



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Greenwich Community College**

**October 2010**

**SR005**

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## **Preface**

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

## **Purpose of IQER**

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

## **The IQER process**

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

## **Developmental engagement**

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

## Summative review

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

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

## Evidence

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

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

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* 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 Greenwich Community College carried out in October 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 agreement, for the standards of the awards 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 introduction of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management, developed in full consultation with a major local employer at a time of significant restraint and retrenchment, which provides good work placement opportunities for students and excellent associated documentation
- the College's learning resource facilities, with helpful staff, availability of counselling, financial and career advice and an online service, allowing access to virtual learning and support, which is particularly beneficial to part-time students.

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision:

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

- consider ways of resourcing higher education management to ensure that the momentum of positive change can continue
- seek to establish, in conjunction with the University, an arrangement whereby improvement points and good practice identified by external examiners are specifically attributed to the College
- review the management of the moderation process to include reference to learning outcomes and the quality of tutor feedback, in order to disseminate good practice and to ensure that new tutors are supported in the development of good feedback techniques
- evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of support and staff development in relation to procedures and protocols for all tutors, particularly relating to those new to teaching
- develop a higher education teaching observation arrangement
- ensure that placement handbooks are developed and in place for all programmes and that placement visit and employer meetings form part of the placement learning and assessment process, so as to ensure that all work placement information clearly articulates the responsibilities of the employer, the students and the College, as set out in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*

- check the accuracy of descriptions of higher education award levels on the website and correct errors
- ensure that public information relating to Foundation Degrees always explicitly states that these are qualifications in their own right.

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

- develop a common layout and content for all course handbooks to identify generic information such as assessment practice, policies, tutorials and learning resources, and a course specific information section, together with the inclusion of learning outcomes on all assessments.

## 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 Greenwich Community 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 the University of Greenwich. The review was carried out by Mr Jonathan Baker and Ms Rowena Beighton-Dykes (Reviewers) and Mr Ian Fleming (Coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for integrated quality and enhancement review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and its awarding body, meetings with staff, students, employers and the partner institution and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice 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 the largest provider of further education in the London Borough of Greenwich, serving a multicultural community and enrolling about 10,000 students annually. It operates one of the two 'Life in the UK' citizenship centres in London. The average age of students is 34 and most pursue part time study. During 2008-09 there were 59 full-time equivalent (FTE) students funded by HEFCE on higher education programmes in the College, and this rose to nearly 100 in 2010-11. The College employs 600 staff, of whom 20 work in higher education. It is located on two main sites and over 50 outreach centres across the Borough.

5 The College's mission statement is 'to meet the educational and training needs of our communities by being an excellent provider where all learners are empowered to realise their aspirations and achieve their goals'.

6 The College's higher education strategy sets out its aims and objectives for higher education over the period 2008 to 2012. Explicitly stated aims include the engagement of local employers to develop higher education skills in the workplace, the provision of learning opportunities at higher education level for those not in employment, education or training, and the enhancement of staff development for higher education staff, together with the development of additional Foundation Degrees.



## **Higher education provision at the College**

7 The HEFCE-funded higher education provision currently delivered by the College comprises the following programmes, all validated by the University of Greenwich:

- FdA in Learning Support (26 FTEs)
- FdSc in Integrative Counselling (16.375 FTEs)
- FdA in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management (18 FTEs)
- FdSc in Computer Systems and Networking (8 FTEs)
- Foundation Year for Degrees in Science (20 FTEs)

## **Partnership agreements with the awarding body**

8 The College works with one awarding body, the University of Greenwich, with which there is a strong sense of partnership. A memorandum of understanding defines the University's relationship with all its partner colleges and sets out a number of objectives, including widening participation, staff development involvement and promoting employer engagement. The University strongly supports the College in the effective management of its programmes, having ultimate responsibility for quality and academic standards. Liaison with the University is facilitated by the appointment of designated link tutors.

## **Recent developments in higher education at the College**

9 Higher education provision in the College has changed since the Developmental engagement in 2009. The College as a whole has sustained funding cuts of seven per cent and a restructuring process has resulted in fewer departments. There are now six departments, each with a clearly defined management structure. Higher education is not differentiated within the structure. The FD in Sports Studies (Sports Therapy) has now been withdrawn but there are two new FD programmes, in Computer Systems Networking and in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management. The latter programme has been developed in conjunction with AEG (Europe), the owners of the O2 Arena in London.

## **Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission**

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team, but the scale and pace of change taking place during the summer and early autumn of 2010 meant that the College was not able to facilitate, coordinate and submit a document. Nevertheless, the review team was able to meet three separate groups of students from three higher education programmes.

## **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 Since the Developmental engagement the College has experienced a range of influencing factors which have impacted strongly upon the management and delivery of academic standards. These factors include a new streamlined staffing structure and changes to higher education responsibilities. The College has created a cross-College HE Coordinator (on a 0.8 basis), College-level quality manager posts, a Work Placement Coordinator and a College Quality Administrator. Each head of department is responsible for the delivery of curriculum and meeting quality targets, supported by a curriculum manager with the HE Coordinator reporting to the Vice Principal and Principal. Staffing changes have impacted upon the speed of the response to the Developmental engagement action plan. The HE Coordinator role has been put in place, but, until a further appointment is made, the role is being managed alongside existing responsibilities. The team considers it advisable that the College considers ways of resourcing higher education management so as to ensure that the momentum of positive change can continue.

12 The College has a structured system for reporting and quality assurance as set out in the partnership agreement with the University of Greenwich, with involvement in quality assurance at all levels of the College management and programme delivery teams. The University is responsible for the validation, accreditation and periodic review of all programmes leading to its awards under the partnership agreement. Quality assurance procedures are approved by the University's Academic Council and responsibility for day-to-day delivery of programmes is delegated to the College, with annual monitoring reports prepared according to University requirements. At a strategic level the Principal attends planning meetings at the University twice a year and at an operational level the HE Coordinator attends partnership development group meetings four times a year, while programme and teaching teams meet to discuss delivery of specific programmes. The team found that relationships with the University are good, that procedures are effective and that the College tutors demonstrate confidence as they take more responsibility for their programmes.

#### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

13 The importance of the Academic Infrastructure in the delivery of higher education was highlighted in the Developmental engagement, and the College has recognised the need to raise awareness among teaching staff and to appoint to areas associated with the implementation of the Academic Infrastructure at high levels in the new management structure.

14 Staff development activities relating to the Academic Infrastructure since the Developmental engagement have included a development day, attended by key members of programme teams, specifically addressing this topic. The value and relevance of the Academic Infrastructure have now become embedded in the work of delivery teams, and tutors are fully conversant with its components. The College also supports new tutors through informal mentoring, which assists in the dissemination of Academic Infrastructure expectations.

15 The College has published a quality strategy which includes delivery at all levels. Within this broad strategy, stated success criteria cover aspects of the Academic Infrastructure in a generic way. The College has a diverse intake of students studying a wide range of awards, but levels of quality management are not currently differentiated in the quality strategy.

16 The University appoints link tutors to College programmes and these disseminate information and advice relating to the Academic Infrastructure. Some occasional difficulties with the link tutor role had previously been reported but these have now been resolved. Members of College programme staff describe communications with the University as friendly and helpful.

17 The College has worked with AEG (Europe), the owners of the O2 Arena, a very significant local employer, to develop the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management. This innovative award has involved full consultation with the employer, and students undertake valuable and relevant work placements as part of their programme of study, in line with *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* expectations. The team considered this development, together with its excellent documentation on work placements, to represent good practice at a time of significant restraint and retrenchment.

**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 The College has a close relationship with the University, and College senior staff attend University strategic planning meetings. Tutors are also encouraged to engage in partnership meetings that support the delivery of higher education, although the College acknowledges that attendance for tutors and College staff can be difficult due to time constraints.

19 The College operates a range of quality assurance procedures, including a cyclical monitoring process, internal moderation and arrangements for external examiners. External examiner reports confirm that academic standards of programmes are appropriate, and that good quality procedures are in place. These reports cover awards that run in several University partner institutions. The College has identified a difficulty concerning such generic reports, since they do not identify specific colleges, and has put in place reporting templates to address this. The most recent reports all contain generic information and some good practice is identified, with particular institutions identified, indicating that external examiners prefer only to specify where good practice is evident. The University continues to address this matter and is considering further strategies to ensure comments are college-specific; however, tutors agree they can identify problems highlighted in the reports, and clearly recognise when they relate to their area. The team considers that the College, in conjunction with the University, should establish a system by which improvement points and good practice are specifically linked to the individual institutions.

20 External examiner and programme monitoring reports refer to the ongoing challenges faced by non-traditional students in achieving expected academic standards. Tutors on the Foundation Degree in Integrative Counselling programme are commended for their responsiveness and willingness to reflect on their delivery to address this area. Student work indicates that tutors consistently feed back to students on the expected levels and approaches to formal assignments from the earliest stage of the awards. Employers expressed concern that informal communications with students sometimes

highlighted poor writing skills. This is an area for ongoing monitoring and sharing of good practice, as typical students on these awards may not be from a traditional academic background.

21 Moderation of assessment is managed at programme level, and feedback on assignments is moderated to ensure levels of achievement are assessed appropriately. University host schools make arrangements to support tutors on individual awards. The process is not shared across the programme areas at College level, and moderation documents indicate that only the level of grading is moderated, not the quality or appropriateness of tutor feedback to students. Moderation procedures do not refer to the evaluation of tutor feedback to students. There is no reference to learning outcomes on feedback documents, or cross-referencing of learning outcomes to assignment tasks in the briefs, although the submitted work fulfils the requirements. Some students confuse assessment criteria with learning outcomes, although those in the later stages of their awards clearly understand what a learning outcome is. The team considers it advisable that the College reviews the management of the moderation process, to include reference to learning outcomes. It should also review the quality of tutor feedback, in order to disseminate good practice and to ensure that new tutors are supported in the development of good feedback techniques.

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

22 The College places a high priority on staff development for tutors teaching on higher education programmes, and participation in planned activities is good. The College staff development policy covers all areas and offers the same routes to participation across all academic areas and levels. Tutors are supported to undertake some time in industry, and are able to request up to six weeks industrial updating.

23 Staff teaching on higher education programmes are included in graded observations of teaching undertaken by the College. These observations cover all levels of teaching, and higher education results are not differentiated from further education, either in process or outcome. However, observations of tutors delivering higher education are also undertaken by the HE Coordinator. Tutors value the supportive nature of the observations and regard the observation process as enhancing. Peer review is also valued by tutors as a supportive aspect of their ongoing development. Both observations and reviews help in the identification of staff development requirements of tutors.

24 There is evidence that the detail of all the procedures for managing higher education programmes is not always understood clearly, particularly where staffing is new. Areas noted include a lack of understanding of procedures for supplying samples of material to external examiners, and no briefs being supplied to external examiners for some areas of provision. Support for new tutors is arranged on an ad hoc basis, and is tailored to requirements. The team considered that the College might evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of support and staff development in relation to procedures and protocols for all tutors, particularly relating to those new to teaching.

**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 arrangements outlined in paragraphs 11-12 are also relevant in supporting the College's management of the quality of learning opportunities.

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

26 The arrangements outlined in paragraphs 17-21 are also relevant in this context. Annual programme monitoring reports review each whole programme and cover external examiner reports, student recruitment, student feedback, staffing, student enhancement and employability.

27 The College quality strategy sets out clear points to achieve and to maintain and improve quality. It seeks actively to encourage student and employer feedback from all sources to inform self-assessment, as well as to involve all College staff in a process of self-assessment that identifies strengths and weaknesses and informs the setting of operational objectives.

### **What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?**

28 The arrangements noted in paragraphs 13-16 are also relevant to the management of the quality of learning opportunities. The informal mentoring system for new staff delivered by the HE Coordinator and the programme leaders covers elements of the Academic Infrastructure, including assessment requirements and design.

29 The College has taken account of the Academic Infrastructure in the design of its Foundation Degree programmes, and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and appropriate subject benchmark statements are referenced within programme documents. The *Code of practice* has been used by the University in the development and updating of its procedures for partner colleges. It is evident that there is a good level of knowledge of the Academic Infrastructure among staff.

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

30 Under the partnership agreement, the University approves the allocation of staff to teach on programmes of higher education. The College provides details of the teaching team for each programme in June for the next academic year. Proposed changes in staff need to be approved in advance and be advised to the appropriate University school at the earliest opportunity. The College undertakes to ensure that the qualifications and experience of any new staff teaching on the programme are adequate to maintain agreed quality standards.

31 As noted in paragraph 23, the College has a support and appraisal process which ensures that members of staff receive a graded observation of their teaching each year which is reviewed with the line manager. Teaching staff are given an allowance of three hours per year to undertake peer review to enable the dissemination of good practice and sharing of information. In addition, self-assessment days enable teaching and learning to be evaluated and the findings included in quality improvement plans. In order to enhance the critical analysis and independent learning required at this level, the team

considers it advisable that the College should develop a higher education teaching observation arrangement.

32 Programme monitoring reports provide student feedback on programmes and enable their comments to be included in areas for improvement, although the reports currently request no specific student comments relating to teaching.

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

33 Prospective students are invited to a College Day at which they are given specific information by programme leaders, other staff and current students. They are asked to undertake diagnostic testing online to assess literacy and numeracy skills and to undertake some free writing skills tasks related to the subject area. Students were very appreciative of the supportive staff involved in this and found the initial tests helpful. The College induction process for new students includes an introduction to learning resources and facilities at the University, together with College systems and processes and tours of the building.

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

34 The staff development policy and procedure sets out the responsibilities of staff development for staff and managers. The policy indicates there are facilities for financial support and time allowances for approved staff development activities and for gaining academic qualifications. Staff at further education level are expected to undertake a minimum of 30 hours continuing professional development per year, but the specific requirement for higher education staff is not defined. Emphasis has now been placed on enhanced staff development for higher education and the HE Coordinator holds annual 'away days' for development activities.

35 The mentoring system for new higher education staff is informal at present but is considered to be effective and may be formalised. Under the partnership agreement, College staff can claim reduced fees on University programmes and are also entitled to take part in University staff development activities.

36 The system of graded and peer teaching observations offers higher education staff a means of sharing good practice and raising standards.

### **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?**

37 The College's learning resources service supports students with independent learning and research. There is an excellently equipped learning resource centre, with further access to an extensive collection of e-books, electronic journals and databases available via the student portal, LEO (Learning online). Students spoke highly of the learning resource facilities, the helpful nature of the staff and the availability of counselling, financial and career advice and support. The online service allows access to learning resources, virtual learning and student support. It is based on a moodle-based virtual learning environment which allows students to study at their own pace. The team considered that the College's learning resource provision represented good practice.

38 Students have access to their programme areas through the student portal and have found the system to be very supportive. Both part-time and full-time students stated they benefited from this system. Students also commented on the 'study buddy' system.

This is an informal arrangement between students to arrange for help to take class notes and copy information if their 'buddy' is away ill.

39 The learning resource centre has a multimedia library with integrated computer and learning support provision. Students are also able to access the facilities at the University and, under the SCONUL arrangement, can access all higher education libraries in the London area. The learning resource centre achieved external accreditation last year by the Council for Learning Resources in Colleges for the quality of its service to students.

**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?**

40 The College is responsible for publishing information about higher education awards on its website, in the prospectus and in all higher education-related marketing material. Links are also made to outside websites, such as Hot Courses. The current prospectus for the College is being updated to include, for the first time, a section specifically for higher education courses. A specific higher education prospectus is in development but its completion has been delayed by the College restructuring process. An online version is now proposed, in place of a printed document. The College also provides students with handbooks for their awards.

41 Each programme has a student handbook which contains a variety of useful information for students, including programme specifications, aims and objectives of sessions, information on assessments, assessment timetables, grading criteria, example feedback sheets, and learning outcomes. Some handbooks are much more comprehensive and contain information on tutorials, individual learning plans, learning resources and support such as funding assistance. The team consider it desirable to develop a common layout and content for all course handbooks to identify generic information such as assessment practice, policies, tutorials and learning resources, and a course specific information section, together with the inclusion of learning outcomes on all assessments.

42 The College should provide clear information to employers and students about work placements, including any related health and safety requirements. This kind of information has already been provided in the case of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management. In the case of the Foundation Degree in Integrative Counselling, a number of employers stated that there was limited contact with, and information from, the College regarding work placement arrangements. The team considers it advisable that placement handbooks are developed for all programmes and that placement visit and employer meetings should form part of the placement learning and assessment process, so as to ensure that all work placement information clearly articulates the responsibilities of the employer, the students and the College as set out in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*.

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

43 Programme tutors compose the initial content for higher education published information, which is checked by heads of department, while the College marketing department manages the overall production of published material. There is an annual schedule for published material, and the website is updated as required, which means changes can be made easily.

44 The marketing team evaluates the success of the published material in a variety of ways, including evaluation of the use of the College website and information gathered through the management information system. Tutors had also discussed the dissemination of course information at the staff development 'away day'. This is an ongoing process and further evaluation of the conversion of enquiries into applications is planned, including the establishment of a new stakeholder action group, comprising members of academic and support teams, and student representatives.

45 Programme staff may produce additional material outside the marketing schedule, and although in the past this has been generated without oversight of the marketing department, templates have now been produced to enable staff to create documents for events and activities in the College house style, while tutors are now expected to adhere to College guidelines. A calendar has been made available on the shared drive to indicate events and activities planned throughout the year. Higher education staff feed information into the calendar, and this helps tutors to plan events appropriately.

46 The College website has clear and systematic information relating to higher education programmes at award level. Higher education is not identified specifically as an option in the search engine, but market research undertaken by the College indicates that prospective students generally search by subject areas, and that higher education awards are easy to find through a subject search.

47 Students' perceptions of Foundation Degrees as awards in their own right were considered in the Developmental engagement and clarification of this was a recommendation. The level of higher education awards is described in various ways across the College website and not always accurately or consistently. Under the search facility, lower level awards have supporting definitions, whereas higher education programmes have none. The levels of individual higher education awards are variously described on the website as 'general interest', 'level 3' and 'level 4' and no reference at all is made to level 5. Generic information on the website relating to Foundation Degrees implies that a student will not gain a full degree until a 'final honours year' is completed. The accuracy of descriptions of higher education awards, including the need to describe Foundation Degrees as degrees in their own right, needs to be checked and corrected across all published materials.

48 Prior to starting at the College all students receive information explaining the nature of their course. Information is from a variety of sources, including leaflets and website literature. Students considered the information to be appropriate, informing them accurately what to expect. This was supported by very good pre-entry information supplied by tutors, who clarified and further explained the nature of the courses. Information on the University website also provided invaluable confirmation of course details.

49 Students who had started Foundation Degrees this academic year showed an understanding of the value of the award as a degree in its own right, while some students who were closer to the end of their studies expected to have to complete a year at the



University before achieving a full degree. It is clear that some progress in this area has been made since the Developmental engagement, and that new students are provided with accurate information.

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

## **C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment**

50 The Developmental engagement in assessment at the College took place in November 2009. The review team included one institutional nominee. The lines of enquiry agreed with the College were as follows:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How does the College's assessment strategy maintain academic standards?

**Line of enquiry 2:** In what ways does feedback to students support their learning and their achievement of learning outcomes?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How does the College ensure that information on assessment issued to students is accurate, complete and fit for purpose?

51 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. Pre-entry diagnostic assessment and peer assessment are both applied successfully. Staff development is well supported and linked to a strong mentoring culture, while higher education staff are supported by regular focussed 'away days'. Students enjoy ease of access to tutors and receive formative feedback in a variety of ways. The College has also successfully developed academic skills in non-traditional groups of adult students.

52 The College was advised to clarify the status of Foundation Degrees to its students and to improve information for students on the Foundation Year for Degrees in Science programme. The Developmental engagement team also made a number of recommendations with a view to enhancing the provision. These included the need to raise awareness of the Academic Infrastructure and to review the application of procedures for accreditation of prior learning. The team also judged it desirable for the College to liaise more closely with its awarding body over access to University staff development opportunities, and to involve employers in assessment of student work on Foundation Degrees. In addition, it suggested that the College should moderate assessment across different programmes, consider ways to record informal feedback and develop a consistent style for assignment briefs. Finally, it was recommended that students and staff should receive information on all higher education events and activities in the College.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

53 Foundation Degrees at the College are validated by the University of Greenwich. The first Foundation Degree, in Education Administration, enrolled students in 2004 and was followed in 2005 by the Foundation Degree in Learning Support, in 2007 by the Foundation Degree in Integrative Counselling and in 2008 by the Foundation Degree in Sports Studies (Therapy). During 2010, two further programmes commenced, the Foundation Degree in Computer Systems and Networking and the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management. The latter programme was developed in close association with AEG (Europe), the owner of the O2 Arena and other venues worldwide, and in collaboration with Foundation Degree Forward and the lifelong learning network The Creative Way.

54 The Foundation Degree in Education Administration failed to recruit sufficient students for a viable cohort in 2006 and has since been under review. The Foundation Degree in Sports Studies (Therapy) has been temporarily suspended since it does not currently meet the requirements of the relevant professional body.

55 The Foundation Degrees in Learning Support and Integrative Counselling are run on a part-time evening basis, the Foundation Degree in Computer Systems and Networking is a full-time programme and the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management is run on a part-time day basis. All Foundation Degree programmes have been developed in accordance with the College higher education strategy and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Since Foundation Degrees represent the College's higher education provision (with the exception only of the Foundation Year for Degrees in Science programme) all conclusions of the report apply to them.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- the introduction of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management, developed in full consultation with a major local employer at a time of significant restraint and retrenchment, which provides good work placement opportunities for students and excellent associated documentation (paragraph 17)
- the College's learning resource facilities, with helpful staff, availability of counselling, financial and career advice and an online service, allowing access to virtual learning and support, which is particularly beneficial to part-time students (paragraph 37).

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

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

- consider ways of resourcing higher education management to ensure that the momentum of positive change can continue (paragraph 11)
- seek to establish, in conjunction with the University, an arrangement whereby improvement points and good practice identified by external examiners are specifically attributed to the College (paragraph 19)
- review the management of the moderation process to include reference to learning outcomes and the quality of tutor feedback, in order to disseminate good practice and to ensure that new tutors are supported in the development of good feedback techniques (paragraph 21)
- evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of support and staff development in relation to procedures and protocols for all tutors, particularly relating to those new to teaching (paragraph 24)
- develop a higher education teaching observation arrangement (paragraph 31)
- ensure that placement handbooks are developed and in place for all programmes and that placement visits and employer meetings form part of the placement learning and assessment process, so as to ensure that all work placement

information clearly articulates the responsibilities of the employer, the students and the College, as set out in the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* (paragraph 42)

- check the accuracy of descriptions of higher education award levels on the website and correct errors (paragraph 47)
- ensure that public information relating to Foundation Degrees always explicitly states that these are qualifications in their own right (paragraph 47).

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

- develop a common layout and content for all course handbooks to identify generic information such as assessment practice, policies, tutorials and learning resources, and a course specific information section, together with the inclusion of learning outcomes on all assessments (paragraph 41).

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

61 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.

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 that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

<b>Greenwich Community College action plan relating to the Summative review: October 2010</b>						
<b>Good practice</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the college:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the introduction of the Foundation Degree in Venues, Events and Hospitality Management, developed in full consultation with a major local employer at a time of significant restraint and retrenchment, which provides good work placement opportunities for students and excellent associated documentation (paragraph 17)</li> </ul>	Review ways of implementing good practice with employers in relation to future Foundation Degree development	HE away day	HE Coordinator	Student/employer satisfaction surveys	HE Forum	HE fora; subject assessment panels; Programme Monitoring Report; Annual Institution Report; CQMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's learning resource facilities, with helpful staff, availability of counselling, financial and career advice and an online service, allowing access to virtual learning and support, which is particularly beneficial to part-time students (paragraph 37)</li> </ul>	Annually review and monitor efficacy of, and investment in, Learning Resource Centre (LRC) to ensure it continues to meet the needs of HE students	Annually	Head of LRC; HE Coordinator; College Executive	Student satisfaction surveys	HE Forum	HE fora; subject assessment panels; Programme Monitoring Report; Annual Institution Report; CQMS

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 <b>advised</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider ways of resourcing higher education management to ensure that the momentum of positive change can continue (paragraph 11)</li> </ul>	Review HE management structure and resourcing to ensure efficient, cost effective practice	July 2011	College Executive; HE Coordinator	All management posts filled, scheduled operational tasks implemented effectively	Corporation; CEG; HE Forum	HE fora; Programme Monitoring Report; Annual Institution Report; CQMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seek to establish, in conjunction with the University, an arrangement whereby improvement points and good practice identified by external examiners are specifically attributed to the College (paragraph 19)</li> </ul>	Host schools at University to be advised of this recommendation in order that they can implement change when appointing external examiners	January 2011	HE Coordinator; host schools (link tutors)	External examiner reports refer to specific partner colleges and specifically Greenwich Community College	HE Forum	Annual Institution Report; subject assessment panels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the management of the moderation process to include reference to learning outcomes and the quality of tutor feedback, in order to disseminate good practice and to ensure that new tutors are supported in the development of good feedback techniques (paragraph 21)</li> </ul>	Review of process to take place at regular delivery team meetings and programme leader meetings	January 2011	HE Coordinator; programme leaders; subject lecturers	Assessment and feedback protocol established	Programme Leaders' Panel	Programme monitoring reports; Annual Institution Report; subject assessment panels

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate the consistency and effectiveness of support and staff development in relation to procedures and protocols for all tutors, particularly relating to those new to teaching (paragraph 24)</li> </ul>	Annually review effectiveness of staff development	HE away day	HE Coordinator; programme leaders	Staff satisfaction surveys; student satisfaction surveys; success data	HE Forum; Vice Principal Curriculum	Programme monitoring reports; Annual Institution Report; Principal's Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a higher education teaching observation arrangement (paragraph 31)</li> </ul>	Review observation procedure	July 2011	Director of Quality; curriculum managers; quality managers; HE Coordinator	HE specific elements added to observation protocol (if deemed necessary)	Curriculum Management Team	Annual Institution Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that placement handbooks are developed and in place for all programmes and that placement visit and employer meetings form part of the placement learning and assessment process, so as to ensure that all work placement information clearly articulates the responsibilities of the employer, the students and the College, as set out in the <i>Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning</i> (paragraph 42)</li> </ul>	Develop and implement placement handbooks	HE away day	Programme leaders; HE Coordinator	Effective, informative handbooks in place	Programme leader meetings	Programme monitoring reports; Annual Institution Report

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>check the accuracy of descriptions of higher education award levels on the website and correct errors (paragraph 47)</li> </ul>	Review award descriptors	January 2011	Programme leaders; HE Coordinator; Marketing Team	Errors removed	HE Forum	Annual Institution Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that public information relating to Foundation Degrees always explicitly states that these are qualifications in their own right (paragraph 47)</li> </ul>	Review award descriptors	July 2011	Programme leaders; HE Coordinator; Marketing Team	Clear information on Foundation Degree status	HE Forum	Annual Institution Report
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team agreed the following area where it would be <b>desirable</b> to take action						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a common layout and content for all course handbooks to identify generic information such as assessment practice, policies, tutorials and learning resources, and a course specific information section, together with the inclusion of learning outcomes on all assessments (paragraph 41)</li> </ul>	Negotiate viability of this aim with host schools (re layout) and implement all remaining recommendations	HE away day	Programme leaders; HE Coordinator	Generic template for handbooks	HE Forum	Programme monitoring reports; Annual Institution Report





**RG 680 10/10**

**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](mailto:comms@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)