ensure that all scholarly activity is reported to and reviewed by the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum</p>		<p>Higher Education</p> <p>Higher Education Practitioners' Forum</p>	<p>are included as standard agenda items on the Higher Education Practitioners' Forum</p>	<p>Committee</p>	<p>Practitioners' Forum that feeds into Higher Education Self-Assessment Report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider ways in which staff teaching on higher education programmes can be made better aware of their responsibilities for the achievement and maintenance of the academic standards (paragraph 19) 	<p>All staff teaching on higher education programmes to be provided with training opportunities in relation to Quality Code</p> <p>Curriculum Teams to be involved in the writing of the Programme Specifications; Course Handbooks and Module Study Guides</p>	<p>December 2012</p> <p>December 2012</p>	<p>Assistant Principal - International and Higher Education</p> <p>Curriculum and Programme Area Managers</p>	<p>All staff teaching on higher education programmes have a clear understanding of the Quality Code and are engaged in it according to their level of responsibility</p>	<p>Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team</p>	<p>Annual programme review of quality of engagement with the Quality Code to assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities it provides that is monitored at Management Review Meetings and reported in the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage more consistent content and quality of material on its virtual learning environment to support and enhance teaching and learning across all programmes (paragraphs 39 42). 	<p>Review the current quality, consistency and volume of content on the virtual learning environment</p> <p>Undertake staff development sessions to provide staff with the skills to be able to use the virtual learning environment effectively to enhance teaching and learning</p>	December 2012	Curriculum and Programme Area Managers led by E-Learning Manager	<p>All staff teaching on higher education programmes have the skills to use the virtual learning environment to enhance teaching and learning</p> <p>There is increased use of the virtual learning environment in teaching and learning</p>	Curriculum Management Team and Executive Team	Annual review of quality, volume and consistency of quality of learning materials available on the virtual learning environment that enhances teaching and learning that is monitored by the Higher Education Practitioners Forum and reported in the Higher Education Self-assessment Report and the E-Learning Self-Assessment Report
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