

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

April 2010

College of North West London

SR83/2009

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2010

ISBN 978 1 84979 162 5

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

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Preface

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

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements, which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

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

Outcomes of IQER

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

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.
- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published.

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

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

Executive summary

Summative review of the College of North West London carried out in April 2010

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 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 involvement of employers in the curriculum design of programmes which ensures the development of relevant work skills
- the commendable achievement of students who progress to honours level from the Foundation Degree in Construction
- the close and effective relationship between the College and all its awarding bodies
- the flexible multi-mode delivery available to students supports the College's aim to widen participation
- the relationship with employers that enhances delivery of the programmes and encourages students to identify the links between theory and practice
- the range and quality of academic and pastoral support available to students
- the high quality of the mathematics support provided for students
- the systems in place to monitor the quality of learning that is used developmentally to support teaching staff
- the provision of industry standard equipment available to engineering and construction students
- the helpful documentation published by the College that is wide ranging, accessible and inclusive.

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 **desirable** for the College to:

- ensure that the minutes of the Higher Education Board accurately report and track the outcomes of action plans which address the issues raised
- update the quality manual

Integrated quality and enhancement review

- conduct a mapping exercise to confirm that current College practices align with the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- continue to monitor staffing levels on construction courses
- review the Higher National programme handbooks to ensure that they match the completeness and accuracy of those for Building Services Engineering programmes.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at the College of North West London (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, the University of Reading, London South Bank University, Middlesex University and the University of Westminster. The review was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Professor John Holloway, Mr Russell Kinman (reviewers), and Mrs Christine Plumbridge (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*, published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students and partner institutions, and reports of reviews by QAA. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagements in assessment and work skills. A summary of findings from these Developmental engagements is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 The College is a large general further education college situated in the London Borough of Brent. In 2008, the population of Brent was estimated at 270,600, of which some 54.7 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. About 80 per cent of the economic activity is in the service sector; the remainder is in manufacturing and construction. The borough has one of the highest levels of deprivation in England, with 63.5 per cent of the working population in employment (compared to the UK average of 75 per cent). Approximately 26 per cent of the College's students are from areas of high deprivation. The College's mission is 'to lead in the provision of knowledge and skills for work, in support of London's economic success'. It is committed to the development and delivery of higher education programmes to ensure local progression routes, meet learners' needs and to address the higher skills gap in the area, particularly in construction, building services engineering and the creative media industry. It cooperates with different higher education institutions to guarantee progression for students to full honours degrees.

5 The College has three main centres at Kilburn, Willesden and Wembley. Willesden delivers programmes to 50 per cent of the College's students; Wembley is responsible for some 23 per cent of the provision, and Kilburn hosts 14 per cent of learners. The remainder of the students (11 per cent) are off-site across Brent. Programmes are provided in most of the subject sector areas identified by the Learning and Skills Council, Foundation studies, construction, engineering, and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) being the most popular. The College is organised into four academic faculties, Technology; Business and Computing; Arts, Community and Leisure Studies and Sports; and Skills for Life, with the higher education provision embedded in them. Most of the higher education portfolio

sits in the Faculty of Technology and is managed separately in the School of Higher Education Studies.

6 In 2009-10, there are 15,628 students studying at the College of which 75.8 per cent were aged 19 or over. The provision is split between full-time programmes (21 per cent of learners), part-time day programmes (57 per cent) and evening programmes (22 per cent). Some 41 per cent of learners are female and 57 per cent are of known minority ethnic backgrounds.

7 In 2009-10, 284 full-time equivalent students (FTE) were enrolled on the full and part-time higher education programmes cited below:

Edexcel

- Higher National Diploma (HND) Building Services Engineering (44 FTE)
- HND Computing (Software Engineering) (21 FTE)
- Higher National Certificate (HNC) Computer Studies (14.5 FTE)
- HND Construction (21 FTE)
- HNC Construction (21.5 FTE)
- HND Engineering (Electrical/Electronics) (13 FTE)
- HNC Engineering (Electrical/Electronics) (10 FTE)
- HND Vehicle Operations Management (19 FTE)
- HNC Vehicle Operations Management (11.5 FTE)

London South Bank University

- Foundation Degree (FdEng) Building Services Engineering (4.62 FTE)

Middlesex University

- Science Foundation Year 0 (19 FTE)
- FdA Early Childhood Studies (0 FTE)

University of Reading

- FdSc Computer Engineering (3.96 FTE)
- FdSc Information Computer Technology (20.46 FTE)

University of Westminster

- Certificate in Education (17 FTE)
- Certificate of Special Study Additional Diploma in Teaching English (ESOL) (8 FTE)
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (6 FTE)
- FdSc Construction (29.7 FTE).

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

8 The memoranda of understanding in place for the University of Westminster, London South Bank University, Middlesex University and the University of Reading all confirm that they take responsibility for the academic standards of its awards, including programme approval, validation and monitoring links. Guidance on all these arrangements is provided in each university's Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance Handbooks. The College has devolved responsibility for course delivery, student support and administration, student information and teaching staff appointments. It works closely with link tutors from all its awarding bodies in the operational management of the programmes. Appropriate articulation agreements are in place for the progression of Foundation Degree students to honours degrees at the university concerned.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

9 The College's academic management structure was changed in January 2009, between the first Developmental engagement in April 2008 and the second in April 2009. The programmes have been located in the appropriate schools in their curriculum. This supports the integration of the delivery of the higher education programmes into the curriculum areas to improve progression from level 3 programmes into higher education. Faculties are managed by dedicated heads of schools or curriculum managers. The management and quality assurance of these programmes have been transferred to the newly appointed Vice-Principal for 14-19 and Higher Education, and the Head of Higher Education Studies (cross-college).

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

10 Students on higher education programmes were invited to present a submission to the team. Over 150 students from 16 different study groups contributed to this submission. The views reflected include a compilation of the individual reports of the learner groups, written by the course representative as a record of the discussions of the students who attended. Additional information was gathered using a questionnaire specifically designed for the Summative review. The summary produced proved helpful to the team who found that the views expressed were consistent with those obtained in their meeting with current students.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

11 Overall, the new management structure is effective. The monitoring and review of higher education policies, procedures and action plans at faculty and cross-college levels is reported by the heads of school to the Vice-Principal, for 14-19 and Higher Education, (the Vice-Principal) and the Higher Education Board. The ultimate responsibility for College quality assurance lies with the Head of Professional Development and Standards who sits on the responsible committees.

12 The Higher Education Board is a strategic body chaired by the Vice-Principal. Its membership includes the Head of Professional Development and Standards, the Head of Higher Education Studies, heads of faculty, the Head of Learning Resources and other cross-college managers. It reports to the College Executive Management Team and ultimately to the College Corporation. Evidence indicates that while issues have been identified and addressed, minutes of the Board need to record and track the outcomes of its action plans more accurately.

13 The Higher Education Academic Standards Committee reports to the College Higher Education Board, and is responsible for curriculum development, academic standards and resources. Its membership includes heads of school, curriculum managers and programme leaders, and it receives input from the Head of Professional Development and Standards. The Committee reports on recruitment, retention and achievement, and it oversees annual programme monitoring and responses to external examiners' reports.

14 Effective day-to-day management of programmes is achieved by programme leaders. Programme teams meet at least once a term to ensure that learning outcomes are appropriately covered and that issues raised by external examiners and the Higher Education Academic Standards Committee are addressed.

15 The involvement of employers in curriculum design, course content and assessment is a significant strength that enables students to improve their skills in the workplace. Close links with employers enhance the College's strategic approach to work-based learning. The Employer Breakfast initiative provides a forum for the constructive discussion of curriculum content and progression opportunities. External examiners comment favourably on the considerable enhancements to the student experience derived from the active support and participation of employers.

16 Annual monitoring reports, based on module questionnaires, course statistics and external examiners' reports, confirm that quality procedures are fully embedded at programme level. Retention and progression rates are generally high and external examiners comment favourably on the academic standards achieved. The Science Foundation Year 0 has been notably successful with a 95 per cent progression rate to year one at Middlesex University. Achievement in the Foundation Degree in Construction is commendable; last year, of the nine students who had progressed to a degree programme in construction, three achieved First class and four Upper Second class honours degrees.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

17 All awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that their policies and procedures meet the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure. The validation documents and programme specifications align with its relevant elements. The College has increased staff awareness of the Academic Infrastructure in areas such as programme validation, student recruitment, programme review and annual monitoring and assessment. There is a higher education section in the College's quality manual, although this document is now out of date and is in need of revision.

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?

18 There is evidence of a close and effective relationship between the College and all its awarding bodies. The College complies with their requirements, as set out in the collaborative memoranda and agreements, to ensure the standards of their awards. All Higher National awards are approved by Edexcel and their external examiner monitors the quality of these programmes during annual verification visits. The team met the external examiner who confirmed that these programmes achieve appropriate academic standards. Link tutors ensure effective communication between the College and the awarding bodies.

19 External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies to whom they report, along with the College. Their reports indicate satisfaction with academic standards and the learning opportunities offered to students. Issues raised by external examiners are considered and appropriate action has been taken by the College and approved by the awarding body concerned.

20 Internal verification procedures for setting and moderating assessments work well; these include meetings between assessors and verifiers before the final agreed version of each assessment is approved. The College has now introduced appropriate checking procedures to prevent over-assessment while ensuring that all learning outcomes are met.

21 The process for the annual monitoring of programmes is robust. It incorporates a wide range of evidence available in the College. Detailed action plans are generated to ensure appropriate and timely responses to issues identified. The reports are considered and evaluated by the Higher Education Academic Standards Committee and the Higher Education Board.

22 An efficient management information system is readily accessible to staff and tracks individual student results and records student progress. Programme leaders and curriculum managers ensure the accuracy of data and are able to capture key performance indicators for learner groups. Statistics generated are included in annual programme monitoring reports, and are scrutinised by the Higher Education Academic Standards Committee and the Higher Education Board.

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

23 Since the Developmental engagements in assessment and work skills, the College has developed its programme of staff development to further embed its internal verification and assessment procedures, and general issues relating to academic standards within the Academic Infrastructure. The College intends to continue raising awareness of these issues.

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?

24 The general responsibilities and arrangements for managing and reporting on the quality of learning opportunities are those described for academic standards in paragraphs 10 to 15. At an operational level, curriculum managers or heads of school work in cognate faculties, enabling higher education to be embedded within discipline areas. The Head of Professional Development and Standards has overarching responsibility for quality assurance.

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

25 The procedures and arrangements through which the College ensures it is fulfilling its obligations to the awarding bodies are clear and generally effective, as set out in paragraphs 17, 18 and 20. Programmes leading to university awards are monitored and supported by link tutors who visit the College regularly, both informally and to attend programme committee meetings. A close working relationship exists as is exemplified by the minutes of the relevant meetings.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

26 The College's claim in its self-evaluation report, that the Academic Infrastructure is embedded at programme level, is confirmed by revalidation reports, external examiner reports, the outcomes of internal verification processes and annual monitoring. This view was affirmed during the College's first Developmental engagement, subject to certain recommendations, most of which have now been implemented. Student assessment and internal verification documentation has been redesigned to further reflect relevant elements of the Academic Infrastructure. The examples of student assignment work examined by the review team provided evidence of the efficacy and thoroughness of this process.

27 The Head of Higher Education Studies has worked with academic staff to raise awareness of elements of the *Code of practice* relevant to academic standards. However, the College acknowledges that there has been a limited focus in documentation on other sections of the *Code* that focus on student learning opportunities. A mapping exercise would confirm that current College practices align with the *Code* in areas such as students with disabilities and career education, information, advice and guidance. The higher education section within the College's quality manual should then be updated to reflect this.

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

28 The College has well-established reporting procedures for lesson observations, staff appraisal, the analysis of student survey data and the production of annual monitoring reports.

29 The flexible multi-mode delivery of programmes available to students supports the College's aim to widen participation. Students appreciate the choice of full or part-time attendance, either as day-release or as a two-evenings option. In addition, a Saturday delivery is coupled to one evening's attendance. Part-time students told the team that without this flexibility they could not have undertaken their programme.

30 Students who met the team were generally very positive about the quality of the teaching they received, describing most staff as friendly, supportive and expert in their subjects. The College regularly updates its detailed teaching and learning strategy. A new Head of Teaching and Learning has been appointed and will take a lead role in the strategic and operational development of practice across the College.

31 Extensive use is made of part-time staff, and about 45 per cent of staff delivering higher education programmes are industrial or professional practitioners. Students on construction programmes enjoy numerous presentations from external specialists from a wide range of backgrounds; these enhance currency in the curriculum and in assessment. Part-time staff are supported and monitored carefully. All new staff have a mentor and all staff engage in a structured peer coaching scheme. Recently, an 'advanced practitioner' has been appointed who will provide advice and guidance to new part-time staff.

32 The College's relationship with employers enhances the delivery of the programmes and encourages students to identify the links between theory and practice. Connections with local industrial, commercial and public sector organisations, and with the West London Lifelong Learning Network, are actively fostered. The College has been awarded certification by the Training Quality Standard organisation, which recognises quality in 'employer-led' training and development.

33 A variety of mechanisms is used to listen to student opinion and provide feedback about their programmes. Each cohort selects a representative to communicate with the programme tutor and attend programme team meetings and the College's parliament. Student-organised focus groups report to staff each semester. Biannual online questionnaires are administered; efforts are being made to improve on the 25 per cent response rate currently achieved for these. Changes made in response to student concerns, such as the timing of assessments and the provision of extra tutorial support, indicates that these systems are effective. The National Student Survey has also confirmed overall satisfaction with teaching and the programmes generally.

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

34 A wide range of academic and pastoral support is in place for students throughout their College experience. All students are interviewed and undergo testing for suitability. An appropriate process for admission on the basis of advanced standing is now in place. The joint arrangements between the College and its University awarding bodies result in a wide-ranging and helpful induction for students at each stage of their programmes. Students receive a programme handbook outlining the content and structure of their studies. They also have access, either within the handbook or electronically, to relevant policies relating to assessment, academic misconduct, mitigating circumstances, appeals and other regulatory matters. The majority of students consider that the induction programmes are well organised, informative and provide a realistic picture of the student learning experience.

35 Generally, students are clear about progression arrangements to degree study. Teaching staff gradually move towards a teaching style which students will encounter at university. Students find tutors helpful and approachable, and easy to contact if they have any academic queries

36 The College has been awarded 'Beacon' status for its work with, and support for, students with visual impairments. The University of Westminster recently commissioned a 15-credit, level 4 module, Teaching and Supporting learners with Visual Impairment, to be included within the programme and made available to all partners within the consortium.

Other examples of support emphasised by students during the review included help from the hardship fund, the efforts of the International Office on their behalf and, generally, the support available to students with disabilities. The College prospectus and other documents relating to funding and information for international students provide accurate and concise information for applicants.

37 An innovative approach to supporting students facing difficulties with numeracy has been provided by the offer of extra classes either at dawn or twilight. Improvements in performance have been particularly notable for those attending early in the morning. In spite of funding difficulties, extra help for students continues through the provision of additional classes. All students have access to the 'Maths Café' suite that is supported by the West London Lifelong Learning Network. Students praise the high quality of mathematics teaching and the level of support available.

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

38 The College has a focused approach to staff development that encourages staff to engage in continuing professional development addressing academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities as described in paragraph 22. The systems to monitor the quality of learning, such as lesson observations and appraisal, are used effectively to drive the design of the staff development programme. A wide range of development opportunities is provided to staff, and participation rates are high. Funding is also made available for postgraduate study. Participation in development activity is monitored to ensure that staff engagement is appropriate and sufficient.

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?

39 The sufficiency and suitability of both human and physical resources is confirmed at validation. Subsequently, a college-wide strategy monitors the adequacy of resources across all programmes. Recently, monitoring reports have identified some problems arising from the retirement of experienced staff delivering the construction programmes, and there is a need to continue to monitor staffing levels.

40 Students spoke very positively about the welcoming and secure environment within the College which starts at reception, where entry is regulated by friendly staff. Extensive investment has recently been made in the Telford Building to provide an impressive range of industry-standard equipment for engineering and construction students. These are invaluable for practical classes in technology programmes and the quality of these resources attracts both students and employers to the College.

41 Overall, the learning resource centre on the Willesden Campus is regarded as satisfactory by students and the awarding bodies. Higher education students enjoy a quiet area equipped with computers where they can work. Students have access to a limited range of journals at the College, but they also have access to online and library resources at the relevant universities, except for the University of Reading.

42 The College has invested heavily in hardware and software to support the learning experience of its higher education students, and network and computing equipment have recently been upgraded. Widespread use is made of the College's virtual learning environment to provide materials, support and guidance to students. Some of this material is more extensive than others. For example, the Building Services Engineering programme

includes information about registration with a professional body, lifelong learning materials, previous examination papers for revision and online tests. A member of staff has been nominated as a 'champion' to support tutors in their use of the virtual learning environment, and to encourage greater consistency of content and navigation routes.

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

43 General public information documents includes the prospectus, advice on applications and pre-entry guidance, application forms, learner support and guidance documents, and more specialist information covering areas such as international applications and study for visually impaired students. Commendably, all key documents are available in published document form (PDF), large-format, enhanced CD-audio and Braille versions. The College has developed a substantial online resource to support applicants and students. Students stated that the College's website was helpful in enabling them to choose their programmes.

44 The various partnership agreements outline the College's responsibilities for the provision of information on the university-validated programmes. Programme specifications, handbooks and assignments are published on the College intranet and in print form. Programme factsheets now incorporate information on funding, accreditation of prior experiential learning arrangements, assessment methods and the quality assurance system.

45 Programme handbooks are produced by programme teams to meet the requirements of their awarding bodies. Overall, the information contained in handbooks is clear, accurate and helpful to students. However, the handbooks for Higher National programmes should be reviewed to ensure that they match the completeness and accuracy of those provided for the Building Services Engineering programmes.

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?

46 The systems in place to secure the accuracy and completeness of information that the College has responsibility for publishing operate effectively. A Higher Education Materials Group comprises the Vice Principal, the Head of School for Higher Education, the Head of Marketing, the web developer and representatives of marketing and management information system units. The group reviews the content of marketing materials, standardises formatting and ensures that published documents are fit for purpose. It recently carried out a review and rewrite of a number of documents, including Higher Education Frequently Asked Questions, Higher Education Funding and How to Apply; these documents provide accurate and helpful information for prospective students. The Head of Marketing is responsible for approving any marketing material presented on the website; the relevant head of school is responsible for approving academic material for publication.

47 In order to ensure that online information remains current and accurate, programme listings are synchronised so that should a programme be withdrawn, this is automatically reflected on the College website and on that of the awarding body.

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

C1 Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

48 The Developmental engagement visit was conducted in June 2008 and focused on the assessment of students. The three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College in advance and reflect a broad range of assessment issues. These took the form of the following questions:

- How well are assessment processes being embedded into the College processes and procedures in order to assure and maintain academic standards?
- How effective are staff development activities in securing the application of quality assurance processes and continuing to develop the quality of the delivery of learning opportunities?
- How effectively does the College communicate accurate information on student assessment and achievement to its students?

49 The team identified a number of areas of good practice. These included the strategic approach to work-based learning, which recognises the varying backgrounds and work roles of a wide range of students; the effective staff development programme, that has enabled staff to participate in relevant activities which underpin their assessment practice; the University of Westminster course handbook for the Certificate in Education, which is an example of good practice in providing clear information to students, its format and content could usefully inform the format for all courses, and the standardised assessment feedback sheet, assessment and internal verification procedures introduced for the Edexcel technology courses which are beneficial in tracking student progression.

50 The team also made a number of recommendations. It suggested that it would be desirable to provide staff development on aspects of the Academic Infrastructure most relevant to them; ensure that timely feedback is given to all students in order to improve its value; to consider whether the documentation on assessment would be clearer to staff if differences in policy between higher and non-higher education courses were presented in a clearer format.

C2 Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in work skills

51 The Developmental engagement visit was conducted in April 2009 and focused on work skills. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College in advance and reflect a broad range of work skills issues. These took the form of the following questions:

- How well do work skills modules enhance the achievement of the academic standards of the students?
- To what extent does teaching and learning promote the enhancement of work skills?
- How effectively does the College communicate accurate information on entry criteria with regard to work skills?

52 The team identified a number of areas of good practice. This included the strategic approach to work-based learning which benefits student learning and progression; the initiative by the College for employer involvement, as evidenced by the recent Employers' Breakfast meeting; the support for part-time students through a flexible mode and time of delivery that meets students' needs; good academic support summarised through the tracking and report on students' progress; the promotion of, and reference to, work skills within teaching and written documentation provided to students; the effective partnerships with employers, professional institutions and awarding bodies to ensure links between theory and current practice; excellent learning resources which are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet industrial standards.

53 The team also made a number of recommendations. It suggested that it would be desirable to use the findings of this Developmental engagement to inform the planned review of College policies and procedures; use progression and destination data to monitor the impact of work skills development on students; acquire and use employer and student feedback more systematically; improve the course organisation and scheduling of assignments; ensure that students are enabled to make more effective use of the virtual learning environment through a clearer and more consistent structure for accessing documents and information; ensure that information on requirements relating to entry criteria and the accreditation of prior learning is included on the website, and to use the redesign of the website to ensure all higher education information is accessible through links on the homepage.

D Foundation Degrees

54 The College began offering Foundation Degrees in 2002 with a degree in construction validated by the University of Westminster. Although validated for delivery in either full or part-time mode, all current students attend part-time. Students are funded through the University of Westminster. The degree has pathways in Construction Management, Construction and Surveying, and Architectural Technology. The degree was revalidated in 2008. Students on the two Foundation Degrees in Computer Engineering and in Information Communication Technology are directly funded and study part-time. A programme for Early Childhood Studies was validated by Middlesex University in 2009, but failed to recruit sufficient numbers. Further efforts are in place to recruit for the next academic year. London South Bank University validated a degree in building services engineering in 2007, with a first intake at the College in 2008. The programme is delivered on a part-time basis.

55 The College's strategic plan commits it to expanding its higher education provision both in the number of programmes and the volume of students. This expansion includes growth through internal progression, requiring greater collaboration between those delivering further and higher education. This approach is supported by the new faculty structure and a strategic overhaul of College management boards and committees. The Vice-Principal, 14 -19 and Higher Education, is responsible for driving and coordinating the policy of expansion within a context of maintaining quality assurance.

56 The College works effectively with its partner universities to deliver, monitor and evaluate the Foundation Degrees. The areas of good practice and recommendations identified during the Summative review are common to the whole provision, except for the desirable recommendation in paragraph 45. The areas of good practice and recommendations relevant to Foundation Degrees are outlined below.

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

- the involvement of employers in the curriculum design of programmes which ensures the development of relevant work skills (paragraph 15)
- the commendable achievement of students who progress to honours level from the Foundation Degree in Construction (paragraph 16)
- the close and effective relationship between the College and all its awarding bodies (paragraph 18)
- the flexible multi-mode delivery available to students supports the College's aim to widen participation (paragraph 29)
- the relationship with employers that enhances delivery of the programmes and encourages students to identify the links between theory and practice (paragraph 32)
- the range and quality of academic and pastoral support available to students (paragraphs 34-37)
- the high quality of the mathematics support provided for students (paragraph 37)
- the systems in place to monitor the quality of learning that is used developmentally to support teaching staff (paragraph 38)
- the provision of industry standard equipment available to engineering and construction students (paragraph 40)
- the helpful documentation published by the College that is wide ranging, accessible and inclusive (paragraphs 43, 46).

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

- ensure that the minutes of the Higher Education Board accurately report and track the outcomes of action plans which address the issues raised (paragraph 12)
- update the quality manual (paragraphs 17, 27)
- conduct a mapping exercise to confirm that current College practices align with the Code of practice (paragraph 27)
- continue to monitor staffing levels on construction courses (paragraph 39).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

59 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in the College of North West London'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. These were based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies, Edexcel, the University of Reading, London South Bank University, Middlesex University and the University of Westminster.

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

- the involvement of employers in the curriculum design of programmes which ensures the development of relevant work skills (paragraph 15)
- the commendable achievement of students who progress to honours level from the Foundation Degree in Construction (paragraph 16)
- the close and effective relationship between the College and all its awarding bodies (paragraph 18)
- the flexible multi-mode delivery available to students supports the College's aim to widen participation (paragraph 29)
- the relationship with employers that enhances delivery of the programmes and encourages students to identify the links between theory and practice (paragraph 32)
- the range and quality of academic and pastoral support available to students (paragraphs 34-37)
- the high quality of the mathematics support provided for students (paragraph 37)
- the systems in place to monitor the quality of learning that is used developmentally to support teaching staff (paragraph 38)
- the provision of industry standard equipment available to engineering and construction students (paragraph 40)
- the helpful documentation published by the College that is wide ranging, accessible and inclusive (paragraphs 43, 46).

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

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

- ensure that the minutes of the Higher Education Board accurately report and track the outcomes of action plans which address the issues raised (paragraph 12)
- update the quality manual (paragraph 17,27)
- conduct a mapping exercise to confirm that current College practices align with the *Code of practice* (paragraph 27)
- continue to monitor staffing levels on construction courses (paragraph 39)

Integrated quality and enhancement review

- review the Higher National programme handbooks to ensure that they match the completeness and accuracy of those for Building Services Engineering programmes (paragraph 45).

62 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 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.

63 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 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.

64 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation and other documentary evidence, and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the involvement of employers in the curriculum design of programmes which ensures the development of relevant work skills (paragraph 15) 	<p>Provide opportunities at employer events such as Employer breakfast and Skills days for comments on industry skills' needs.</p> <p>Consult employers in relevant sectors during programme validation.</p>	<p>April 11</p> <p>June 11</p>	<p>Head of Schools and Programme leaders</p> <p>Programme Leaders and University links</p>	<p>Curriculum that provides skills that employers need.</p> <p>Positive student feedback on suitability of programme</p>	<p>HE Academic Standards Committee (HEASC)</p> <p>HEASC</p>	<p>Employer feedback</p> <p>HE Self Assessment Report (SAR)</p>

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the commendable achievement of students who progress to honours level from the Foundation Degree in Construction (paragraph 16) 	Explore opportunities with HEIs to formalise progression of CNWL students to complete honours degree for all provision.	June 12	Head of HE	Progression agreements in place. Increased progression of learners to honours degree.	HE Board	Number of students who achieve honours degree.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the close and effective relationship between the College and all its awarding bodies (paragraph 18) 	Continue to ensure that College Link tutors maintain close links with their university counterparts Ensure college active representation at network meetings and events	July 11 July 11	Programme Link Tutors Head of HE and VP	Identify as strength in AMR. IQER Reports and University Assessment Board Reports and continued validation of programmes	HE Board	Annual review of AMR

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the flexible multi-mode delivery available to students supports the College's aim to widen participation (paragraph 29) 	Continue to review delivery options to meet students' needs in the light of HEFCE funding.	Annually	Curriculum Managers and Heads of Schools	Satisfactory enrolment to available modes of delivery, monitoring retention and achievement on these programmes	HEASC	Positive learner feedback and enrolment numbers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the relationship with employers that enhances delivery of the programmes and encourages students to identify the links between theory and practice (paragraph 32) 	Deliver at least one employer lecture on each HE programme.	July 11	Course Team Leaders Heads of Faculty	Positive learner feedback on learning and quality of resources and delivery. Positive employer feedback.	HE Board	AMR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the range and quality of academic and pastoral support available to students (paragraphs 34-37) 	Provide 2 hours/week on timetable for students' tutorial for full time students. Ensure part-time students	Oct 10	Heads of School	Improved success rate	HEASC	AMR

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	have individual tutorial slots at least twice a term.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the high quality of the mathematics support provided for students (paragraph 37) 	<p>Timing of maths classes in the timetable to promote effective learning.</p> <p>Continue to promote additional Maths workshop to meet individual learner needs.</p>	July 11	Heads of School (HoS)	Improved success rate.	HEASC	AMR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the systems in place to monitor the quality of learning that is used developmentally to support teaching staff (paragraph 38) 	Continue to promote the College process for monitoring the quality of learning in line with the teaching and learning strategy.	July 11	Head of Teaching and Learning	Improved percentage of lessons graded good or better	HE Board	HE Self Assessment Report (SAR)

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the provision of industry standard equipment available to engineering and construction students (paragraph 40) 	<p>Take advantage of existing resources to design practical and project tasks for Building Services Engineering units</p> <p>Through curriculum planning identify capital investment within funding restraints.</p>	March 11	Heads of Faculty	Identified as strength in External Examiner report.	HE Board	AMR review

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the helpful documentation published by the College that is wide ranging, accessible and inclusive (paragraphs 43, 46). 	<p>Continue to extend good practice of accurate documentation through the setting up in each of curriculum area a small vetting team to proof read and correct all published documents.</p>	June 11	Curriculum Manager	<p>Standardised published materials</p> <p>Up to date information on documents</p>	HE Board	Learner feedback.

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the minutes of the Higher Education Board accurately report and track the outcomes of action plans which address the issues raised (paragraph 12) 	Agree administration support availability to take minutes of each meeting.	Sept 2010	Head of HE	Accurate and timely minutes available	Vice Principal (VP)	HE Board Reviewed annually
	Ensure all Board members have access to HE Board shared folder	August 2010	HE Administrator	All Board members are able to report back on minutes at following meetings	VP	Minutes of HE Board
	Ensure that HE Board minutes are sent out to all Board members and copied to Heads of Faculty in addition to	Oct 2010	HE Administrator	HE Administrator	Minutes available.	Head of HE

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	being shared on the T drive Ensure that at each HE Board meeting actions arising are always covering in detail and noted.	June 2010	VP	Minutes of HE Board effectively track actions	Executive Management Team (EMT)	Annual HE Board review
● update the quality manual (paragraph 17, 27)	Update the Quality manual for HE to incorporate recent HE policies and the new Edexcel quality process.	Oct 10	Head of HE and Head of Professional Development and Standards	Revised Quality Manual that better reflect current practices	VP	Review effectiveness at HEASC
● conduct a mapping exercise to confirm that current College practices align with the <i>Code of practice</i> (paragraph 27)	Circulate to relevant college teams the summary of contents of the <i>QAA Code of practice</i> .	Dec 10	Head of HE	All course team members familiar with the Academic Infrastructure	HEASC	AMR

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Map college activities from recruitment to assessment and align with provisions of AI.	June 11	Head of HE	Processes and policies mapped to aspects of AI	HE Board	HE SAR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to monitor staffing levels on construction courses (paragraph 39) 	Confirm progression and new start numbers for 10/11	June 10	HE Board	Learner number confirmed	VP	EMT
	Produce provisional timetables for all HE Construction groups / BSE	July 10	Head of HE	Timetables in place	Faculty Management Team	EMT
	Determine appropriate level of HP support for these programmes	June 10	Hof/HoS	Positive learner feedback	HEASC	HE Board

College of North West London action plan relating to the Summative review: April 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	Complete a staffing panel request for FT appointment (includes all Technology based HE).	Aug 10	HoS	Staffing Panel Approval	HoF	Review of learner feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the Higher National programme handbooks to ensure that they match the completeness and accuracy of those for Building Services Engineering programmes (paragraph 45). 	<p>Produce template and headings and circulate to all Course Team Leaders.</p> <p>Course Team Leader to produce handbook.</p>	<p>July 10</p> <p>Sept 10</p>	<p>Head of HE</p> <p>Course Team Leaders/CMs</p>	<p>All Higher National programme handbooks produced to same standard.</p> <p>Students have access to all the information needed from Handbook.</p> <p>Handbook available to students and on the VLE.</p>	<p>HE Board</p> <p>HEASC</p>	<p>Learners through feedback.</p>

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk