Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

May 2007

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology

SR11/2008

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

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the role of 'rapporteur', integrates College processes with Staffordshire University procedures and shares good practice from the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) consortium within the College

- link tutors promote strong subject-level relationships between the College and University, and facilitate access to faculty resources; development days are regarded highly by College staff

- the Associate Lecturer Scheme allows College staff to become part of the University

- students value the high level of academic and pastoral support

- feedback from students is considered in a timely manner and the action taken is reported to them

- the introduction of a 30-credit module, Teaching Higher Education in Further Education, enhances staff development opportunities

- access to retention, progression and achievement data enhances the quality of management information.

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:

- to ensure all appropriate actions are implemented and recorded in self-assessment reports

- to ensure there are programme specifications for all Higher National programmes

- to ensure support for all new programme leaders in their quality assurance role.

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

- assist all staff to demonstrate understanding and confident engagement with the Academic Infrastructure to inform new programme proposals

- provide feedback to students on their assessed work that is of a consistent standard across the whole provision

- monitor that the SURF policy on work-based-learning is explicit in Foundation Degree documentation.

A Introduction and context

1   This report presents the findings of the Summative review conducted at Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information on 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) it delivers on behalf of Staffordshire University and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mrs Claire Blanchard, Ms Maxina Butler-Holmes, Mr Peter Cutting (reviewers) and Mr Nigel Hall (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; meetings with staff, students and partner institutions; reports of reviews by QAA, and inspections by the Office for Standards in Education. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment conducted January 2007. A summary of findings from the 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 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   The College is the largest provider of post-16 education in Shropshire, and is located on two campuses on the outskirts of Shrewsbury. A number of outreach centres and employer premises are used for the delivery of courses and the assessment of work-based learning. The College is also a centre of vocational excellence in Construction. In the academic year 2006-07, there are 1,592 full-time and 2,986 part-time student enrolments. Of these, there are 93 full-time and 153 part-time students enrolled on higher education programmes. The programmes are taught by 38 full-time staff and two staff on fractional appointments.

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

Edexcel

- HND Business

- HND Performing Arts (Performance)

- HND Performing Arts (Theatre)

- HND Sport Studies

- HND Computing and Business Information Technology

- HNC Applied Information Technology

- HNC Building Studies

- HNC Business

- HNC Computing

- HNC Electrical and Electronic Engineering

- HNC Mechanical Engineering

- HNC Internet Technology

Staffordshire University

- BA (Hons) Business Management.

- BA (Hons) Business Management (Fast-track)

- FD Complementary Therapies

- FD Computing

- FD Computing and Business Information Technology

- FD Construction

- FD Creative Industries

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

5   The College works in partnership with Staffordshire University as a member of the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF), which comprises 10 colleges in Staffordshire and Shropshire, and with the North East Wales Institute. There were 22 full-time equivalent students on the North East Wales Institute programme in 2006, ~but this activity is not funded by HEFCE and is outside the scope of the Summative review. Higher education at the College includes a top-up degree to honours level in Business and Management, FDs and Higher National awards that operate under a SURF licence with Edexcel.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

6   The College was reorganised on 1 April 2007 to improve management and to prepare it for future challenges. Formerly, three faculties had responsibility for 21 departments or sections and these were reorganised into five teaching schools, which run both higher and further education programmes. The College is planning to increase the volume of higher education provision, especially through the expansion of FDs. Recruitment patterns show that approximately 44 per cent of higher education students come from Shrewsbury, 17 per cent from Telford and Wrekin, 31 per cent from the wider Shropshire area and the remainder from outside the county.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

7   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. Two students from Business Studies and two students from HND Performing Arts compiled a submission on behalf of the student body. Of the two business students, one student is undertaking the HND, and the other is on the BA in Business Management. 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?

8 The Memorandum of Cooperation between Staffordshire University and the College clearly defines responsibilities for the validation, annual monitoring and assessment of higher education programmes. This enables the College to operate its higher education provision under SURF, which is a HEFCE-approved consortium. Portfolio development takes place at programme level, and can be instigated by any SURF partner college or by the University itself. The College has offered Edexcel programmes for many years, and these now operate within consortium procedures. The team confirmed that SURF arrangements enable the College to discharge its responsibilities effectively for the management and delivery of the standard of the awards it offers on behalf of Staffordshire University and Edexcel.

9 The SURF Quality Committee is responsible for the production of a Quality Assurance Handbook that defines comprehensive procedures for University awards. In most cases, annual programme reporting at the College adopts Staffordshire University documentation to ensure consistency within SURF and to avoid duplication in the College. Reports are reviewed by the College Quality Unit and are monitored by SURF. The process is designed to identify areas for enhancement, which are then addressed through specific actions at programme level or through college-wide arrangements.

10 The SURF Quality Committee minutes contain detailed discussion points and actions, which are not routinely addressed across the provision. It is left to individual programme teams to take appropriate action. Consequently, the team found a lack of consistency in the use of self-assessments, and that good practice in some areas is not shared across the provision. The need to promote enhancement has been recognised by the College and the new Higher Education Tutors Forum is designed to facilitate dialogue and the sharing of good practice. This is a positive development.

11 There are regular meetings involving all partner colleges, which include a 'rapporteur' from each college. The 'rapporteurs' disseminate information within their own organisations. This ensures effective integration of College processes within the University's quality assurance procedures. The collaborative provision audit identified the role of 'rapporteur' as an example of good practice and the team confirmed this. The benefits of feeding back information collected by the 'rapporteur' could be disseminated more widely through the new Forum. The College should consider how the reporting of quality information could be developed further to enhance its programmes.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

12 Annual self-assessment reports follow the further education model and the self-evaluation for the Summative review acknowledges that there is limited consideration of higher education issues. In particular, there is no college-wide annual evaluation of higher education that focuses upon aspects of the Academic Infrastructure, especially relevant elements of the *Code of practice*. The team noted that the University produced a draft template for this in 2006, but the process has not progressed within the College. Each

self-assessment report generates a quality improvement plan, but again there is no differentiation between higher and further education programmes. The plans are subject to monthly monitoring and termly reports go to a subcommittee of the governing body. Such monitoring is a valuable feature of quality assurance and both SURF and Edexcel Higher National provision will benefit from specific reference to higher education issues within quality improvement plans. Consideration of college-wide higher education issues is a valuable enhancement tool, and the College is advised to revise its procedures to ensure that higher education is addressed clearly and to ensure that all appropriate actions are implemented and recorded in self-assessment reports.

13   The Developmental engagement in assessment reported that a better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure in the College was desirable. The team noted that a University representative had addressed the Higher Education Tutors Forum, which will now take this forward. The College will benefit from working with SURF on a development plan to assist all staff on higher education programmes to demonstrate understanding and confident engagement with the Academic Infrastructure to inform new programme proposals.

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

14   In February 2007, the SURF Quality Committee introduced a revised handbook and new procedures to summarise and disseminate the findings of Edexcel examiners within the consortium. This ensures a central response to all external examiner comment and demonstrates further strengthening of reporting arrangements on academic standards. For example, the team noted that comments from the external examiner in computing resulted in the distribution of additional documentation to the examiner and a change to the sample of materials sent for external scrutiny. This has made a significant contribution to the protection of academic standards on computing courses and a summary of such information is now circulated within the consortium. In addition, a new Higher Education in Further Education Committee provides opportunities for peer-group discussion on a broad range of issues with representatives from appropriate University faculties.

15   Student handbooks for University awards are comprehensive and clearly articulate learning outcomes with assessment approaches, but handbooks for Edexcel awards are more variable. The Developmental engagement in assessment recognised this variation and advised the College to disseminate the good practice in programmes such as HND Sports Studies across the provision. Within the action plan, this responsibility has been delegated to the Higher Education Tutors Forum and the team noted a recent distribution of information from HND Sport Studies. The Head of Curriculum and Quality is monitoring this.

16   The Developmental engagement in assessment also advised that the College produce programme specifications for Edexcel Higher National awards and the College aims to complete this activity by June 2007. A template has been created to reflect QAA guidelines and the team was informed that full programme specifications would be available for new applicants, existing students and employers in the next academic year. The Head of Curriculum and Quality is managing this process, and the College is advised to monitor its completion before the start of the academic year 2007-08.

17   A new organisation structure was introduced in April 2007. This allocates responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement within designated subject areas to five heads of school and to programme leaders who report to them. The role of programme leader, which reflects some of the duties of former heads of department, is still to be embedded

within the College. It is not yet clear how effectiveness in this new role will be developed. For example, as yet there is no development plan to support the programme leaders who undertake this pivotal quality assurance role for higher education provision. The College is advised to address this in the near future.

18   The team noted that the College is developing its strategic approach to collaboration with higher education partners, with particular reference to FDs, and that elements of a higher education strategy are to be in place by September 2007. The collaborative audit team considered it desirable that periodic review should focus on the whole centre as distinct from just the programme level. Within this context, the College will benefit from a higher education strategy that articulates portfolio development and demonstrates a consistent college-wide approach towards the management and delivery of the standards of its programmes.

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

19   A nominated Staffordshire University link tutor supports each SURF award and the team found that strong subject-level relationships exist between college and university staff. This is reflected in the annual monitoring reports and in engagement with examination boards. The Link Tutor Handbook sets out clearly the details of the relationship between college-based programme teams and their relevant university faculty or department. There is an Associate Lecturer Scheme that allows college staff to become part of the University. Staff reported that this provides a valued opportunity to work with their academic peers and gain access to the University, which enhances the curriculum.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

20   The College has explicit college-wide internal arrangements, based on its further education procedures, to manage, assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities for higher education students. These have been extended to meet the requirements of its partner organisation, which are clearly articulated in the SURF Memorandum of Cooperation and related SURF documentation. The University report on the monitoring of collaborative awards confirms that reporting arrangements are conducted in accordance with partnership requirements and that courses are delivered within SURF guidelines. The report noted that learning opportunities at the College are appropriate and the team confirmed this.

21   Within the Curriculum and Quality Unit, there is a Manager who has specific responsibility for curriculum issues and who oversees the reporting of quality information. This involves: internal auditing of documentation; compiling statistical data; acting as 'rapporteur' at SURF meetings; and disseminating the information within the College. The Quality Unit reviews information from the student perception of course surveys, supplements this with information from focus group meetings, and reports its findings to the governing body. In the future, these reports will also inform the agenda for the Higher Education Tutors Forum.

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?

22   The self-evaluation identifies several factors that contribute to the quality of learning opportunities. These include: small class sizes that enable students to get individual attention; interactive teaching methods to foster self-directed study; and the mentoring of students by their peers, which is a particular feature on HND Performing Arts and HND Sport Studies. Students confirmed the effectiveness of this approach and reported that personal contact with teaching staff made a significant contribution to their learning experience. Students value the high level of academic support. They reported that tutors were readily available and provided additional tutorials when requested. Some students attested that they would not have felt able to cope with studies at higher education level in a less supportive environment. Student perception of course surveys' demonstrate students' satisfaction with their learning experience. Both the written submissions and the meeting with students confirmed this.

23   The Developmental engagement in assessment reported that feedback on students' assessed work was generally timely, and appropriate in both qualitative and quantitative terms. The team confirmed this and noted appropriate guidance to students on how to improve their work, with clear links to assessment criteria. However, students reported that feedback on HND Computing and Business Information Technology was sometimes limited to the final mark and the College should provide feedback that is of a consistent standard across the whole provision.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

24   The Developmental engagement in assessment advised the College to produce programme specifications for all Edexcel programmes. It also suggested that consideration be given to how understanding of the Academic Infrastructure could be further disseminated across the higher education provision, with particular reference to subject benchmark statements. The team noted a significant improvement in engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and that the College is committed to completing the process before the next academic year.

25   Under the new organisation structure, responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching is delegated as follows: the Head of School carries overall responsibility with a focus on strategic issues; the Assistant Head has operational responsibilities; and the Programme Leader leads the curriculum team and ensures that procedures are appropriately implemented. As yet, the new structure has not had sufficient time to influence the quality of learning opportunities, but the team noted some existing good practice in the programme files for Complementary Therapies, Performing Arts, and Sport. Measures are now being taken to extend this to all programme areas. For example, programme files in engineering are less informative and the team recommended that existing good practice be shared more widely. The Higher Education Tutors Forum has begun this process, and further progress is anticipated in the next academic year.

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

26   The close working relationship between staff and students enables the College to identify enhancement opportunities and to take swift action to implement changes. Examples of enhanced learning opportunities resulting from student feedback include: the relocation of Business Studies programmes to ensure quiet study space, which was

highlighted by the Developmental engagement team; specific rehearsal space for higher education Performing Arts students; additional advice on referencing for students on the FD in Complementary Therapy; changes to Construction modules to reflect professional body requirements; and an improved focus on e-learning.

27   Students feel they have a clear voice within the College. Their comments are considered in a timely manner, and the actions taken by the College are reported to them both formally in meetings and informally through personal tutors. Arrangements for representation are clear and although the cohort size is small there is some formal engagement through college meetings. However, students reported that informal arrangements are more effective and yield rapid results. For example, Business Studies students had commented on the poor quality of information available on the website, and this has improved significantly. These students found the comparative information available on the SURF website was particularly useful. They stated that the opportunity to check their progress against that of their peers was a significant aid to motivation.

28   There are arrangements for students to meet with their University link tutor at the start of each semester. The self-evaluation confirms a close working relationship between college staff and link tutors, especially in computing and creative studies. However, some students reported that they had not met with link tutors and would welcome greater opportunities for involvement with the partner institution.

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

29   Arrangements for academic and pastoral support are in place and are clearly set out in documentation, which is available electronically. For example, any student with specific learning support needs can apply for a disabled student allowance before starting a programme. This is done through the additional learning support arrangements, and there is clear evidence that procedures are effective.

30   The self-evaluation claims that student support is a major strength of higher education provision at the College and the team confirmed this. The College strategy supports its mission of providing learning opportunities for students who wish to remain in the local area and progress to a higher education award.

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

31   Measures are in place for higher education related staff development in addition to college-wide development opportunities. The link tutor scheme ensures access to faculty resources at the University and promotes the sharing of good practice across all SURF partners. The organisation of specific development days for each programme ensures consistency of learning opportunities and is regarded highly by college staff. The introduction of a 30-credit module, Teaching Higher Education in Further Education, is an innovative feature. It is a significant enhancement to staff development within the College and within the whole SURF consortium.

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

32   Students confirmed the sufficiency and accessibility of learning resources. The Developmental engagement team advised the College on the need for quiet study facilities at the London Road Campus and this has been addressed. A virtual learning environment is

now developing within the College. Blackboard is used for SURF programmes and Moodle enables students to retain access to further education based resources. Library staff take a proactive approach to seeking and identifying potential teaching and learning resources, which is appreciated by both staff and students.

33 The College uses an Ofsted approach to teaching observation and the grades achieved for higher education teaching are noteworthy. The results of observations are scrutinised by the Quality Unit across different disciplines and across different levels to identify good practice. This is then reported to the SURF Quality Committee. Students commented favourably on the quality of teaching and performing arts students were especially pleased with the practical focus of their tuition.

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

Core theme 3: Public information

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

34 Reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College publishes about its Staffordshire University and Edexcel awards. The College and its partners recognise the need to monitor the accuracy of public information. Documentation is regularly reviewed to ensure comprehensive user-friendly information for students and other stakeholders. Students confirmed that this is achieved, and that they value the guidance it provides.

35 In accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 2: collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, published by QAA, the Memorandum of Cooperation states that all advertising and publicity relating to SURF awards are the responsibility of the University. In addition, the college's marketing manager is a member of the SURF Marketing Committee and monitors the accuracy and reliability of advertising and publicity materials produced by the College. There is a higher education prospectus, published by the College, which contains outline information on all higher education programmes. In the case of Higher National programmes, this information is repeated on single sheets of programme specific documentation, to which the College logo is attached. These are produced by SURF for all partner institutions. Consortium-wide SURF documents such as handbooks are monitored centrally, and Blackboard is used to make programme and module related materials available for distribution and amendment across all providers.

36 The team reviewed a representative sample of course and student documentation from both Higher National and degree programmes. They confirmed that internal procedures, supplemented by checks within SURF, ensure the accuracy and reliability of published information. The College is extending the volume of information available on its website, and students reported that both printed and electronic information provided valuable and accurate guidance. They commended the user-friendly nature of the College documentation. The integrity of documentation is also confirmed by external comment. The College has achieved Matrix accreditation for the quality of its information, advice and guidance services.

37   The management information system at the College has been enhanced as higher education programmes have grown in both number and in the size of individual cohorts There has been an appropriate investment in additional resources to sustain this development. The College is able to audit information on student registrations both regularly and frequently to ensure accuracy. Student records are clear; there is close liaison with the University, and data transfer between the College and SURF is effective. To ensure the continuing integrity of information, a formal check is conducted every two years when SURF audits the College's data system.

38   Higher education students are enrolled locally, in addition to the standard SURF registration. This enables the College to record personal data, prior attainment and details of both past and present studies. Data is entered on the SURF system and returned to the College for confirmation prior to assessment board and award board meetings. Notification of student achievement on SURF courses is a direct responsibility of the University, while the College assumes responsibility for the notification of Edexcel awards. Within the College, higher education information is subject to the same checking as further education data. The Learning and Skills Council extracts the appropriate set of data for transmission to HEFCE and this is then sent to the University for final verification.

39   Staff interrogate the database to establish figures for admission, retention, progression and achievement. This is in order to evaluate performance against existing targets, and to set appropriate targets for the following academic year. Performance is measured against national average figures, where these are available, and SURF is currently seeking to establish benchmarks for colleges within the consortium. The ease of access to retention, progression and achievement data is a significant enhancement to the quality of management information.

40   College information is logged on the ProAchieve system, which is accessible to all staff. Each School has a full-time data administrator, who is responsible for processing enrolments and monitoring the information. There is a termly review of all data to identify inaccuracies and a report is sent to programme teams for additional verification. The College also extracts generic information such as widening participation rates to inform college-wide targets. There is an external audit of data at the end of each year.

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

41   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in January 2007. It was structured around the following lines of enquiry agreed with the College:

- How does the College ensure that there is a consistent approach in the design and implementation of assessment?

- How are assessment procedures made explicit and communicated to all students?

- What evidence is there that marking and moderation of assessment is in line with published criteria?

- Is there consistency in the timeliness, quality and quantity of feedback to students across the provision?

- How does feedback enhance learning and progression?

- How is assessment data collected for publication to students, staff and outside bodies?

42 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice that were worthy of dissemination throughout the College. These include the effective communication of assessment information to students; effective assessment design; timely and helpful feedback to students on their assessed work; tutorial support and Matrix accreditation, the quality standard for information, advice and guidance services. Overall the team found rigorous monitoring of academic standards through annual reporting procedures and action plans.

43 The Developmental engagement team recommended that it was advisable for the College to take action to produce programme specifications for Edexcel Higher National awards that reflect QAA guidelines and to ensure it provides appropriate quiet study facilities for higher education students. The Developmental engagement team also agreed that it would be desirable for the College to take action to share understanding of the Academic Infrastructure across the College; to develop a formal assessment strategy for all higher education programmes; to provide opportunities for further monitoring and alignment of calendars within SURF; and to improve the administrative arrangements for handling assignments at the London Road Campus.

D Foundation Degrees

44 The College has adopted a strategy to develop FDs within a regional framework. This is based on the findings of the 2005 report to HEFCE on Higher Education in the Marches, which found that learners do not wish to study full-time, nor travel more than 10 miles to their place of study. The report states that employers are keen to access higher education training opportunities for staff and favour work-based training or 'e-learning'. Shrewsbury is seen as a centre for such activity, and a proposal to develop a Higher Education Centre at the London Road Campus has support from the local authority.

45 The current consortium arrangement with SURF is central to this strategy, but existing links with partners such as the University of Wolverhampton will be strengthened and new links will also be developed. In particular, there is a new Lifelong Learning Network covering Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. It is led by Staffordshire University and involves a partnership with Keele University, the University of Wolverhampton, the Open University, Harper Adams University College and further education colleges in the area. The Lifelong Learning Network will undertake a significant role in linking the demand for learning with appropriate provision.

46 The College currently offers FDs in Computing and Business Information Technology; Complementary Therapies; Computing; Construction, and Creative Industries. The College intends to expand its provision into areas including: care; early years; engineering; hospitality and tourism; performing arts; public service, and sport studies. Under the new organisation structure the business development manager will be responsible for enhancing employer engagement to support both new and existing FDs.

47 The team noted that work-based learning is only featured in the third year of the FD in Construction, while in other FDs the work-related element is not explicit. There is a SURF policy to provide 20 per cent of learning on each award that is work-related, and the College should make this explicit in documentation.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

48 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 Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology and its awarding bodies, Staffordshire University and Edexcel.

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

- the role of 'rapporteur', which integrates College processes with Staffordshire University procedures and shares good practice from the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) consortium within the College (paragraph 11)

- link tutors promote strong subject-level relationships between the College and University, and facilitate access to faculty resources; development days are regarded highly by College staff (paragraphs 19, 31)

- the Associate Lecturer Scheme allows College staff to become part of the University (paragraph 19)

- students value the high level of academic and pastoral support (paragraphs 22, 29, 30)

- feedback from students is considered in a timely manner and the action taken is reported to them (paragraph 27)

- the introduction of a 30-credit module, Teaching Higher Education in Further Education, enhances staff development opportunities (paragraph 31)

- access to retention, progression and achievement data enhances the quality of management information (paragraph 39).

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

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

- to ensure all appropriate actions are implemented and recorded in self-assessment reports (paragraph 12)

- to ensure there are programme specifications for all Higher National programmes (paragraph 16)

- to ensure support for all new programme leaders in their quality assurance role (paragraph 17).

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

- to assist all staff to demonstrate understanding and confident engagement with the Academic Infrastructure to inform new programme proposals (paragraph 13)

- to provide feedback to students on their assessed work that is of a consistent standard across the whole provision (paragraph 23)

- to monitor that the SURF policy on work-based-learning is explicit in Foundation Degree documentation (paragraph 47).

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

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

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

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology 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 team identified the following areas of **good** practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the college:						
● the role of 'rapporteur' integrates College processes with Staffordshire University procedures and shares good practice from the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) consortium within the College (paragraph 11)	Raporteur to report to HE Course Tutors Forum to disseminate good practice		Quality and Curriculum Unit	Sharing of good practice through Annual Self Assessment process	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports
● link tutors promote strong subject-level relationships between the College and University, and facilitate access to faculty resources. Development days are regarded	Review issues arising from link tutor feedback to self assessment report.	Nov 2007	Heads of School/ Programme Leaders	Sharing of good practice through Annual Self Assessment process	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
highly by College staff (paragraphs 19, 31)	Promote attendance at development days					
●Associate Lecturer Scheme allows College staff to become part of the University (paragraph 19)	Share information of scheme with all SURF tutors and promote uptake within teams		Heads of School / Programme leaders / HR	Maximum take-up	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports
●students value the high level of academic and pastoral support (paragraphs 22, 29, 30)	Monitor through Learner Feedback and report to HE Course Tutor Forum		Quality and Curriculum Unit	Minutes SPOC Student Forum Reports End of Module Feedback Forms	Head of Curriculum and Quality	Positive student feedback
●feedback from students about their education is considered in a timely manner and the action taken is reported to them (paragraph 27)	Monitor through Learner Feedback and report to HE Course Tutor	Dec 2007	Quality and Curriculum Unit	Minutes SPOC Student Forum Reports	Head of Curriculum and Quality	Positive student feedback

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Forum Introduce eILPs to provide additional feedback			End of Module Feedback Forms		
• the introduction of a 30-credit module on Teaching Higher Education in Further Education enhances staff development opportunities (paragraph 31)	Share information of scheme with all SURF tutors and promote uptake within teams		Heads of School / Programme leaders / HR	Take-up as appropriate	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports
• access to retention, progression and achievement data enhances the quality of management information (paragraph 39).	Retention, achievement and progression data informs programme self evaluation	Nov 2007	Heads of School / Programme leaders / HR	Monitoring of strengths and areas for improvement through Annual Self Assessment process and action planning	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports Monitoring of action plans

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be **advised** to take action:						
• to ensure all appropriate actions are implemented and recorded in self-assessment reports (paragraph 12)	Higher education issues are specifically referenced through the College's annual self assessment process	Nov 2007	Heads of School/ Programme leaders/ HR	Monitoring of strengths and areas for improvement through Annual Self Assessment process and action planning	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports Monitoring of action plans
• to ensure there are programme specifications for all Higher National programmes (paragraph 16)	Programme specification to be produced for all Edexcel awards	Sept 2007	Programme Leaders	Programme specification produced for all Edexcel awards to be available for new academic year (Sept 2007)	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Programme specifications available for learners, employers and applicants
• to ensure support for all new programme leaders (paragraph 17).	Management Development Programme in place to support all new programme leaders	June 2007	HR	All managers successfully complete the programme	Human and Physical Resources Director	Learning gain questionnaires undertaken for all aspects of the programme

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desired** to take action:						
• to assist all staff to demonstrate understanding and confident engagement with the Academic Infrastructure to inform new programme proposals (paragraph 13)	Continue to review Academic Infrastructure issues through termly HE Course Tutors Forum		Quality and Curriculum Unit	Increased engagement with all aspects of AI	Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of Programme Self Assessment Reports Monitoring of action plans
• to provide feedback to students on their assessed work that is of a consistent standard across the whole provision (paragraph 23)	Feedback monitored through internal moderation with programme teams Introduce eILPs to provide additional feedback	Dec 2007	Quality and Curriculum Unit/ Programme Leaders	Consistent feedback to learners	Heads of Schools / Head of Quality and Curriculum	Improved student feedback. Internal moderator feedback. Monitoring of eILPs

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
● to monitor that the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) policy on work-based-learning is explicit in Foundation degree documentation (paragraph 47).	Agenda item HE Course Tutors Forum. Liaison with link tutors.		Quality and Curriculum Unit/ Programme Leaders	Documentation amended	Programme leaders/ Heads of Schools/ Head of Quality and Curriculum	Review of documentation