Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

September 2009

Aquinas College

SR40/2009

Preface

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

Purpose of IQER

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

The IQER process

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

Developmental engagement

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college

- an optional written submission by the student body

- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit

- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days

- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education

- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams, however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents

- reviewing the optional written submission from students

- asking questions of relevant staff

- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications

- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*

- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects

- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study

- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report:

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential, advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.

- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence, limited confidence** or **no confidence.** There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published.

Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

Executive summary

The Summative review of Aquinas College carried out in September 2009

Aquinas College (the College) is a Catholic sixth-form college based in Stockport. The College's philosophy is based on Christian values and it aims to help each student to make informed decisions, accept responsibility for their actions, and to cooperate with others in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and are studying GCE Advanced Level courses. Since 2003-04, the College has also offered Level 1 of the BSc (Hons) Psychology degree of The Manchester Metropolitan University.

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, for the standards of the award it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, 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 standardisation of moderation across the provision

- the recruitment process, with an in-depth interview that encourages the return to study for mature entrants

- the tutorial system, with academic guidance and pastoral support that contributes significantly to student success

- the toolkit for psychology teachers that uses published materials developed in the College

- annual lesson observation for all staff

- the facility to borrow laptop computers to undertake work away from the College, which students with limited access to such facilities see as a significant enhancement to their learning experience

- the programme handbook, which is a valuable reference source with user-friendly advice on reading lists and grading criteria.

Recommendations

The team has 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:

- take measures to formalise arrangements and establish a college-based subcommittee that meets in full the requirements of the collaborative agreement

- devise and implement measures that ensure reports contain explicit detail of the issues considered by the programme team, and the actions taken to enhance the provision

- ensure that all quality enhancement plans include a signature and date to provide evidence that the quality loop is closed

- devise and implement a system for editing and approving documentation.

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

- enhance delivery of the programme through developing in staff a better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure

- encourage further engagement with the discipline through support for staff to attend and present at academic conferences.

A Introduction and context

1   This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at Aquinas College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to the programme that the College delivers on behalf of The Manchester Metropolitan University (the University). The review was carried out by Ms Clare Davison and Dr Michael Edmunds (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 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 body, and reports from inspections by Ofsted. The Coordinator met with staff, students and a representative from the partner institution at a preparatory meeting. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications. As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

3   There are no Foundation Degree awards at the College.

4   Aquinas College is a Catholic sixth-form college based in Stockport, which is under the Diocese of Shrewsbury. Stockport is a diverse metropolitan borough in Greater Manchester, with prosperous areas and low unemployment alongside areas of high deprivation. The College's philosophy is based on Christian values and it aims to help each student to make informed decisions, accept responsibility for their actions, and to cooperate with others in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

5   At the time of the review there were 1,873 full-time students aged 16 to 18 studying advanced-level courses, 1,200 part-time students on adult education programmes, and 400 students on a variety of skills and access programmes. Of these, 15 students are following higher education studies in psychology. The following higher education programme is offered at the College:

The Manchester Metropolitan University

BSc (Hons) Psychology - level 1.

Partnership agreement with the awarding body

6   There is a formal partnership agreement with the University that clearly defines the College's responsibilities for delivery of the University's higher education provision. This is a standard agreement that is used for franchised provision at further education partner colleges. The agreement with the College began in 2004 and was renewed in 2007. There are no discernible changes to the arrangements between these dates.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7   The psychology provision is the only higher education programme available at the College. It was introduced in 2004 and initially recruited a small number of students. As the provision has become more established, the number of participants has grown, but numbers remain modest. The College is currently the only partner for this provision, and the University is reviewing the current agreement with a view to discontinuing current arrangements and exploring other areas of collaboration.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8   Students studying on the higher education programme at the College were invited to present a submission about their experience to the Summative review team. The College incorporated a summary of their views into the self-evaluation, with contributions from student representatives and the higher education coordinator. The coordinator met with a representative group of students at the preparatory meeting and reported their comments to the team.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

9   The College works within the framework of the collaborative agreement with the University. The agreement is clear and explicit. It specifies the principles and procedures that underlie the relationship between the two institutions. Responsibility for academic standards is lodged within the University. The franchise arrangement allows the College to deliver level 1 of the University's psychology degree for a small group of part-time students who are recruited locally. Following successful completion of level 1 at the College, students' progress to the University and register on level 2 of the part-time programme. This means that they complete their degree studies over four further years on a one day a week attendance pattern. Students are also able to apply for a transfer to the full-time programme, if there are places available.

10   The original collaborative agreement of 2004 lists a range of further education colleges as franchise partners but, when this was renewed, the College was identified as the specific franchise partner. The 2007 document that the College provided as evidence was a draft and contained a number of typographical errors.

11   The University retains full responsibility for the collaborative provision and for the academic management and control of programmes. Responsibility lies with the Academic Board and the oversight, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of academic standards is devolved to the Academic Standards Committee of the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education. The franchise provision is subject to the same arrangements as other faculty programmes.

12   A college-based subcommittee of the Faculty's Academic Standards Committee is expected to meet once each term to discuss management issues that are specific to the provision. The terms of reference for all committees are explicit within the Definitive

Document. While a college-based subcommittee has not been formally established, the College confirms that the three members of staff involved in delivery of the programme act in this capacity. However, the team noted that there are no formal minutes of discussions, and no process for ensuring that appropriate action is taken to safeguard academic standards. While there is no evidence to suggest that this has influenced the learning experience adversely, the College is advised to take measures to formalise its arrangements, and to establish a college-based subcommittee that meets in full the requirements of the collaborative agreement.

13 The University has clearly-defined procedures for the delivery of programmes, which are followed by all institutions offering its programmes through collaborative provision. These are detailed in the Definitive Document, which includes programme specifications, admission requirements, assessment regulations, and programme management arrangements. There is also an Academic Memorandum, which sets out the College's responsibilities for administration of the programme, the provision of learning resources and arrangements for student support. These documents provide explicit details of how the College contributes to the management of the provision. Any changes to operational guidelines are communicated via the University's link tutor, and communication is normally undertaken by email.

14 The programme that the College delivers is part of the awarding body's provision, and the University is responsible for reporting arrangements.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 The Definitive Document describes how the programme accords with the psychology benchmark, and how benchmark statements are used as key external reference points for the development of learning outcomes. Mapping is undertaken to demonstrate how each learning outcome is addressed, and to make explicit the relationship between learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment strategies. The self-evaluation confirms that programme specifications reflect relevant sections of the *Code of practice* and the FHEQ.

16 Although programme staff are aware of the Academic Infrastructure and how it relates to higher education provision, they have not received any formal training from the College or the awarding body. The College considers that an understanding of the Academic Infrastructure is not considered to be necessary, as staff operate within the requirements of the University, but the team believes that this could enhance the delivery of the programme.

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 Academic Regulations and Procedures Handbook of the University identifies the roles and responsibilities of University and College staff for the management and support of collaborative provision. The self-evaluation describes the partnership with the University as one that operates at several levels and confirms that, in general, the arrangements are effective. When required, the Head of Psychology and Social Change works with the programme leader to consider issues of concern to students. There is a clear requirement to record any complaint, and to explain how this is addressed. However, the College reports that there have been no complaints to date, and students confirm this.

18   The College's management structure has evolved over time to meet the needs of both further education and higher education programmes. Overall responsibility for higher education rests with the Assistant Principal for post-19 programmes who reports formally to senior management twice a year through the Adult Centre self-assessment review process. The Assistant Principal's report informs the College's self-assessment review. There is also an Assistant Principal (Quality) who carries a monitoring role within the College. This involves a separate report to senior management and to governors on quality issues, and overseeing production of the College's self-assessment report.

19   The College nominates a partner link tutor to work with the link tutor at the University. The programme leader fulfils this role and the arrangement is effective. Link tutors provide advice on operational matters, such as the interpretation and implementation of University procedures, practices, regulations and requirements. Discussions are informal and there are no minutes of the meetings, but the College confirms the value of this arrangement.

20   The College's link tutor prepares a report as part of the annual monitoring and evaluation process. This incorporates commentary on academic standards, programme design and content, analysis of student performance data, and analysis of student feedback from internal sources and the National Student Survey. The self-evaluation claims that annual monitoring and evaluation procedures ensure a comprehensive review of year-on-year progress. However, the annual monitoring and evaluation reports of 2007-08 and 2008-09, which were submitted as evidence, are brief and lack detail. This limits the value of monitoring and evaluation procedures to teaching staff and College management, and opportunities for enhancement are not fully exploited. The College is advised to devise and implement measures that ensure reports contain explicit detail of the issues considered by the programme team, and the actions taken to enhance the provision.

21   The self-assessment report describes a number of quality issues that have arisen, but offers limited commentary on the action taken and results achieved. For example, annual monitoring and evaluation reports include only brief commentary on the enhancement of assessment practice. There is limited feedback from students and, as comments from the external examiner make no specific reference to the College's provision, there is no debate on action that might be taken to improve practice. The annual quality action plan identifies actions taken in response to the previous plan and claims that the provision is good and well rounded, but offers no evidence to support the judgement.

22   Collaborative provision quality action plans do not always contain dates and signatures to demonstrate that there has been appropriate consideration of the plan and that the College ensures closure of loops in the quality cycle. The College should seek to demonstrate the effectiveness of its arrangements through independent scrutiny of quality procedures and enhancement plans at institutional level. All plans should include a signature and date to provide evidence that the quality loop is closed.

23   Student assignments for the whole provision are designed by the University. College tutors are responsible for the marking of student work, which is then moderated by the University. The team was informed that, following specific recommendations from the College, moderation is being standardised across the provision. This demonstrates good practice developed by the College with potential to enhance the provision. Examination board meetings in which all tutors are invited to participate are held at the University. The review of student work confirmed that assessments achieve the appropriate standard and are moderated in accordance with University requirements. The College participates effectively in the assessment process and tutors attend the University's examination board.

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

24 The self-evaluation confirms the value of staff development activity, which is supported by the awarding body. All members of the teaching team have undertaken continuing professional development to support the maintenance of academic standards in the higher education provision. Of particular note is the training offered for teachers of psychology in all associate colleges, such as the training on use of the statistics package for social sciences. The teaching team recognises the value of individual support offered by link tutors and module tutors, and would welcome further development in their understanding of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

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?

25 The programme leader, who is also the higher education coordinator at the College, has the primary responsibility for quality arrangements relating to teaching, student support, learning resources, and monitoring of the student experience. Whereas academic standards are largely ensured by the University's monitoring arrangements, oversight of the quality of learning opportunities is primarily a concern of the College.

26 The programme leader produces an annual monitoring and evaluation report each July. This reviews progress during the current academic year and proposes six points for action during the next academic year. Proposed actions are reported formally to the awarding body following discussions with the link tutor. They inform the enhancement of learning opportunities across the whole collaborative provision, such as the standardisation of moderation arrangements.

27 Reports to senior management at the College are through the Assistant Principal for post-19 programmes, as the Adult Centre is responsible for the allocation, monitoring and overall management of resources devoted to the higher education provision. Arrangements are effective. Enhancement of the provision includes the introduction of web-based materials to support learning, the development of self-assessment methods that enable learners to monitor their own progress, and provision of evening sessions on using the statistics package for social sciences by the partner university.

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

28 The College monitors the academic performance of students through an analysis of student profiles and reports to senior management through the self-assessment review. Student feedback is collected at both programme and College level and has informed the management of communications with students and development of the student handbook. Students report that the College acts swiftly on feedback and that student opinion has a significant influence on delivery of the programme.

29 All the students admitted to the programme are mature, and many are returning to education after a significant gap in their studies. A large majority of students gain direct entry from the College's Access programme. The self-evaluation claims that a key factor in choosing to study at the College is the availability of local provision, and the meeting with students confirms this. They comment positively on the recruitment process, especially the opportunity for an in-depth interview, which encourages return to study and is a feature of good practice.

30 Student performance on level 1 demonstrates the effectiveness of learning opportunities. Of the 27 students recruited over a four-year period, 19 achieved the full 120 credits for transfer to level 2. Student data from the University suggests appropriate progression at level 2 and beyond, and College data shows that, to date, one student has graduated. While the total number of students is small, the recruitment of 12 learners in the current academic year is encouraging.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

31 To date, there has been little attempt to increase staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure, although tutors are aware that the programme they deliver accords with subject benchmarks and reflects the *Code of practice*. The University has not provided any specific training or guidance, and the College does not see it as a priority area for development. However, there are opportunities to enhance delivery of the programme through developing in staff a better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure. Students will benefit if staff take this into account when devising learning strategies and producing learning materials, and this should be addressed.

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

32 The College employs three staff on its higher education provision who also teach on further education programmes. The awarding body scrutinises the curricula vitae of all proposed tutors and approves their engagement with the programme. Tutors have graduate and postgraduate qualifications and are supported by the College to enhance their qualifications and professional experience. The University and students have commended the contribution of the teaching staff.

33 Student opinion on the quality of teaching and learning is collected through student feedback questionnaires, Adult Centre questionnaires, and a specific questionnaire on the effectiveness of the Learning Resources Centre. Feedback is consistently positive, and students report that the enthusiasm of teaching staff enhances delivery of the programme. Those who have progressed to level 2 and beyond confirm that the College's approach to teaching and learning is focused on small-group tuition, which ensures much individual academic guidance. They report that independent learning is emphasised from the start of the programme, and that they are well prepared for the transition to level 2 at the University. Progression and achievement data support this.

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

34 Guidance sheets are provided with each assignment, and students report that assessments are challenging, but well within their capabilities. There is clear feedback from tutors on a standard front sheet, which is supported through annotation of scripts. Grading criteria are effectively communicated through handbooks and are supported by commentary from the tutors. The review of student work confirms that students achieve an appropriate learning experience.

35 There is a well-established tutorial system which offers both academic and pastoral support. The programme leader has a significant role in ensuring that students are supported from their initial acceptance on the programme to their eventual transfer to the University. Tutorials are a regular feature of the student experience, and they can request additional tutorials whenever they identify a development need. In addition, there is a dedicated notice-board by which tutors communicate with students when they identify the need for further guidance and support.

36 In general, students report that their achievements exceeded their initial expectations. They commend the good practice in both academic guidance and pastoral support, and report that it contributes significantly to their success on the programme.

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

37 The University supports staff development to update the teaching team on learning methods that are a significant feature of the provision at level 2 and beyond, such as use of the statistics package for social sciences. The staff welcome such support and express a desire for more development aimed at helping them to prepare learners for study at the awarding body.

38 The College also organises its own in-service training aimed at improving teaching quality. For example, there is a workshop for all tutors entitled 'A toolkit for psychology teachers' that uses materials developed in the College. These include published materials that are available nationally and were written by the programme leader. This is a feature of good practice that is worthy of wider dissemination across the provision.

39 There is good practice in the College-wide process of lesson observation, which is designed to enhance pedagogical practice and encourage technological innovation. The Assistant Principal for post-19 programmes, as the Adult Centre manager, observes each member of the higher education teaching team. Observations take place annually and yield record sheets with feedback, advice and guidance that inform College management on the quality of learning opportunities.

40 At present, staff engage effectively with pedagogy of the discipline. They provided evidence of staff development activities on teaching that involved all members of the team. However, there is limited engagement with research or scholarship. For example, there is no evidence of attendance at academic conferences designed to enhance their knowledge of developments in psychology. A clear commitment by the College to encourage further engagement with the discipline through support for staff to attend and present at academic conferences would be desirable.

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?

41 There is a well-stocked library with copies of all publications that support the level 1 provision. In addition, students are registered at the University and have full access to the learning resources of the awarding body. The Ofsted report of 2008 awarded the College a Grade 1 for resources, including teaching rooms, library facilities and computing and information technology equipment. Documentation from the Learning Resources Centre confirms the value of this facility.

42 Students confirm that learning resources are effective, with a wide range of publications and computing facilities to support their studies. They report that opening hours in the Learning Resources Centre are somewhat restrictive, and that the closing time of 1900 or 1930 hours puts pressure on them to find books during their break periods. Longer opening hours would be beneficial. They are aware of the opportunity to use resources at the University, but feel that the additional time needed to travel outweighs the potential benefit.

43 The College's virtual learning environment is a valuable resource, which enhances the information provided in class. Staff encourage the students to use the internet to aid their research, but emphasise the need to use authoritative texts as their first source of information. The Learning Resources Centre allows students to borrow laptop computers to undertake work away from the College. Students with limited access to such facilities find this significantly enhances their learning experience. The students commend this arrangement, and the team noted the good practice.

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 body to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Core theme 3: Public information

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

44 The College publishes an annual Adult Centre courses brochure, which is the prospectus for all post-19 provision, including the higher education provision. This is distributed to prospective students and is available at information points in the local area. There is also a specific programme handbook, which is updated annually and contains programme information from the awarding body, supplemented by information about College procedures and arrangements that apply to the higher education provision. The self-evaluation claims that the handbook contains a clear guide to entry requirements, programme specifications and related documentation, student support arrangements, and information on access to learning resources. Students confirm this and report on the value of the programme handbook as a reference source throughout their studies. In particular, they commend the advice on reading lists, grading criteria, and the user-friendly nature of the publication.

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?

45 The Academic Memorandum states that the University retains responsibility for control and accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity. There is no separate protocol in place for the approval of partnership publicity material. The Faculty Registrar of the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education approves materials issued to prospective students, and those enrolled on the programme on behalf of the University.

46 The College is responsible for the accuracy of college-specific information that is available to its students. The team noted documents with a number of typographical errors and incorrect dates. These included a collaborative agreement, which was not signed and dated, and an annual monitoring and evaluation plan for 2008-09 that was incorrectly dated. The programme leader assumes responsibility for production of the information,

but it is not checked at institutional level to ensure accuracy. While this does not impact on the learning experience, the College is advised to devise and implement a system for editing and approving documentation.

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 programme it delivers.

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

47 As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

D Foundation Degrees

48 The College does not offer any Foundation Degrees.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- the standardisation of moderation across the provision (paragraph 23)

- the recruitment process, with an in-depth interview that encourages the return to study for mature entrants (paragraph 29)

- the tutorial system, with academic guidance and pastoral support that contributes significantly to student success (paragraph 36)

- the toolkit for psychology teachers that uses published materials developed in the College (paragraph 38)

- annual lesson observation for all staff (paragraph 39)

- the facility to borrow laptop computers to undertake work away from the College, that students with limited access to such facilities see as a significant enhancement to their learning experience (paragraph 43)

- the programme handbook, which is a valuable reference source with user-friendly advice on reading lists and grading criteria (paragraph 44).

51   The team also makes some recommendations for consideration by the College and its awarding body.

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

- to take measures to formalise arrangements and establish a college-based subcommittee that meets in full the requirements of the collaborative agreement (paragraph 12)

- to devise and implement measures that ensure reports contain explicit detail of the issues considered by the programme team, and the actions taken to enhance the provision (paragraph 20)

- to ensure that all quality enhancement plans include a signature and date to provide evidence that the quality loop is closed (paragraph 22)

- to devise and implement a system for editing and approving documentation (paragraph 46).

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

- to enhance delivery of the programme through developing in staff a better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraphs 24, 31)

- to encourage further engagement with the discipline through support for staff to attend and present at academic conferences (paragraph 40).

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.

Aquinas College action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2009

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 standardisation of moderation across the provision (paragraph 23)	This practice to be mainstreamed to other areas of similar provision	April 2010	Facilitator and course coordinator	Moderation systems standardised for all provision	Senior Management Team (SMT)	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process
• the recruitment process, with an in-depth interview that encourages the return to study for mature entrants (paragraph 29)	Maintain staffing levels to enable high standards of induction	June 2010	Facilitator	Quality of service maintained	Quality review coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process
• the tutorial system, with academic guidance and pastoral support that contributes significantly to student success (paragraph 36)	Maintain staffing levels to enable high standards of tutorial support	June 2010	Course coordinator	Quality of service maintained	Quality review coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process

Aquinas College action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2009

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the toolkit for psychology teachers that uses published materials developed in the College (paragraph 38)	Further maintain and develop toolkit	June 2010	Course tutors	Toolkit maintained and developed	Course coordinator	Reviewed by annual Quality Review (QR) meeting and external moderation report
• annual lesson observation for all staff (paragraph 39)	Continue current observation process	June 2010	Centre managers	All staff observed at least once each year	Quality review coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process
• the facility to borrow laptop computers to undertake work away from the College, that students with limited access to such facilities see as a significant enhancement to their learning experience (paragraph 43)	Resources maintained and extended to serve more students	June 2010	Learning Resources Centre (LRC) manager	Loan service maintained and improved	Quality review coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process

Aquinas College action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2009

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the programme handbook, which is a valuable reference source with user-friendly advice on reading lists and grading criteria (paragraph 44).	Continue to produce handbook to described standard	June 2010	Course tutors and coordinator	New handbook produced to same or better standard	Course coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process

Aquinas College action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2009

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 take measures to formalise arrangements and establish a college-based subcommittee that meets in full the requirements of the collaborative agreement (paragraph 12)	Discussion with The Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to arrange regular meetings	January 2010	Course coordinator	Subcommittee in place by end of second term	Facilitator	Evaluation report from both Aquinas and MMU to go before QR meetings

Aquinas College action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2009

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• to devise and implement measures that ensure reports contain explicit detail of the issues considered by the programme team, and the actions taken to enhance the provision (paragraph 20)	Discuss these measures with all managers and programme team and devise reporting strategies	By June 2010	Facilitator, course coordinator	New and enhanced reporting strategy in place	Quality review coordinator	Evaluation report from both Aquinas and MMU to go before QR meetings
• to ensure that all quality enhancement plans include a signature and date to provide evidence that the quality loop is closed (paragraph 22)	Endorse all such plans with date/signature	December 2009	Course coordinator, Facilitator	All QA plans signed and dated	Quality review coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process
• to devise and implement a system for editing and approving documentation (paragraph 46).	System for editing and approving documentation to be agreed and implemented by all project staff	June 2010	All management staff	System for editing and approving documentation in place	Quality review coordinator	Evaluation report from both Aquinas and MMU to go before QR meetings

Aquinas College action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2009						
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 enhance delivery of the programme through developing in staff a better understanding of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraphs 24, 31)	Raise awareness and understanding of Academic Infrastructure in all staff delivering HE programmes through in-service sessions	June 2010	Facilitator, course coordinator to organise in-service sessions	All HE delivery staff and managers aware of Academic Infrastructure	Quality review coordinator	Evaluation report from both Aquinas and MMU to go before QR meetings
• to encourage further engagement with the discipline through support for staff to attend and present at academic conferences (paragraph 40).	Encourage all delivery staff to engage in and attend academic conferences. Increase in-service budget to facilitate this	June 2010	All delivery staff and managers	More attendance at academic conferences	Facilitator, course coordinator	Process to be monitored by annual quality review process