



QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

May 2007

City and Islington College

SR02/2008

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2008

ISBN 978 1 84482 833 3

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

Printed copies are available from:

Linney Direct

Adamsway

Mansfield

NG18 4FN

Tel 01623 450788

Fax 01623 450481

Email qaa@linneydirect.com

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 the 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 City and Islington College carried out in May 2007

City and Islington College May 2007

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement(s), for the standards of the award(s) 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 agreement(s), for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the cross-centre support for higher education, underpinned by effective leadership and management at curricular and senior levels, provides overall effective mechanisms for the strategic and operational management of the College's higher education portfolio
- staff have engaged well with the Academic Infrastructure, with programmes reflecting the precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. Mechanisms are in place to ensure effective dissemination and appropriate implementation of the Academic Infrastructure
- the nature of the synergic partnerships developed with the higher education institutions are an example of managing growing provision in partnership and, in particular, the establishment of the City University Course Board
- curriculum managers have a clearly defined role in the effective management and enhancement of learning
- monitoring and moderation of teaching and learning, with its emphasis on enhancement and staff development, is impressive (paragraph 28)
- work-based, or simulated work-based, learning into Foundation Degree programmes is well integrated, with the effective involvement of employers in programme development, approval, monitoring, delivery and assignment design.

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:

- reconcile the differences in respect of the time limits for the return of assessed work to ensure that the published information expressed in the College's Student Charter and programme handbooks is consistent and accurate.

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

- review systems and processes for the management of external examiners' reports, responses to them, annual monitoring reports and the monitoring of consequent action plans, to ensure that consistent and effective internal practices are developed for all higher education programmes regardless of the awarding body
- monitor the take-up of staff development, to ensure effective staff development supports the maintenance of academic standards
- enhance the directed scholarly activity of staff to maintain and develop their subject currency.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review conducted at City and Islington College. The purpose of the review was 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 for programmes funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that it delivers on behalf of City University, Edexcel, London Metropolitan University and Queen Mary, University of London. The review was carried out by Dr Paul Brunt, Ms Maggie Carroll and Ms Freda Richardson (reviewers) and Dr Chris Amodio (Coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for an integrated quality and enhancement review*, (the handbook) published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted and ALI and other external bodies. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from the Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. This review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with particular reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmarks, *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 City and Islington College is one of England's largest further education colleges, with over 20,000 students, and five specialist centres located within the London Borough of Islington. Its mission is to be, within the relevant areas of London, the first-choice college for school leavers, young people and for lifelong learning for adults, and a major skills training provider. It was designated a Centre of Vocational Excellence in child care and early-years education in 2004 while, in 2005, the College was awarded Beacon Status by the Department for Education and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council for excellence in post-16 education and training.

5 As at 1 December 2006, the College had 221 students studying on the City University approved programmes, 199 studying on London Metropolitan University programmes (including the direct Edexcel Programme), and 62 with Queen Mary, University of London.

6 The HEFCE-funded higher education provision at the time of the review, together with the awarding bodies, comprised the following programmes:

City University

- FdSc Ophthalmic Dispensing
- FdA Public Service Management
- FdSc Health Science

Integrated quality and enhancement review

- FdA Working with Young People and Young People's Services
- Foundation Year in Engineering.

Edexcel

- HND Computing.

London Metropolitan University

- HNC Business Management
- HNC Computing
- HND Fashion
- HND Photography
- FdA Early Years
- FdA Education (Primary Pathway)
- FdSc Personal Training and Fitness Consultancy.

Queen Mary, University of London

- FdSc Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation.

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 All the College's higher education programmes are indirectly funded through City University, Queen Mary, University of London or London Metropolitan University. These universities approve the programmes apart from one directly approved by Edexcel. This programme is funded through London Metropolitan University and will cease from July 2007. From September 2007, all HNC and HND programmes will be approved by London Metropolitan University through the University's licence agreement with Edexcel.

8 The partnership with London Metropolitan University has seven approved programmes, three FDs and four HNC/D programmes. Some of these programmes have joint examination boards with university in-house programmes. The College has four FDs and one Foundation Year programmes approved by City University. On two of the programmes, the Programme Director is a member of the University staff. The College became an institutional partner of City University in September 2006, in recognition of the increasing higher education provision within the strategic alliance of the two partners. The institutional partnership has been developed to put in place an enhanced structure to manage and govern quality and standards to the benefit of both partners. At present, there is one joint FD programme with Queen Mary, University of London. The programme began in September 2005, with the first cohort completing in July 2007. The Programme Director is based at Queen Mary, University of London and the Deputy Director at the College.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9 Over recent years, the College has increased higher education student numbers, and its portfolio of higher education programmes. This strategically planned increase is set to continue, with an emphasis on the development of FDs. There is clear evidence from external reviews of further and higher education that the College is in a strong position to effect this growth. The Senior Management Team is aware of the issues and is developing a coherent strategy for taking this agenda forward.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. Full and part-time representatives from across the range of higher education provision were invited to attend a meeting with the College's Director of Students. As a result, a written submission was constructed, reflecting the core themes, the nature of their learning experience and specific aspects dealt with in the Developmental engagement, such as the nature and quality of feedback on assessment. In addition, current and former higher education students made a valuable contribution to the review, as they did for the Developmental engagement through meetings held with the team. The views of current students were also available through the results of College student questionnaires.

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?

11 The higher education provision is located in four of the five specialist curriculum centres. The responsibility for quality assurance and management resides with programme managers, curriculum managers, and centre directors and deputy directors. One of the centre directors, a member of the College's Senior Management Team, has overall responsibility for higher education strategy, while the HE Quality and Development Manager, a member of the Teaching and Learning Group, has operational responsibility.

12 The HE Quality and Development Manager chairs the HE Operational Group and is a member of the HE Strategy group. The higher education provision is thus managed centrally as well as in a devolved manner. Direct reporting lines to the Senior Management Team and the governing body are well established. The Summative review team found that this cross-centre support for higher education is underpinned by effective leadership and management at curricular and senior levels. In conjunction with the HE Quality and Development Manager, it provides overall effective mechanisms for the oversight and delivery of the College's higher education portfolio.

13 Curriculum managers work closely with staff from the awarding bodies in the quality assurance and operational delivery of programmes. The higher education institutions provide effective support in a variety of ways, including a named liaison tutor at each institution. A specific course board at City University oversees all its higher education provision at the College, chaired by a member of academic staff at that University. At Queen Mary, University of London, the FD Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation programme management team is chaired by a member of the University's staff and reports issues relating to quality assurance directly to its School Teaching and Learning Committee. The team recognised that this range of different working practices reflects the varying structures and processes at the higher education institutions and that, in each case, appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure effective management of the programmes. Overall, the strategic and operational management of the higher education programmes is well established and enhances the provision.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14 The team found clear evidence that the use of the Academic Infrastructure underpins policies and procedures and that these, in the main, lead to appropriate implementation of the *Code of practice* precepts and use of benchmarks in the development and delivery of the programmes. Validation processes reference relevant sections of the *Code of practice*, while academic regulations and assessment frameworks provided by partner higher education institutions explicitly refer to the Academic Infrastructure.

15 An exception, where reference to the Academic Infrastructure is less evident, is the articulation of the FD Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation with the second year of an honours degree at Queen Mary, University of London, which does not reflect the spirit or the expectation of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark statement*. This was identified as a desirable recommendation in the report arising from the Developmental engagement and is currently under review. Queen Mary, University of London, while remaining clear that the current articulation of the FD Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation with year two of the BSc (Hons) programme is deliberate and due to issues of curricular alignment, is considering other articulation options into final-year honours programmes.

16 The team found good evidence of interaction with the Academic Infrastructure at senior management level within the College, and in conjunction with the higher education institutions. This effectively supports the College in understanding the Academic Infrastructure through a range of measures, including targeted staff development and partnership events. The team concludes that, overall, staff have engaged well with the Academic Infrastructure, and that programmes reflect the precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. The team is therefore confident that mechanisms are in place to ensure effective dissemination and appropriate implementation of the Academic Infrastructure.

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?

17 The quality assurance of higher education programmes follows the same system as that for further education except where awarding body requirements differ. Programme teams undertake annual monitoring procedures that are reviewed in accordance with systems and processes adopted by the relevant awarding body. Synergistic partnerships have been developed with the higher education institutions. For example, the City University Course Board, which forms part of the governance of the City and Islington College/City University Strategic Alliance, has particularly effective oversight of the quality and standards of its awards at the College.

18 The team found some discrepancies between the internal review of annual monitoring reports and external examiners' reports. While it is acknowledged that the HE Quality and Development Manager sees all these reports, there are inconsistencies in the process by which they are reviewed, agreed internally or action plans monitored. For example, the protocols for the distribution of the external examiners' reports vary across the provision. Moreover, responses to external examiners' reports may be dispatched directly from the awarding bodies or through the College's curriculum managers. Curriculum managers agree annual monitoring reports internally and relevant programme boards monitor resulting action plans. It is desirable that the College reviews its systems and processes for the management of external examiners' reports, responses to them, and the monitoring of consequent action plans to ensure consistent internal practices are developed for all higher education programmes, regardless of the awarding body.

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

19 Staff development is offered by all partner higher education institutions to address issues such as use of the Academic Infrastructure, assessment and cross-college moderation, which are targeted towards assuring and enhancing the standard of award. These events are often organised by the relevant awarding body but delivered jointly by higher education staff from both institutions. At present, take-up of staff development events and opportunities at higher education institutions that do not incur a fee are not monitored at the College. It would be desirable to monitor the take-up of all staff development to ensure effective support for the monitoring and enhancement of academic standards.

20 Staff development for those teaching on the higher education programmes is often specifically higher-education focused and, in addition to that offered within the cycle of the College's professional development days, makes links with activities at the awarding higher education institutions. This has recently included a higher education workshop on assessment covering level descriptors, learning outcomes and the IQER process; a day related to FDs at London Metropolitan University covering moderation, assessment, feedback, use of marking templates and marking standardisation; and a partnerships day at London Metropolitan University which included input by Foundation Degree Forward.

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 mirror those for managing delivery of higher education standards. Together, the strategic and operational groups ensure that the high quality of teaching and learning evident from the 2004 Ofsted report is both sustained and improved.

22 The curriculum managers, responsible to the relevant centre director, provide curricular and operational leadership, and undertake a range of duties relating to the promotion of effective learning opportunities. They oversee their programme teams' activities in relation to teaching and learning, in addition to more wide-ranging initiatives in curricular innovation and development. Through their involvement in the monitoring of quality assurance, and in the annual teaching observation cycle, they have a clearly defined role for the effective management of their teams' contribution to enhancing learning. This is a feature of good practice.

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

23 The awarding higher education institutions are responsible for programme approval and thereafter have an ongoing monitoring function both annually and through the periodic programme review. This creates a dynamic exchange of reporting and feedback, ensuring that appropriate standards of teaching and learning are maintained. At validation,

the higher education institutions approve the resource provision for the programmes to ensure that learning resources and accommodation are sufficient to support them and that staff are appropriately qualified.

24 The higher education institutions are confident about the College's staffing policy and reported that, while they would have some interest in new staff appointments, they would not need to be directly involved in their appointment to the higher education programmes. This reflects the positive nature of the partnership agreements with all the awarding bodies.

25 Scrutiny of curricula vitae indicates that teaching staff continue to have relevant qualifications and often have both academic and professional expertise. Students report that their teaching staff have good subject knowledge and demonstrate high standards of teaching. This was a further aspect of commendation by Ofsted.

26 Learning centre managers conduct regular cycles of quality assurance that feed into the annual self-assessment reports. Their membership of programme management teams facilitates their involvement in decision making in learning support. Student representatives acknowledged the usefulness of the learning centres but noted that they were, at times, noisy. There is no dedicated space for students following higher education programmes.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

27 As discussed in paragraph 15, the College, in conjunction with the awarding bodies as appropriate, has embedded the Academic Infrastructure within its higher education provision. As a result, clearly defined mechanisms have been adopted for inducting students, monitoring and assessing their academic performance, supporting them academically and pastorally, and complaints and appeals. The quality of the College's provision of learning opportunities confirms a high level of successful engagement with the *Code of practice* in particular.

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

28 Teaching observations are fully embedded within the processes for quality assurance. The scheme mirrors that of the College Inspection Framework and is reviewed annually. Curriculum managers observe tutors regularly each year, and a number are observed by the Head of the Teaching and Learning Unit. This is in addition to observations of tutorials as part of the standard tutorial process. Observation grades are moderated in the centre by quality panels and then biannually by the Academic Board. Observation grade profiles inform the centres' business review processes, with the College using this information to improve further its already good teaching grades reported after the Ofsted inspection. The Teaching and Learning Unit acts as an auditor for college quality assurance systems through its cross-curricular liaison. The Summative review team regards this continual monitoring and moderation, with its emphasis on enhancement, as good practice.

29 The annual self-assessment reports and Curriculum Development Plan process focuses explicitly on the management and leadership of student achievement, the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and student guidance and support. The resulting action plan identifies measurable outcomes and dates for reviewing progress on these. Through this process, and in conjunction with reporting of external examiner comments, the awarding bodies can be confident about the quality of the students' learning opportunities.

30 Students confirm the high quality of teaching, although there have been instances, particularly on programmes where delivery teams are small, where staff absences have caused significant problems. The College has identified this matter for action and is matching up subject specialisms and identifying cover mechanisms.

31 Students have a range of mechanisms for discussing their learning opportunities with the College. These include student councils, the College's Council, focus groups, representation on programme management teams and student surveys. Through their representatives, students formally and informally contribute to the programmes' management. Students report that their views are considered effectively but that they did not always know what action would be taken to address matters raised. The Director of Students is developing a way forward on this.

32 The team was impressed with the manner in which work-based learning is integrated into FD programmes. Employers are effectively involved in programme development, approval, monitoring, delivery and assignment design. The nature of work-based or simulated work-based learning is appropriate for career entry or career development. This considerably enhances the range and quality of learning opportunities available to students.

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

33 The College has a well-developed and appropriate range of systems and procedures for supporting students, including the Tutorial Policy, a Learner Support Group and student focus groups. The Director of Students, a member of the college Senior Management Team, oversees the implementation and monitoring of these and is responsible for ensuring consistency in the quality of support provision across the college centres. The Director is assisted in this role by the College's Quality Unit and the deputy directors of students.

34 The clearly documented Tutorial Policy identifies student entitlement, roles and responsibilities of personal tutors, and the key role of a lead tutor who is based in each of the College's centres. During the tutorials in which progress is discussed, students develop individual learning plans and associated targets that are monitored on a regular basis. At present, there is no consistent evidence of the development of personal development plans/progress files across the higher education provision. There are, however, some examples of these in particular FDs, for example, in the FD Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation. The College intends to review its system of individual learning plans in tutorials against higher education Progress File developments.

35 The College Learner Support Group, in conjunction with the lead tutors, undertakes the moderation of tutorial observations. The College Quality Unit undertakes tutorial audits and student focus group activities across the provision. Module tutors also give feedback to students on their progress in modules, particularly on assessments. The Developmental engagement report recommended that the College should evaluate the different assessment and feedback processes across the portfolio of higher education programmes so that best practice can be identified and disseminated. The College is to hold a summer conference in 2007 for this purpose.

36 Support to students from programme teams is a strength. Student representatives also reported on the high quality of the tutorial support they were receiving. During the Summative review itself, students attested to the regular and useful contact they have with their personal tutor.

37 Funded learner support is available for students with specific learning difficulties. This had been an aspect of some confusion, owing to different further and higher education funding methods, but the College HE Strategy Group has now resolved the discrepancy.

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

38 Staff development for higher education tutors at the College is well managed through the directors of centres, the Staff Development Manager and the curriculum managers. The College's Policy for Staff Training and Development provides a comprehensive overview of the approaches to staff development. Each of the centres is required to produce an annual training and development plan, which feeds into the College Development Plan. Identification of training and development needs arises from an individual staff member's agreed outcomes from their performance review, from grassroots annual programme monitoring, and from initiatives of the Senior Management Team through the centres.

39 The College has a clear and effective Professional Development Review process, which is linked to staff development. Staff have a responsibility to prepare for the meeting and then agree a personal development plan with their curriculum manager. These plans feed in to the self-assessment reports process through the programme and Centre self-assessment reports, and copies are routed to the Staff Development Manager.

40 Training and development are provided by the College Staff Development Service, led by the Staff Development Manager. It includes support for managers for their particular responsibilities including management development programmes, new staff induction and College higher education training days. The Staff Development Service reports annually on its evaluation of the preceding year's activities to the Senior Management Team.

41 Support for those staff new to higher education teaching is provided by the Teacher's Toolkit, a one-day course covering good teaching, e-learning, learning centre support, being a tutor and sources of support for tutors. While only those staff new to the College formally have the support of a mentor during their induction, coaching and mentoring are available for those new to higher education teaching through the programme teams and the curriculum managers.

42 Staff teaching on higher education programmes are on the same conditions of service as all further education staff. Managers on higher education programmes have a minimum of two hours remission each week. Hours are provided to enable all students in work-based learning to be given support in the workplace. The College provides funding for development relating to qualifications, but this is to support teacher training at present. There is some evidence of development relating directly to staff scholarly activity, supported by the higher education institutions. However, there is scope for further enhancement in this area to maintain and develop subject currency. London Metropolitan University has a steering group with University and college members to consider collaboration, areas for targeted development, and facilitation of interaction with its research centres. It also provides access for the College staff to its MA Learning and Teaching in Higher Education programme. City University has a research fellowship programme, with the College focused on aspects of FDs. Its Centre for Educational and Academic Practice regularly emails appropriate staff with information on conferences and similar events.

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?

43 While awarding bodies ensure that necessary physical resources are in place through the programme approval process, the resource base, including academic and supporting staffing requirements, is continually reviewed by programme management teams and as part of annual programme review processes. Recommendations subsequently feed into curriculum area, Centre and College discussions and decision-making. The learning centres have a systematic process of selection of resources based on curriculum and student needs, teaching staff recommendations and student numbers. The learning centres undertake an effective monthly periodic audit of provision, which ensures that the learning resources are appropriate and fit for purpose.

44 The upgrading of the College's virtual learning environment is a major resource initiative to enhance learning opportunities, because e-learning is seen as a core educational tool. This is being managed strategically with targets set for each learning centre against the strategic development framework for its dissemination. This is facilitated by e-learning 'champions' in each learning centre.

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

45 The College, in conjunction with its higher education partners, is responsible for publishing the prospectus, the higher education section of the College's website. Programme handbooks are established and approved by the relevant course team, which includes representatives of the awarding body. Ultimately, the awarding body is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of published information at strategic level, the College at operational level.

What arrangements do 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?

46 The team confirmed that the College and partner institutions jointly verify the accuracy of publicity materials for the programmes. Academic staff and staff from the College's Marketing Department, together with their counterparts at the partner institutions, are involved in the process. This extends to materials posted on the College website. In all cases, the higher education institution partner retains overall responsibility for materials that make use of their institution's logo. Students confirmed that the information they had received before beginning their programme had been accurate and informative.

47 Students receive further information about their programme of study at briefing sessions and induction, but principally through their programme handbook. Handbooks are typically written to conform to the relevant partner institution's own style or template, or are in one case, produced by the partner with the College information added. Programme handbooks vary in extent and level of detail, but students reported general satisfaction with their content. Students are enrolled by the relevant higher education institution, which then retains responsibility for the production of all data relating to the awarding process.

48 The Developmental engagement identified a desirable recommendation to enhance the opportunities for formative feedback and to review the length of time taken for the return of assessed work to students. Some progress to enhance the opportunities for formative feedback, in advance of the return of work and mark, has been made since the Developmental engagement, which is welcomed by students. Further work is ongoing in this area.

49 However, with regard to the time taken to return assessed work, it is apparent that turnaround times are, on occasions, at odds with the time limits published in the College's Student Charter. This limit is out of step with common practice within the higher education institutions. Some of the programme handbooks do not set out any expectations for the return of assessed work, while others are in line with those within the College's Student Charter. The team welcomed the progress made in response to the Developmental engagement report and consider that developments are appropriate. Notwithstanding this, programme handbooks do not currently set out consistently the expectations for the return of assessed work. It would be advisable, therefore, for the College to reconcile the differences in the time limits for the return of assessed work to ensure that published information expressed in the College's Student Charter and programme handbooks is consistent and accurate.

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

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

50 The Developmental engagement in assessment at City and Islington College took place in March 2007. This Developmental engagement was conducted according to the procedures presented in *The handbook for a pilot study of an integrated quality and enhancement review*, published by QAA, following negotiation with the College, and by a team of trained reviewers. This included two nominees, members of the College staff, who were full members of the Developmental engagement team. The Developmental engagement was structured around the following lines of enquiry agreed with the college:

- assessment of work-based learning for the 'career development' and for the career entry students of FDs
- strategy, nature, extent and effectiveness of feedback to students on their work as related to level descriptors
- review of whether or not the types of assignments used are appropriate vehicles for feedback to students on their progression and development, support and enhance student learning, and allow them to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes
- how accurate is information provided on assessment and feedback, particularly with respect to work-based learning within FDs
- how does the awarding body satisfy itself that the strategy and modes of assessment are appropriate for the award of the qualification and are consistent with their own practices, as defined in any partnership agreements, and can the institution clearly show that it considered consistency with the *Code of practice* on assessment and alignment of assessment with the appropriate level in the FHEQ when developing its assessment strategy and programmes of study
- do assessment processes ensure equity of treatment for students and are they fairly conducted within institutional regulations and guidance, and are principles, procedures and processes of all assessments clearly communicated to all involved?

51 The Developmental engagement report highlighted several elements of good practice. These include staff that engage well with the Academic Infrastructure, and programmes which reflect the precepts of the *Code of practice*. Proactive support for assessment purposes is provided appropriately for both full and part-time students. It was also evident that the awarding bodies' assessment strategy informs the identification and development of student learning and progression at programme level. The Developmental engagement team also noted that the nature of work-based or simulated work-based learning is appropriate for either career entry or career development students. Work-based learning is well integrated into FD programmes, with employers effectively involved in programme development, approval, monitoring, delivery and assignment design. The extensive involvement of practitioners in FD programmes was found to enhance the provision considerably.

52 The Developmental engagement team reported that it would be advisable for the College to review the clarity of information concerning progression opportunities made available in student handbooks and other publicity material. Further, it indicated that it would be desirable for the College to jointly review, with partner institutions, the arrangements for the articulation of FD programmes, to ensure they fully reflect the spirit of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark statement* and other parts of the QAA Academic Infrastructure as appropriate.

53 With specific reference to assessment and the identification and dissemination of good practice, the Developmental engagement report indicated that it would be desirable for the College to evaluate the different assessment and feedback processes across the portfolio of higher education programmes. In the context of enhancing the opportunities for formative feedback to students on assessment, a review of the length of time taken for assessed work to be returned should be undertaken in conjunction with partner institutions. Finally, the Developmental engagement report suggested that it would be desirable to consider whether there are ways in which review processes used by the College and awarding bodies could be more fully integrated.

D Foundation Degrees

54 City and Islington College currently offers eight FD programmes with three awarding bodies. Further additions to this portfolio have been identified for the next few years, and a strategically planned increase in student numbers reflects the emphasis on FDs, as follows:

Validated by City University

- FdSc Ophthalmic Dispensing
- FdA Public Service Management
- FdSc Health Science
- FdA Working with Young People and Young People's Services.

Validated by Queen Mary, University of London

- FdSc Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation.

Validated by London Metropolitan University

- FdSc Personal Training and Fitness Consultancy
- FdA Early Years
- FdA Education (Primary Pathway).

55 The Developmental engagement in assessment was particularly concerned with the FDs. It identified the integration of work-based or simulated work-based learning within the programme and the extensive involvement of practitioners as elements of good practice. The team noted that the articulation route to an honours degree programme for the FD Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation at Queen Mary University of London leads to entry at level 2 of the programme. The team considered that it would be desirable for the College to jointly review, with partner institutions, the arrangements for articulation of FD programmes, to ensure they fully reflect the spirit of the *Foundation Degree benchmark statement* and other parts of the Academic Infrastructure, as appropriate.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

56 The Summative review team 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 City and Islington College and its awarding bodies City University, London Metropolitan University, Queen Mary, University of London and Edexcel.

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

- the cross-centre support for higher education, underpinned by effective leadership and management at curricular and senior levels, which provides overall effective mechanisms for the strategic and operational management of the College's higher education portfolio (paragraphs 12, 13, 21)
- the level and extent of staff engagement with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 16)
- the nature of the synergic partnerships developed with the higher education institutions as an example of managing growing provision in partnership and, in particular, the establishment of the City University Course Board (paragraph 17).
- the clearly defined role of curriculum managers in the effective management and enhancement of learning (paragraph 22)
- the monitoring and moderation of teaching and learning with an emphasis on enhancement and staff development (paragraph 28)
- the integration of work-based (or simulated work-based) learning into FD programmes, with the effective involvement of employers in programme development, approval, monitoring, delivery and assignment design (paragraph 32).

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

The team agreed upon one area where the College is **advised** to take action:

- reconcile the differences in respect of the time limits for return of assessed work, to ensure that the published information expressed in the College's Student Charter and programme handbooks is consistent and accurate (paragraph 48).

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

- review systems and processes for the management of external examiners' reports, responses thereto, annual monitoring reports and the monitoring of consequent action plans, to ensure consistent and effective internal practices are developed for all higher education programmes regardless of the awarding body (paragraph 18)
- monitor take-up of staff development to ensure that it effectively supports the maintenance of academic standards (paragraph 19)
- enhance the directed scholarly activity of staff to maintain and develop their subject currency (paragraph 42).

58 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.

59 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.

60 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/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review, the review team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the college:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the cross-centre support for HE, underpinned by effective leadership and management at curriculum and senior levels, which provides overall effective mechanisms for the strategic and operational management of the College's higher education portfolio (paragraphs: 12, 13, 21) 	Continue to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of both strategic and operational management systems as the higher education provision evolves, in annual cycle of meetings	July 2007 and following years	College Director with responsibility for HE; College Higher Education Quality and Development Manager	Management systems measured against meeting targets	College HE Strategy Group	Annual review. Success against long term targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the level and extent of staff engagement with the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 16) 	Continue to develop awareness of Academic Infrastructure	07/08 Academic Year and continuing	College Higher Education Quality and Development Manager	Consideration of the academic infrastructure at programme	College HE Strategy Group	Annual review process at programme, cross-college higher

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature of the synergic partnerships developed with the higher education institutions as an example of managing growing provision in partnership, and in particular, the establishment of City University course board (paragraph 17) 	<p>within both the college operational management structure and programme teams</p>		<p>College Higher Education Operational Group</p>	<p>and operational levels. Minutes of meetings to indicate that the QAA Academic Infrastructure referred to and continues to be noted in validation minutes</p>		<p>education and college level. July 2008, July 2009</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the effectiveness of arrangements for managing joint provision. Ongoing cycle of strategic level meetings between the college and partners 	<p>07/08, 08/09. Linked to meetings schedules</p>	<p>CIC/CU Course Board CIC/ Londonmet - Steering Group CIC/QM - Programme Management Team</p>	<p>Targets set in meetings cycle between CIC and Partner. These may be more joint provision, more joint processes etc</p>	<p>CIC/CU Strategic Alliance Group CIC/ Londonmet Steering Group CIC/QM Group</p>	<p>Evaluation at strategic level meetings</p>	

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the clearly defined role of curriculum managers in the effective management and enhancement of learning (paragraph 22) 	<p>Continue to ensure consistency of approach through induction of new Curriculum Managers, ongoing training, peer observation and monitoring as well as moderation of lesson observation grades through quality panels and College Academic Board</p>	<p>From Autumn 2007</p>	<p>College Management Team</p>	<p>Teaching and Learning targets set in Curriculum Area Development plans full met in relation to higher education provision</p>	<p>College Deputy Principal (Curriculum and Quality)</p>	<p>Evaluated through the Quality Cycle, ie Centre Quality Panels and Academic Board</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monitoring and moderation of teaching and learning with an emphasis on enhancement and staff 	<p>Through the process of monitoring and moderation of teaching and</p>	<p>From Autumn 2007</p>	<p>Curriculum Managers College HE Operational Group</p>	<p>Grades of lesson observations. Student Feedback</p>	<p>College Teaching and Learning Group</p>	<p>Normal reporting process</p>

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
development (paragraph 28)	learning in higher education delivery, encourage reflection on practice leading to staff development. Working in partnership on staff development		Teaching and Learning Unit	Staff development uptake		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the integration of work based (or simulated work based) learning into FD programmes, with effective involvement of employers in programme development, approval, monitoring, delivery and assignment design (paragraph 32) 	Produce a summative document of work based learning, development and operation across the range of FDs. Provide a dissemination session for all stakeholders	Autumn 2007	College HE Quality and Development Manager Programme Teams across college and university CIC/Londonmet Steering Group CIC/CU Course Board	Feedback from dissemination	College HE Operational Group	Report

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The review team agreed upon a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reconciliation of the differences in respect of the time limits for return of assessed work to ensure that published information expressed in the College's Student Charter and programme handbooks is consistent and accurate (paragraph 49) 	<p>The time limits for return of work in the college student charter to be in all handbooks relating to modules taught by college staff for 2007/2008</p>	<p>Discussion with partners on wording for modules taught on by partner universities staff (Autumn 2007)</p>	<p>College HE Quality and Development Manager College HE Operational Group Londonmet Academic Partnership and Audit Office CIC/CU Course Board CIC/QM Programme Management Committee</p>	<p>Handbooks contain accurate and consistent information in line with Student Charter</p>	<p>College HE Strategy Group</p>	<p>Course Handbooks are monitored HE Annual Self Assessment</p>

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The review team agreed the following areas where it would be desirable for the College to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● review systems and processes with regard to the management of external examiners' reports, responses thereto, annual monitoring reports and the monitoring of consequent action plans, to ensure consistent and effective internal practices are developed for all higher education programmes regardless of the awarding body (paragraph 18) ● monitor take-up of staff development to ensure that it effectively supports the maintenance of academic standards 	<p>Review the operation of present systems with each partner against good practice. Agree and document systems with each partner to ensure consistency with best practice across the partnerships</p>	<p>By July 2008</p>	<p>College Higher Education Quality and Development Manager CIC/Londonmet Steering Group CIC/CU Course Board CIC/QM Programme Management Committee</p>	<p>Consistent practice.</p>	<p>College HE Strategy Group. Steering Groups with awarding Universities</p>	<p>College HE Self Assessment</p>
	<p>Staff Development Activities to be monitored and evaluated</p>	<p>Report July 2008, July 2009</p>	<p>Curriculum Managers. College HE Quality and Development</p>	<p>Accurate records of attendance at all higher education staff development</p>	<p>HE Operational Group. College Staff Development Manager</p>	<p>Log of activities and commentary</p>

City and Islington College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
(paragraph 19)			Manager	activities (including those offered by partners) are held by the college		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● enhancement of directed staff scholarly activity to maintain and enhance subject currency (paragraph 42) 	<p>Production of a document and dissemination of availability of scholarly activity in the college, with partners and elsewhere</p> <p>Evaluation of needs and take-up of activities</p>	By July 2008	<p>College HE Quality and Development Manager</p> <p>Curriculum Managers feeding into College HE Operational Group</p>	<p>Potential activities documented in college HE Handbook</p> <p>Register of scholarly activity undertaken</p>	<p>College HE Operational Group</p> <p>Teaching and Learning Unit</p>	<p>Review of relevant scholarly activity undertaken</p>

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
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

RG 363 06/08