# Integrated quality and enhancement review

## Summative review

### New College Telford

SEPTEMBER 2010

SR003

# 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 body. 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 body, 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 New College Telford carried out in September 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 body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreements, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

## Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the high quality of feedback to students which provides clearly for remedial action and progression, together with the comprehensive tracking system of assessments that includes completion dates, grades and details of verification
- the progression agreements that the College has initiated, offering opportunities to progress to top-up degrees at the two named universities
- the well designed assessment briefs which give information about their position in the assessment schedule, clear intended learning outcomes and the requirements for merit and distinction grades
- the recruitment process for applicants without level three qualifications, with online assessment and in-depth interviews that encourages widening participation
- the use of the electronic system of providing documents as a means of communication with individuals and the group of students
- the clear and detailed higher education student handbook which contains links to the electronic system of providing documents and is used to update students during the course of the year.

## 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:

- thoroughly review resource allocation procedures for the higher education programmes to ensure that studio equipment is up to date, in working order and available to support learning.

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

- make explicit at all levels of management, the use of the Academic Infrastructure in managing academic standards and learning opportunities
- ensure that the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision including aspects such as the Academic Infrastructure and assessment
- continue to develop industry links to enrich the learning experience, the assessment opportunities and the progression routes for students.

# 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 New College Telford. 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 review was carried out by Dr Heather Barrett-Mold and Dr Colin Fryer (reviewers), and Mr Martin Hill (coordinator).

2        The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding body, a meeting with staff, students and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment and the Developmental engagement in admissions. A summary of findings from the two Developmental engagements is provided in Section C of this report. The Summative review was conducted as a desk-based study. 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 awards, Section D of this report summarises details of the Foundation Degree proposals at the College.

4        New College Telford is a sixth-form college established in 1975, currently recruiting around 1,400 young people annually. The mission statement states that the College is 'committed to providing equality of access to the best possible educational opportunities for those aged over 16 whether they are from Telford or further afield'. The College draws students from a wide variety of socio-economic groups in the former new town of Telford, from rural market towns and from rural communities in Shropshire and East Staffordshire and from Wolverhampton. In the academic year 2010-11, the College had 1,526 enrolments, representing 1,490 full-time equivalent students. There are 14 full-time and two part-time students enrolled on higher education programmes. They are taught by three staff, representing 1.2 full-time appointments.

## Higher education provision at the College

5        There is a small provision of adult programmes in the College. This includes the directly-funded HND/C Music Production programmes which are accredited by Edexcel. This provision accounts for less than one per cent of the learners. The programme is based within the Creative Arts, Cultural Studies and Communications Area. The HND is a full-time programme taught over two years. The HNC is run as a part-time programme taught over two years. The latter programme did not recruit any students in 2009-10, but is running with two enrolments in 2010-11. The provision at the time of the review, with the awarding body, is:

**Edexcel**

- HND Music Production (14 students)
- HNC Music Production (2 students; 1 full-time equivalent)

## Partnership agreements with the awarding body

6        The College offers the HND/C programmes on behalf of Edexcel.

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

7        Students from the higher education provision at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The College undertakes annual focus group meetings with students on their programmes which are independent of the programme teams. It was agreed that the relevant minutes of these meetings for the last two years would be forwarded to the team, in place of a student written submission, as an indication of the students' views. The team found these a helpful set of views, which enabled further issues to be raised with the students and staff. A meeting with a representative group of students was also held in May 2010 as part of the Preparatory meeting between the review coordinator and members of the College.

# B        Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

## Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

8        The College has a clear management structure for higher education with the Deputy Principal having responsibility for the higher education provision. The Head of the Creative Arts, Cultural Industries and Communications Area is responsible for the overall management and development of the programmes. The Manager of Quality, Staff Training and Development has oversight of quality assurance systems and processes and manages all aspects of internal and external review. Operational management and evaluation of the programmes is clearly articulated and undertaken by the programme leader who has responsibility for the learning, teaching and assessment, for self-assessment and for implementing programme improvement plans.

9        The Student Achievement and Standards Committee, a sub-committee of the governing body, is responsible for the monitoring of quality and standards in academic performance and quality improvement across the College. A Higher Education Examination Board is convened annually to review and agree the unit summative marks for the year. The Board is attended by representatives from the College Management Team, the Curriculum Area Leader and members of the teaching team; the external examiner is invited. The College uses the Edexcel assessment regulations.

## What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

10      The College's self-evaluation document identified engagement with the Academic Infrastructure as explicit in relation to *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), subject benchmark statements, and *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* and *Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review.* Scrutiny of the student handbook and programme specifications demonstrates accordance with the *Code of practice* and the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure, and reflects the appropriate subject benchmark statements.

11      The subject benchmark statement for music was used to inform the development of the intended learning outcomes and the programme specification. However, because the programmes equates to the intermediate level of the FHEQ and the subject benchmark statements relate primarily to the study of music performance, the intended learning outcomes and the programme specification reflect the spirit of the statement, rather than being fully aligned with it. The intended learning outcomes make appropriate use of the FHEQ descriptors and the QAA *Code of practice*.

12      The College's engagement with the Academic Infrastructure is evident at the programme level. It is less clear how the College has engaged with the Academic Infrastructure in relation to institutional processes as there is no reference to the *Code of practice* or the Academic Infrastructure within the College's strategic plan or the policies on learning, teaching and assessment. The team recommends that is desirable for the College to make explicit how the Academic Infrastructure is used at all levels of management.

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

13      An external examiner for the programmes is appointed by Edexcel. The students are aware of the external examiner and his role and their views are included in his report. Improvement points from his report are discussed within the teaching team and addressed in an action plan. This is discussed with the Quality Manager and forwarded to the external examiner.

14      The intended learning outcomes relate to the skills and attributes required to enter the music industry, and include the development of transferable skills. They reflect the aims of the programmes and the College mission statement. The development of strong linkages and, where possible, the integration of theory and practice is evident in both unit design and the assessment instruments. This ensures that a complementary mix of theoretical knowledge and skills is offered and that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

15      Moderation processes follow Edexcel guidelines. As recommended in the Developmental engagement, internal verification procedures are full and transparent across the programmes, and include the assignment brief and a sample of feedback and marking. Internal verification is carried out by the three members of the programme team and the Head of the Creative Arts, Cultural Industries and Communications Area who provides internal verification from outside the core team.

16      There is a comprehensive tracking system of assessments that includes completion dates, grades achieved, feedback and verification. Double marking is used in particular for merit and distinction grades. The tracking processes are used to monitor the overall effectiveness of assessment, the quality of feedback and student responses. Marks are tracked by the programme leader using a centralised marks matrix, and can be accessed by

students electronically using the internet-based document system. Students report that having prompt access to interim marks is very useful.

17      The marks matrix for 2008-10 shows few distinction grades although there is an improvement in performance for 2009-11 which may be due to additional guidance through tutorials. There are opportunities for students to improve grades in later assignments. Progression from year one to year two has improved from 36 per cent in 2007-08 to 90 per cent in 2009-10. Overall achievement is generally satisfactory in the context of the relatively low numbers on the programmes, ranging from 83 per cent to 100 per cent over the past three years.

18      The College has negotiated progression agreements with the University of Wolverhampton and Staffordshire University. These agreements allow students with the necessary grades to progress from the HND to the completion of a degree at either university, normally completing one final year. The opportunities afforded the students to further their academic studies through the establishment of these progression agreements is a feature of good practice, particularly in the context of the relatively modest size of the provision. HND students visit both Staffordshire University and the University of Wolverhampton to see facilities and discuss their progression, and experience a lecture at Staffordshire University. 63 per cent of completers in 2008-09 progressed to a higher education institution to complete a degree, and half were able to secure places through the progression agreements.

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

19      The College Staff Training and Development Plan refers to higher education but only in a general reference to the dissemination of information. There are no specific staff development priorities related to higher education work. The programme leader is undertaking a master's degree as staff development and has a working knowledge of the Academic Infrastructure through programme development in the College and with partners.

**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?

20      The College quality assurance procedures incorporate the higher education provision, within an annual quality assurance cycle. The College requires the production of a self-assessment report together with a quality improvement plan. The programme team hold regular, minuted meetings to review students' progress, and consider issues around the delivery of learning opportunities. The strengths and areas for improvement of the programmes are agreed with programme team members. The annual self-assessment report evaluates the quality of learning opportunities, together with those aspects of leadership and management that affect the delivery of the curricula. These reports are used as a basis for curriculum area reports; the overall College report is approved by governors.

21        The Performance and Monitoring Review Group supplements the work of the Student Achievement and Standards Committee by taking a broader view of performance management within the College, including the effective use of data and intervention to underpin improvement. All programme improvement plans are scrutinised by the group as part of the development of the overall College improvement plan. The group plays a key role in monitoring the College's higher education provision, reviewing all annual monitoring reports and ensuring that actions are addressed. The programme leader monitors the progress of the improvement plan and reviews outcomes as part of the review process for the following year.

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

22        Scrutiny of external examiner and annual monitoring self-assessment reports confirms that the quality of the students' learning opportunities is well managed. Assessment processes in the programmes take account of the College Assessment Policy and are further informed by the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*, the Edexcel programme specification, external examiner comments, annual programme self-assessments, and student consultation. The assessment framework is set out in the programme student handbook. This outlines the measures taken to maintain the integrity and consistency of the assessment procedures. The programme handbook gives clear guidance on assessment policies covering terminology, deadlines, examination board details, appeals, grade descriptors and plagiarism. Students have a clear understanding of the assessment language and process, and feel well guided and supported.

23        Assignment briefs are well designed and give information about their position in the overall assessment schedule, clear intended learning outcomes and the requirements for merit and distinction grades. Students commented on the ease with which they could identify what was required of them and how this fitted into the overall programme of assessment. The briefs allow students to achieve the aims and learning objectives of the programmes at the appropriate level and are an example of good practice. Grading is consistent and accurate. Merit and distinction criteria are clear and contextualised and are of an appropriate standard. Assignments allow theory to be put into practice. Not all assessments delivered early in the programmes allow higher grades to be achieved, but all higher grades are available to students within the overall assessment of the unit.

24        The College has a number of partnerships, including employers, which support delivery. Some assignment briefs are sent to relevant industry professionals for comment when they are vocationally relevant to that practitioner. The programme leader holds planning meetings with both partner universities regarding unit choice and assessment plans. The second year students assist with a series of recording workshops in a mobile studio which is anticipated will be more fully used with the recent appointment of a facilitator.

25        Feedback to students on their assessments is very comprehensive and identifies clearly any remedial action and allows students to develop their skills and knowledge and improve grades. There is a clear timetable for returning work, marks and feedback. Much of the interim feedback is through the internet-based document system which students consider to be very useful. Students report that there is improved feedback, workload and assignment scheduling. There are regular opportunities for students to discuss feedback during one-to-one tutorials. The high quality of feedback is considered as a feature of good practice.

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

26      Teaching staff plan the assessment schedule for the coming academic year in the summer term. Planning this year will encompass changes to the Edexcel unit specifications and validation processes. This includes a review of the intended learning outcomes to ensure that they remain appropriate in the context of the new units. There are clear schemes of work and assignment schedules available from the start of each programme. The process of monitoring and review throughout the year ensures that the programmes effectively continue to meet the expectations of the FHEQ, *Code of practice,* subject benchmark statements and programme specifications.

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

27      The College has a teaching observation system in which all staff are observed on an annual basis but not necessarily when teaching higher education students. The process includes both formal graded observations and monitoring visits which are not graded. Development points are discussed during feedback. Subsequent monitoring and follow-up of actions is the responsibility of the line manager. Areas for development inform individual objectives, and should be supported by training and development activities.

28      Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in the music industry and in wider music performance networks. Their experience is utilised effectively to ensure that teaching and learning reflects current industry practice and provides appropriate preparation for students to progress to a career in the industry or to other higher education. The programme leader is involved in the development of audio recording software and students have been involved in the testing process. In addition students have had access to a main software developer for advice and guidance on projects. The College invites industry practitioners to work with students either as guest lecturers or for practical demonstrations, providing opportunities for students to showcase their work and receive critical comment and advice. Employer engagement is developing and links with the music industry have been pursued, but as yet are not firmly established. The College recognises that there is a need to establish strong links with the music industry to enrich the learning opportunities for students. The team recommends that the College continues to develop industry links to enrich the learning experience, the assessment opportunities and the progression routes for students

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

29      The College has effective procedures for the admission of students. All applicants attend an interview which provides the opportunity to explore and clarify the content and requirements of the programmes. In addition all applicants meet with staff from Student Services and the Learning Resource Centre to explore the full range of support the College provides. Initial assessment of student needs includes a formal assessment of literacy and numeracy. The programme team, in conjunction with learning support staff, have developed a novel online assessment that applicants are required to complete prior to interview. After being successfully piloted in 2009-10, the online assessment is now fully integrated with the recruitment process for applicants without level three qualifications, and is a feature of good practice.

30      The external examiner states there is good overall College support and guidance for students. Students report positively on advice and guidance offered by the College on the UCAS application process, financial advice and careers advice. Students can access support on time management, referencing and research skills through the College's Learning

Resource Centre. The studio technicians provide support for the use of the recording studio equipment and install appropriate software.

31 The programmes operate a well-established tutorial system in which students are allocated a personal tutor and have one-to-one sessions timetabled regularly through the year to discuss their progress and achievement. Individual progression plans have been developed and include opportunities for individuals to improve their grades. The use of electronic communication between staff and students encourages student dialogue with staff, particularly when students are off-site. Students receive guidance on plagiarism, complaints and appeals procedures during induction from the student handbook. All students have access to the student handbook on the College intranet and through the internet-based document system.

32 The College has acted on student feedback and a recommendation of the Developmental engagement, to provide additional guidance to students on progression to vocational careers. The College progression coordinator now arranges individual appointments with students to discuss progression plans and further support them in their action planning. This is supplemented with visits by industrial practitioners to talk to students about career opportunities within the music industry.

33 Student feedback from annual focus groups is collected by the Quality and Staff Development Manager. Notes from the meetings are distributed to programme staff, members of the College management, the Deputy Principal and shared with the external examiner. Relevant actions in response to the feedback are noted and fed back to the students via the programme leader. A report is produced detailing the actions taken, and this is fed back to students by the programme leader. One example of response to student feedback is the use of individual tutorial time for second-year students for formative, rather than summative feedback on their assignments. Feedback from students indicates that staff are enthusiastic about their subject and employ a variety of teaching methods, including a wide range of practical activities.

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

34 There is clear evidence of staff development activity although most activities are focused on further education. One member of the programme team is undertaking further study and research in music technology. Other programme staff have had no staff development in higher education work in 2009-10 although their inputs to the programmes are relatively small. The teaching team are regularly informed of external opportunities to undertake training and development activities and share good practice. The programme team are encouraged to engage with higher education staff from other institutions, particularly Staffordshire University, to develop dialogue in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.

35 The Staff Training and Development Plan requires that all staff undertake continuing professional development during an academic year. The College places considerable importance on ensuring that all staff build on and enhance their existing skills and expertise. However, there is no statement in the Plan of the need to support the training and development of staff for the higher education provision. The team recommends that it is desirable to ensure the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision including aspects such as the Academic Infrastructure and assessment (paragraphs 19 and 35).

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

36      The higher education students have exclusive access to two learning areas equipped with specialist computers and software. One acts as the main delivery classroom, with computer workstations and an interactive whiteboard. The other is a recording studio. Students also have shared access to a second recording studio. Learning resources are monitored through student feedback, external examiner reports and the annual monitoring process. While the external examiner comments positively regarding the quality of resources available, the 2009-10 annual programme report states that the mixing desk has been deteriorating over the last few years and is now exhibiting several faults. In the documentation provided to the team, there is evidence that these issues have existed for several years. The 2007-08 annual programme report raised concerns about faulty and broken equipment and stated that the student experience has been compromised. Actions to address these concerns are identified in a number of annual improvement plans, but have not been progressed by the College. Students are supportive of the actions taken by the programme team and technicians to maintain the studio equipment. The team considers it advisable for the College to thoroughly review resource allocation procedures to ensure that studio equipment is up to date, in working order and available to support learning on the music production programmes.

37      The programme team make effective use of an internet-based document system to share assignment briefs, feedback, tracking of grades, session notes, interactive white-board files, programme work and other documents. Student feedback on this facility has been universally positive. The storage of documents through this system has greatly enhanced accessibility and consistency across the programmes which the external examiner has welcomed. The team concurs with this and considers the use of this internet-based document system to be an area of good practice.

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

## Core theme 3: Public information

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

38      Public information on the programmes is available through the College website, the full-time prospectus and in separate promotional literature. Marketing materials feature key information about the programmes and what the students can expect from undertaking them. Following the Developmental engagement, the website has been updated to clarify the progression requirements to the top-up degrees offered by the University of Wolverhampton and Staffordshire University. The College is to correct the information in the programme brochure at the next print-run to ensure that the requirements for progression are precisely stated. All higher education students have been contacted in writing to ensure that they are clear about the terms of the progression agreement.

39      Students on the programmes are provided with a detailed programme handbook. The handbook is well-structured and informative, providing clear information on programme aims, intended learning outcomes, content, assessment methodology, grading criteria, referencing, appeals and suggested reading. The handbook also incorporates a number of links to additional information either on the College's website or available through the internet-based document system. For example, students can access directly the schemes of

work for each unit of study and this material can be readily updated. The team considers that the clarity, detail and functionality of the higher education student handbook is a feature of good practice.

40      The programme team operate an effective internet-based calendar system which provides students with access to timetables and College terms dates. A separate online booking calendar allows access to studio facilities for independent study and practical work outside timetabled sessions. Programme staff, technicians, site services personnel and students have access to the calendar. This ensures a well-informed network to support students during out-of-hours sessions

**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?**

41      There are clear and effective procedures for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information published. For the higher education programmes the text is drafted by the programme leader and forwarded to the Marketing Development Manager for second drafting and formatting. The text is approved by the Deputy Principal and returned to the programme leader to check for accuracy and completeness prior to publication.

42      The programme leader prepares the student handbook and this is checked by members of the teaching staff. The higher education assessment policy, which is contained within the student handbook, is checked by the line managers to ensure compliance with the College's teaching learning and assessment policies. Checks on a sample range of publications confirmed that information is accurate and up-to-date.

43      A well produced website offers students clear and accurate information about the provision at the College. The website is regularly checked for accuracy by the programme leader, who notifies the Marketing Manager of any changes that need to be considered. The accuracy of documentation on the internet-based document system is checked by members of the programme staff.

**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

44      The Developmental engagement in assessment in November 2009 considered three lines of enquiry, agreed with the College in advance. These were:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How are the quality and effectiveness of assessment and feedback developed and monitored with reference to the Academic Infrastructure and awarding body requirements?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How effective are the links with industry and higher education institutions in contributing to the assessment strategy, the learning experience and opportunities for progression to other higher education programmes for students?

**Line of enquiry 3:** Is the information available to students and key stakeholders sufficient and accurate enough to identify and support successful coverage, assessment and achievement of intended learning outcomes?

45      The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. The quality of feedback to students is helpful and extensive, and related clearly to the assessment criteria for the assignment, supporting students effectively and enabling them to develop their skills and improve their grades. The progression agreements that the College has initiated offer opportunities to progress to top-up degrees at the two named universities and there is consistent publication of the intended learning outcomes throughout the programme documentation.

46      The team also made a number of recommendations. It considered it advisable that the College should monitor closely the achievement of the two-week target for the return of assignment feedback to students. The team advised the College to correct the information in the programme brochure and the website to ensure that the requirements and the assessment expectations for progression to top-up degrees are precisely stated. The team also recommended that it would be desirable to develop further the rigour of internal verification and moderation through the planned addition of more verifiers and through the introduction of double-marking. Further development of industry links to enrich the learning experience, the assessment opportunities and the progression routes for students were recommended to provide more guidance to students on progression to vocational careers within the industry. The College was also recommended to review with the two universities the assessment expectations contained in the progression agreements to ensure that students are given realistic indications of their opportunities for progression to degree programmes. The team also recommended that students be reminded about the opportunities to upgrade their marks at appropriate stages in the programmes.

# D      Foundation Degrees

47      The College does not, currently, offer Foundation Degrees, but is involved in the development of a Foundation Degree in the performance industries. This involves a consortium of six colleges, one private sector provider and two universities, under the auspices of the sub-regional Lifelong Learning Network. The Performance Industries Pathways scheme has been validated by the University of Wolverhampton. However, the current funding situation means that the commencement of the programme is delayed beyond the current year.

# E      Conclusions and summary of judgements

48      The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in New College Telford'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 body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, Edexcel.

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

- the high quality of feedback to students which provides clearly for remedial action and progression, together with the comprehensive tracking system of assessments that includes completion dates, grades and details of verification (paragraphs 16 and 25)
- the progression agreements that the College has initiated, offering opportunities to progress to top-up degrees at the two named universities (paragraph 18)

- the well designed assessment briefs which give information about their position in the assessment schedule, clear intended learning outcomes and the requirements for merit and distinction grades (paragraph 23)
- the recruitment process for applicants without level three qualifications, with online assessment and in-depth interviews that encourages widening participation (paragraph 29)
- the use of the electronic system of providing documents as a means of communication with individuals and the group of students (paragraph 37)
- the clear and detailed higher education student handbook which contains links to the electronic system of providing documents and is used to update students during the course of the year (paragraph 39).

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

- thoroughly review resource allocation procedures for the higher education programmes to ensure that studio equipment is up to date, in working order and available to support learning (paragraph 36).

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

- make explicit at all levels of management, the use of the Academic Infrastructure in managing academic standards and learning opportunities (paragraph 12)
- ensure that the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision including aspects such as the Academic Infrastructure and assessment (paragraphs19 and 35)
- continue to develop industry links to enrich the learning experience, the assessment opportunities and the progression routes for students (paragraph 28).

52      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.

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

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

| New College Telford action plan relating to the Summative review: September 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Good practice** | **Action to be taken** | **Target date** | **Action by** | **Success indicators** | **Reported to** | **Evaluation** |
| In the programme of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College: | | | | | | |
| • the high quality of feedback to students which provides clearly for remedial action and progression, together with the comprehensive tracking system of assessments that includes completion dates, grades and details of verification (paragraphs 16 and 25) | Review areas of good practice identified by IQER Summative review in tracking, feedback and action planning to identify those aspects which would be applicable to other programmes in the area | December 2010 | Curriculum Manager  Curriculum Area Leader | Adopt best practice for FE vocational provision and demonstrate a positive impact upon student completion of work for 2011/12 | Vice Principal  Head of Area Learning | Evaluation of the applicability of the tracking model - March 2011  Evaluation following implementation in October 2011 |
| | Disseminate good practice through training session and mentoring | January - February 2011 | Course Leader and HND team | Improved submission and tracking of work across area within FE programmes. All work to be assessed within 14 days  Improved student satisfaction in terms of their experience of | Curriculum Area Leader | SRE for other programmes  Evaluation forms from training session |

| | | | | assessment | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Improved tracking of student submission, mentoring and feedback by December 2011 | | Audit improvement in practice - December 2011 |
| • the progression agreements that the College has initiated, offering opportunities to progress to top-up degrees at the two named universities (paragraph 18) | Maintain and update progression agreements through regular contact with HEIs | Review annually (January of each year) | Course Leader | Good progression opportunities for students to be maintained | Curriculum Manager | Examination of student destination records - September 2011 |
| | Ensure public information and students are kept up to date and fully informed about content of agreements | Review annually (February of each year) | Course Leader/ Marketing Manager | Clear and accurate information for students and stakeholders - September 2011 | Curriculum Manager/ Curriculum Area Leader | Regular checks of college information and feedback from learners through focus group - July 2011 |
| | | | | Student satisfaction with the quality of public information to be at least 90% by 2012 | | |
| • the well designed assessment briefs which give information about their position in the assessment schedule, clear intended learning | As action point one | May 2011 | Course Leader | Continually good student achievement and external examiner feedback - July 2011 | Assistant Principal/ Head of Area Learning | External examiner reports on standard of briefs |

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| outcomes and the requirements for merit and distinction grades (paragraph 23) | Maintain quality of briefs for future assessments through audits of designated briefs | | | To continue to improve student performance and raise achievement - September 2011<br><br>Outcome of process of standardisation to indicate the briefs are at least 'Good' in terms of quality and that they are vocationally relevant and promote employability | | Pass rates to be reviewed annually<br><br>Internal standardisation of all assignments by quality lead - July 2011 |
| • the recruitment process for applicants without level three qualifications, with online assessment and in-depth interviews that encourages widening participation (paragraph 29) | Check currency of online assessment and consider applying to all applications | April 2011 | Course Leader and team | Improved diagnostic information to support study skills assessments and learner needs, and to assist in programme planning - across the music curriculum | Course Leader and team/ Curriculum Manager/ Learning Support Co-ordinator | Evaluate the placement of students on all music programmes - September 2011 |
| | Update and review recruitment process in line with national and college standards | Annually | Course Leader | To ensure that all applicants have a vigorous and fair interview | Curriculum Manager | Student achievement on programme on all music vocational programmes |

| | Development action | Start date | Responsibility | Outcome | Monitoring | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | To share practice across the curriculum | July 2011 | Curriculum Manager | Delivery and application of best practice across the music curriculum | HND Team/ Curriculum Area Leader | Evaluation of staff development - July 2011. Survey of staff - July 2011 |
| • the use of the electronic system of providing documents as a means of communication with individuals and the group of students (paragraph 37) | Maintain use of Google docs and ensure all staff involved in HE provision are conversant with its uses | July 2011 | Course Leader and team | Continued effective use of the system by all the team<br><br>Team to showcase their work across the music curriculum by July 2011 | Ann Clark - Curriculum Manager<br><br>Ann Clark - Curriculum Manager | Programme SRE<br><br>Audit of use July 2011 |
| | Review functionality of this system for other areas of college provision | April 2011 | Head of Area Learning/ Vice Principal | Review by ILT Co-ordinator - March 2011 | Deputy Principal/ IT Manager | Report by ILT Co-ordinator - March 2011 |
| • the clear and detailed higher education student handbook which contains links to the electronic system of providing documents and is used to update students during the course of the year (paragraph 39). | Consider dissemination of this to other programme teams through staff development | May - June 2011 | Head of Area Learning/ Vice Principal | To comprehensively review and report on applicability of the handbook across the music curriculum - May 2011 | Course Leader/ Head of Area Learning | Management report examining the suitability of adapting the handbook to other areas of the music curriculum - June 2011 |

| Advisable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be **advised** to take action: | | | | | | |
| • thoroughly review resource allocation procedures for the higher education programmes to ensure that studio equipment is up to date, in working order and available to support learning (paragraph 36). | Curriculum teams to review, identify and plan for future proof equipment needs | February 2011 | Course Leader | Completion of a curriculum plan scoping the future investment in technology and its applicability to industry | Deputy Principal/ Vice Principal | Appropriate management of resourcing for HE provision which is reviewed annually as part of the college SRE |
| | Investigate three or five-year cycle for resource planning to ensure industry standards are met | February 2011 | Course Leader | To measure the effectiveness of equipment in promoting learning through the measuring of improvements in pass rates on annual basis | Deputy Principal/ Vice Principal | Report on pass rates as part of SRE |

| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desirable** to take action: | | | | | | |
| • make explicit at all levels of management, the use of the Academic Infrastructure in managing academic standards and learning opportunities (paragraph 12) | Review college policies annually, taking account of the size of HE provision, and map this to the Academic Infrastructure where appropriate | Review April 2011 | Assistant Principal | Complete compliance (where appropriate) of college policies with the Academic Infrastructure by September 2011 | Principal/ Vice Principal | College policies include reference to Academic Infrastructure when related to HE provision |
| • ensure that the staff development programme is more systematically focused on the needs of the higher education provision including aspects such as the Academic Infrastructure and assessment (paragraphs19 and 35) | Review staff development and training programme to ensure continuous professional development for HE staff is fully integrated into this | April 2011 | STD Manager/ Curriculum Manager | Ensure that all staff engaged in HE in FE receive training and updating on an annual basis. | Principal/ Deputy Principal | Annually evaluated by Assistant Principal as part of SAR |
| | Ensure Academic Infrastructure is incorporated into training as appropriate | July 2011 | STD Manager/ Curriculum Manager | Ensure that HE in FE training is integrated into college training provision | Principal/ Deputy Principal | Annually evaluated by Assistant Principal as part of SAR |
| • continue to develop industry links to enrich the learning experience, the assessment opportunities and the | Contact HEIs and FE providers to discuss their practices relating to industry links | January - May 2011 | Course Leader | Report on best practice in at least one other college/HEI with related action plan | Curriculum Manager/ Curriculum Area Leader | At least one new industry contact built through this research |

| progression routes for students (paragraph 28). | Programme team to proactively establish productive and effective links with industry | March - May 2011 | Student Services Advisor/ Course Leader | At least five good links developed for work experience opportunities - with placement/s in place | Curriculum Manager/ Curriculum Area Leader | Annual assessment of work experience providers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Work with college Work Experience Co-ordinator/ Student Services, employer engagement to develop work experience/professional placement opportunities | March - May 2011 | Student Services Advisor/ Course Leader | To ensure all students have a viable work placement or work awareness experience in place - October 2011 | Curriculum Area Leader | Record of students arranging work experience supported by Student Services Advisor |
| | Support students in developing their own work-based learning experience | March - May 2011 | Student Services Advisor/ Course Leader | Improved support for students in organising and managing work experience. To ensure all students engage in work experience or work awareness | Curriculum Manager/ Curriculum Area Leader | Evaluate experiences through student survey and employer survey |
| | Development consistent with college HE Strategy and Employability Statements | July 2011 | Course Leader | Update the HE Strategy and Employability Statements | Principal/ Vice Principal | Statements to be annually audited for appropriateness |