



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Leeds College of Art**

**February 2011**

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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 Leeds College of Art carried out in February 2011

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

### Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- the successful strategy for promoting external links is characterised by an extensive programme of College lectures and exhibitions that attracts visiting speakers and exhibitors of national and international repute in the creative industries and offers students an impressive professional input to their learning
- the College has a coherent and well-embedded range of robust quality assurance structures for higher education, including annual programme evaluation and module reviews that result in explicit and highly detailed action plans that are assiduously implemented
- the College provides well-funded support for an extensive range of staff development, which includes opportunities for part-time and support staff, and has been effective in helping to secure a well-qualified team of higher education staff
- the arrangements for giving feedback to students on their assessed work are thorough and constructive, and make widespread use of structured group critiques for studio work
- the College deploys a range of mechanisms to capture student opinion, which is directly overseen by senior management and used to inform planning and decision making
- there are rigorous and supportive arrangements in place for the observation of teaching that involve experienced external peers, inform staff development and clearly help to assure the quality of teaching and learning
- the overall architecture of the arrangements for student support provides a clear tutorial entitlement and extensive academic and pastoral opportunities for all students
- students are provided with comprehensive and up-to-date information about all aspects of their studies, using a range of easily accessed communication methods, including the pen drives that are issued to all 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 **desirable** for the College to:

- ensure that all students fully understand the tutorial arrangements for their programme and their responsibilities within them

- review the student induction process with the purpose of ensuring that there are clear and consistent arrangements for returning students at levels 5 and 6
- consider the apparent disparity in the strategy for using highly valued external practitioners for direct teaching within the programmes, which is an area where students on some programmes feel disadvantaged
- continue the development of the virtual learning environment to provide all students with access to the flexible and interactive course materials that are already available to those in the pilot subject areas.

## 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 Leeds College of Art (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the Open University and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Ms Claire Blanchard, Mr Mark Cooper, Ms Maz Stewart (reviewers) and Mr David Lewis (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 bodies; meetings with staff, students and the main partner institution; 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. 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 Leeds College of Art has been established for over 160 years as a specialist art and design institution. The College operates across two main sites, one in the city centre and the other at Blenheim Walk, where all higher education programmes are situated. The wide spread of specialist programmes across art, craft, design and media aligns with the College mission, which also emphasises progression to successful careers for students. The higher education provision is organised within two of the three academic faculties: Media and Design Communication, and Fine Art and Design. In 2010-11, the College has 1,880 students, including 1,151 higher education enrolments, all but 32 of whom are full-time. The higher education provision accounts for almost 60 per cent of total enrolments within the College. All of the higher education provision is directly funded by HEFCE.

5 Leeds College of Art has formal partnership agreements with two awarding bodies for its higher education programmes. These are the Open University, through its Validation Service, and Edexcel. All but one of the programmes provided by the College are awards of the Open University, with whom it currently has associated institution status. The list of current higher education awards funded by HEFCE, with the relevant awarding bodies and full-time equivalent numbers in parentheses, is as follows:

### Open University

#### Faculty of Fine Art and Design

- BA Hons Art and Design - Interdisciplinary (78)
- BA Hons Fine Art - full-time (133)
- BA Hons Fine Art - part-time (15)
- BA Hons Fashion Design (163)



- BA Hons Furniture Making level 6 top-up (8)
- BA Hons Interior Design (51)
- BA Hons Printed Textiles and Surface Pattern Design (188)
- BA Hons Three Dimensional Design: Furniture (8)
- FdA Furniture Making (31)

#### **Faculty of Media and Design Communication**

- BA Hons Visual Communication (113)
- BA Hons Graphic Design (143)
- BA Hons Creative Advertising level 6 top-up (16)
- BA Hons Photography level 6 top-up (25)
- BA Hons Digital Film, Games and Animation level 6 top-up (9)
- FdA Creative Advertising (48)
- FdA Photography (68)
- FdA Digital Film Games and Animation (37)

#### **Edexcel**

##### **Faculty of Fine Art and Design**

- HNC Fashion and Textiles: Millinery (17).

6 The partnership agreement with the Open University was formally agreed in 2006. It makes clear the relative strategic level responsibilities of the College and the University in relation to the provision. The agreement gives the College many devolved powers, including responsibilities for minor programme modifications, designing and conducting assessments, teaching and learning, and ensuring the accuracy of all information published about the programmes. The Open University will undertake an institutional revalidation in March 2011, when the College expects to achieve partner institution status and a further extension of its devolved powers. The College has a standard agreement with Edexcel for the single HNC award.

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

7 The College has seen a stabilisation of higher education numbers over the past three years, following a period of substantial expansion. This year the final stage has been completed in the progressive location of all higher education provision onto the Blenheim Walk campus. This has created a modern and distinctive higher education environment. The College is in the process of applying to the Secretary of State to be transferred from the further to the higher education sector for funding purposes. Since the Developmental engagement, the academic management structure has been revised to define more clearly some important cross-college responsibilities in relation to those that are located within the subject areas. The revisions include an influential new post, the Head of Quality and Standards. The College plans to introduce a new modular framework for the provision from September 2011.

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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. They provided a written submission, which was compiled by the College's Student Liaison Officer with the support of the Head of Quality and Standards and a College administrator. The content of the submission was the result of focus groups that involved 30 student volunteers from 11 higher education

programmes. The submission was organised to cover published information, the student learning experience and feedback. It finished with a concluding statement and a set of recommendations. It gave the team some useful insights into student opinion in advance of the visit and helped to inform the agenda that was explored during the review. The team also had a valuable meeting during the review visit with full-time and part-time students.

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

### **Core theme 1: Academic standards**

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

9 The College's management of its higher education provision is kept separate from that for further education in terms of delivery and quality assurance. The Academic Board approves all College academic policies and procedures, while its Higher Education Sub-Committee is responsible for advising on the standards, planning and general oversight of higher education. Since the Developmental engagement, the College has implemented a new and more clearly defined management and committee structure. The deans of the two higher education faculties now also have college-wide responsibilities for engagement with students and external development. Staff endorse the new arrangements, citing the greater transparency they provide in respect of senior management roles. The changes have also improved communication between course teams, senior managers and external organisations, including the main awarding body. The new committee structure provides clear and integrated progression from course team meetings to the Higher Education Sub-Committee.

10 The College effectively manages curriculum development to deliver its strategic objectives, which are well understood at course team level. Individual courses have their own detailed strategic plans, which set explicit performance targets. Course teams initiate curriculum developments, which are usually proposed as a result of changes within the subject and its related professions. New proposals are carefully monitored by the Higher Education Sub-Committee and considered against the strategic objectives of the College. Academic staff have a sound understanding of the College's development priorities, such as the internationalisation of programmes. Teaching teams are actively developing international links, for example with the fashion team currently making contacts with organisations in India.

11 The College has a clear policy of promoting strong external links, through membership of external academic and professional organisations in the creative sector, as well as links with individual employers and practitioners. The richness of these external influences provides valuable opportunities for students to engage in a dialogue with successful professionals in their intended fields of employment. It also enables full-time staff to build academic and professional networks, which are important in maintaining their knowledge of new developments.

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

12 The College has systematic procedures for ensuring alignment with the Academic Infrastructure when developing new awards and monitoring existing ones. The validation of new programmes reinforces the preparatory work by explicitly checking that intended

learning outcomes reflect the relevant subject benchmark statement and the FHEQ level descriptors. There are also checks in the preparation of course and module documentation against FHEQ level descriptors and precepts of the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. Programme specifications are written with direct reference to subject benchmark statements and, in the case of the FD awards, to the qualification benchmark. The College's own Code of Practice on Assessment ensures that assignments and assessment criteria are tested against the precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* and level descriptors from the FHEQ.

**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?**

13 As an associate institution of the Open University, the College has significant devolved responsibilities for quality assurance, which are, however, directly overseen by the awarding body. It has responsibility for the nomination of external examiners, as well as for their briefing and induction, and for managing the boards of examiners. Quality assurance for the HNC award is supported through Edexcel external verifier visits and reports. Course leaders are responsible for responding to the reports of external examiners, with the responses being reported to the Higher Education Sub-Committee and monitored by the deans of faculty and Director of Academic Standards. The reports of external examiners confirm that academic standards are being upheld and records show that the College is diligent in responding to the action points raised in the reports. The College provides the Open University with an account of the responses to issues raised by external examiners during the Annual Institution Overview.

14 The College has a coherent and robust range of quality assurance structures and procedures. The arrangements ensure that the College fulfils the requirements of both its awarding bodies and maintains appropriate academic standards. The Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee is a subcommittee of the Board of Governors and has cross-college responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards and quality assurance. It reports directly to the Corporation. The College has an established higher education audit that monitors the consistency of course organisation, including curriculum documentation, staff records, student support, and management and achievement data for each programme.

15 The rigorous internal review process is wide ranging and includes specific procedures for module and assessment reviews. A comprehensive assessment review peer process involves the review of all higher education modules by nominated academic peers. These reviews, along with external examiner reports, feed into detailed annual programme evaluations. The annual evaluations support the dissemination of good practice and target areas for improvement. The annual programme evaluation and module reviews result in explicit and highly detailed action plans that are assiduously implemented by course teams and monitored by the deans of faculty. The awarding body has expressed a high level of satisfaction with the College's quality assurance arrangements and the delivery of its awards.

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

16 The College has an explicit scholarship, research and knowledge transfer strategy, and well-established professional development arrangements for supporting staff in the achievement of appropriate academic standards. A specific feature of the arrangements is the strong support for staff to engage in scholarly and professional activity, including

research where appropriate. The College has a policy of supporting research initiatives that enhance the subject disciplines or align with one of the College's overarching research themes. The Research Group receives regular reports from staff on their research and scholarly activities. Staff are encouraged to engage with peers in other institutions, including the Higher Education Academy. Knowledge transfer is promoted and achieved through a range of academic and professional partnerships, external consultancy, sponsored research posts, and study for master's and doctorate qualifications.

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

## **Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities**

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

17 The College's responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities are those described in paragraphs 9 to 11. Both higher education faculties operate the same quality assurance procedures to ensure consistency of practice across all awards.

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

18 The partnership agreement with the Open University gives the College extensive devolved responsibility for ensuring that students receive appropriate learning opportunities. The College determines the teaching and learning to be provided, as well as student support and what learning resources are needed. The robust and effective quality assurance arrangements are as described in paragraphs 13 to 15. The role of the Open University's Academic Reviewer as a mentor and critical friend is highly valued. The accessibility of the Academic Reviewer ensures swift support for course teams on matters of course delivery, management and development.

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

19 The College's engagement with the Academic Infrastructure is extensive, as described in paragraph 12. The outcome of the Developmental engagement, further checked in this Summative review, confirms that student assessment fully meets the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*, and reflects the level descriptors in the FHEQ. In particular, the arrangements for giving feedback to students on their assessed work are consistently thorough and constructive. They include the widespread use of peer review and structured group critiques for studio work. Students describe these feedback opportunities as challenging and helpful, and an important feature of the professional studio culture that is promoted by the College. External examiners note that assessment feedback offers clear and constructive guidance for further development.

20 The College is committed to the collection and use of student opinion. Student views are sought through a range of mechanisms, including internal and external student surveys, meetings with trained student representatives, and annual programme and module feedback questionnaires. The Principal meets student representatives at least once

a term and also monitors the views expressed through the system of student suggestion boxes. Student feedback is used as a standard feature of the annual programme evaluation. It can also influence cross-college strategic and operational decision making, such as the design of assessment and feedback forms.

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

21 The College has rigorous and supportive arrangements in place for the observation of higher education teaching. They comprise a graded classroom scheme and a separate ungraded peer observation scheme. The ungraded scheme involves an experienced external peer who observes staff and produces a detailed report. The schemes operate within the context of an associated teaching and learning Code of Practice and a formal set of learning, teaching and assessment principles. The outcomes of observations are reported to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and are also used to inform staff appraisal and staff development needs.

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

22 The College has an extensive and thoroughly documented tutorial and support system, which includes a prescribed minimum tutorial entitlement. Clear guidance on the conduct of tutorials is provided on the College intranet. Comprehensive support and guidance is available from Learning Support for students with dyslexia and other learning support needs. The system offers extensive academic and pastoral opportunities for all students. In discussions with the team, students on one programme suggested they had not received their tutorial entitlement, although the detailed tutorial records showed that this was not the case. Given this apparent confusion, the College should seek to ensure that students fully understand the tutorial arrangements for their programme and their responsibilities for keeping records in relation to them.

23 There are thorough induction procedures in place for new students across all the programmes. These include a range of general College and course-specific activities and the provision of extensive information, including course handbooks. The arrangements for those students returning for the second year of their studies, or progressing between an FD and BA Honours award, are less clear and consistent.

24 The College has a positive strategy for professional enrichment activities and engagement with employers, which it regards as a priority and an area of strength. A notable feature of the strategy is the extensive programme of College lectures and exhibitions. These frequently attract visiting speakers and exhibitors of national and international repute in the creative industries and offer students an impressive professional input to their learning.

25 Another part of the professional enrichment involves external practitioners contributing to teaching, particularly within the studio environment. This is highly valued by students, who describe the presence of such visiting tutors as adding a crucial professional context to their studies. However, students from some subjects expressed concern about their lack of opportunity to be taught by professional practitioners in this way.

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

26 The College is strongly committed to the ongoing development of its academic and support staff. All academic staff are required to undertake a minimum of 30 hours

professional development each year, and meticulous records are maintained of activities and attendance. There is a comprehensive induction programme for new staff. The Continuing Professional Development Committee, whose membership includes the Principal and deans, organises a wide range of workshops and in-house training events. The staff development process is well funded and ensures there are opportunities for part-time and support staff. It offers good support for higher academic qualifications, research study, conference attendance and a spread of other training events and courses. Staff development is clearly contributing to ensuring a well-qualified College workforce. A significant number of academic staff have or are completing higher-level qualifications with the Open University, without any fee subsidy.

### **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?**

27 Academic staff are well qualified in their subjects and generally experienced in their areas of creative practice. All hold a formal teaching qualification or are working towards one. Some 86 per cent of staff who teach primarily on higher education programmes have a relevant degree. Around 40 per cent have a master's degree or are working towards one, while a further 7 per cent possess a doctorate.

28 The College has built up a range of high-quality facilities in workshops and studios, both craft and technology based, in recognition of the need to ensure the professional credibility and attractiveness to students of its specialist programmes. It has a clear annual capital expenditure application process for the purchase of new and replacement items of equipment. Physical resources are based on the assessment of curriculum needs at the time of programme approval. In almost all subjects, students judge the facilities at the College to be outstanding. They regard the studios, with their individual workspaces, as supporting a strong professional studio culture. Computer rooms and some studios house networks of Apple Macintosh and personal computers, regularly updated with industry-standard software.

29 The Blenheim Walk library is well stocked with books, journals and other media resources, as well as access to online materials including journals. There is an established process for acquiring new stock, with academic and library staff confirming that requests from course teams are rarely refused. Students report that library opening times are sufficient for their needs and value the response of the College in extending the opening hours during the dissertation period.

**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 bodies to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

## **Core theme 3: Public information**

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

30 The College has authority to produce most public information relating to the programmes, although the University does retain responsibility for student transcripts and also publishes a general student guide. Consistent with its partnership agreements, the College is responsible for publishing information relating to publicity and marketing, the higher education prospectus, programme specifications, student support materials, course

handbooks, module information and teaching and assessment strategies. In addition, the College publishes a range of other policy and strategy statements, as well as various codes of practice and guidance materials relating to the provision.

31 Students are provided with comprehensive and up-to-date information about all aspects of their studies. All course handbooks are presented in a common, user-friendly format and provide a comprehensive range of clear and accessible information for students. The contents of the handbook, plus the full programme specification for their award and a wide range of other documents, are given to students on a pen drive. This is a highly effective arrangement and one that is valued by students. The same wide range of information is subsequently made available through the student area of the virtual learning environment. Other key documents, such as the College student charter and health and safety information, are also provided on the intranet. Information on progression arrangements and opportunities is clearly explained to students through information in course handbooks, supplemented by briefings from course leaders. Students are also made aware of the additional costs of course materials during interview and in handbooks.

32 The College has a virtual learning environment policy, which is intended to ensure minimum standards in the level of information that is provided for different courses. The system offers a single portal through which students and staff can access packages of information that are differentiated to match their needs. The policy seeks to provide information that is current, accurate and useful for its intended audience. The use of the virtual learning environment to support student learning varies considerably between course teams, with some providing a wide range of flexible interactive course materials. The level of use depends largely on whether the programme has been involved in the College's pilot development project.

**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?**

33 The College is directly responsible for the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the courses. The Open University monitors information relating to its awards and the nature of the partnerships on an ongoing basis. The College sends the annual prospectus and course publicity material to the awarding body to be checked for accuracy.

34 Following the expansion of its higher education provision and the need to support an increasing number of students and staff, the College recognises the need to keep the effectiveness of its communication systems under regular review. The Developmental engagement also identified the need to formalise procedures for authorship and approval of published information. The College has responded constructively to these needs, with actions that include an appointment to the newly created post of Head of Quality and Standards. Clear progress has been made and appropriate policies and procedures are now in place and being embedded.

35 A process is followed through course leaders, deans of faculty and the Principal to verify the content of the higher education prospectus. This information is then used to populate the website and virtual learning environment. The College uses an annual review process, involving admissions and marketing staff, to check the consistency of the information published across all media. The College marketing team has overall responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of published information on the College's website and in its prospectus, which is then signed off by the Principal and deans of faculty.

36 Course teams have responsibility for the information published about the programmes, confirming the accuracy and currency of materials before the beginning of each academic year. Students testify to the accuracy of the information they receive prior to enrolment and during their studies.

37 The College routinely monitors the arrangements for approving the accuracy and suitability of assignment briefs. It does this by collecting student opinion through the interview process, inductions, tutorials and modules, as well as through exit questionnaires and course committee meetings.

**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**

38 The Developmental engagement in assessment was undertaken in January 2010. It focused on three lines of enquiry, which were agreed with the College in advance. The lines of enquiry reflect a broad range of assessment issues and allowed the team to explore the three IQER core themes. They were as follows:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How does the College ensure that assessment decisions are fair and reliable, in particular between the assessment of individual practice and group work?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How effectively does formative and summative assessment feedback contribute to student learning?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How effective is the College in communicating assessment procedures to students and in ensuring that students understand their role in the assessment process?

39 The Developmental engagement report identified a range of good practice across all three core themes. It notes the rigorous approach to checking the suitability of assignments, as well as the fairness and reliability of assessment outcomes. Other areas of good practice include the College's responsiveness to a range of external sources in enhancing student assessment. Overall, assessment is structured to ensure constructive support for student learning, while there are effective arrangements for ensuring clear individual assessment within the context of group work. Generally, the written feedback on assessed student work is thorough and constructive, while on some programmes the use of electronic learning has resulted in innovative and effective approaches to formative assessment feedback. The widespread use of the group critiques, including those that are led by students, provide highly valued feedback and support for students' learning. The assessment information published for students is clear, and is communicated using a range of appropriate methods. The innovative use of the virtual learning environment and student web logs on some programmes ensures that students have wide access to college, programme and module-level information. It also promotes regular interaction with tutors and student peers.

40 The report includes a number of recommendations for improving the provision. The College was advised to develop written guidance for the authorship and formal approval of public documents. The team judged it desirable that the College should further develop its procedures for the scrutiny of assignment briefs and consider reinforcing the second marking at level 5 of FDs. It was also seen as desirable for the College to continue developing



protocols to support the implementation of e-learning, consider approaches for ensuring the timeliness of summative feedback, and seek to formalise the good practice demonstrated by course teams through the issue of an up-to-date College policy for module evaluation.

## D Foundation Degrees

41 The College offers four FDs, the first of which, in furniture design, began in 2005 as an award of the University of Leeds. Three others, in creative advertising, photography, and design for digital media, were introduced in 2006. The most recent FD, in digital film, games and animation, was introduced in 2009 as a replacement for the award in digital media. The FDs operate within the same College structures and arrangements for assessment as the more extensive range of honours degree provision. For 2011-12, the College plans to replace its FDs, all of which have a one-year bachelor's top-up degree to provide articulated progression routes, with a suite of three-year BA honours degrees in the same subjects. The College is making this change as a response to the perceived opinion of employers and students.

42 A significant majority of students enrol on the FDs with the express purpose of completing a full BA award by progressing to the equivalent level 6 top-up bachelor's degree offered by the College. All of the FDs operate effectively, meeting the requirements of their approval and the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure, notably the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. The College has an explicit work-based learning policy, which clearly sets out the relative responsibilities of the College, the employer partners and the students. The areas of good practice and recommendations relating to FDs are common to the whole provision. They are listed in the main conclusions, paragraphs 44 to 46.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

43 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Leeds College of Art'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 bodies, Edexcel and the Open University.

44 In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of good practice

- the successful strategy for promoting external links is characterised by an extensive programme of College lectures and exhibitions that attracts visiting speakers and exhibitors of national and international repute in the creative industries and offers students an impressive professional input to their learning (paragraphs 11, 24, 25)
- the College has a coherent and well-embedded range of robust quality assurance structures for higher education, including annual programme evaluation and module reviews that result in explicit and highly detailed action plans that are assiduously implemented (paragraphs 13, 14, 15)
- the College provides well-funded support for an extensive range of staff development, which includes opportunities for part-time and support staff, and has been effective in helping to secure a well-qualified team of higher education staff (paragraphs 16, 26, 27)
- the arrangements for giving feedback to students on their assessed work are thorough and constructive, and make widespread use of structured group critiques for studio work (paragraph 19)

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

- the College deploys a range of mechanisms to capture student opinion, which is directly overseen by senior management and used to inform planning and decision making (paragraph 20)
- there are rigorous and supportive arrangements in place for the observation of teaching that involve experienced external peers, inform staff development and clearly help to assure the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 21)
- the overall architecture of the arrangements for student support provides a clear tutorial entitlement and extensive academic and pastoral opportunities for all students (paragraphs 22, 23)
- students are provided with comprehensive and up-to-date information about all aspects of their studies, using a range of easily accessed communication methods, including the pen drives that are issued to all students (paragraph 31).

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

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

- ensure that all students fully understand the tutorial arrangements for their programme and their responsibilities within them (paragraph 22)
- review the student induction process with the purpose of ensuring that there are clear and consistent arrangements for returning students at levels 5 and 6 (paragraph 23)
- consider the apparent disparity in the strategy for using highly valued external practitioners for direct teaching within the programmes, which is an area where students on some programmes feel disadvantaged (paragraph 25)
- continue the development of the virtual learning environment to provide all students with access to the flexible and interactive course materials that are already available to those in the pilot subject areas (paragraph 32).

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

48 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.

49 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.

Leeds College of Art action plan relating to the Summative review: February 2011						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the successful strategy for promoting external links is characterised by an extensive programme of College lectures and exhibitions that attracts visiting speakers and exhibitors of national and international repute in the creative industries and offers students an impressive professional input to their learning (paragraphs 11, 24, 25)</li> </ul>	Draw together an annual list of visiting speakers to be reviewed for effectiveness by Learning, Teaching & Assessment Committee (LTA)	June 2011	Events and Exhibitions Officer	Extensive list of visiting speakers and exhibitors of national and international repute	LTA	Minutes of LTA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College has a coherent and well-embedded range of robust quality assurance structures for higher education, including annual programme evaluation and module reviews that result in explicit and highly detailed action plans that are assiduously implemented (paragraphs 13, 14, 15)</li> </ul>	<p>Monitor and review policies and procedures according to published schedule</p>	<p>September 2011</p>	<p>Head of Quality &amp; Standards (HoQS)</p>	<p>Maintained schedule of policies and procedures</p>	<p>HE Sub-committee, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQA)</p>	<p>Minutes of HE Sub-committee, ASQA</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College provides well-funded support for an extensive range of staff development, which includes opportunities for part-time and support staff, and has been effective in helping to secure a well-qualified team of higher education staff (paragraphs 16, 26, 27)</li> </ul>	<p>Implementation of a new appraisal system currently in development to ensure continued effectiveness of staff development</p>	<p>September 2011</p>	<p>HR Manager</p>	<p>HR reports</p>	<p>Staff Consultative Committee, Senior Manager Team meeting</p>	<p>Minutes of Staff Consultative Committee, Senior Manager Team meeting</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the arrangements for giving feedback to students on their assessed work are thorough and constructive, and make widespread use of structured group critiques for studio work (paragraph 19)</li> </ul>	Monitored and reviewed using the Assessment Review Peer (ARP) process	January 2012	ARPs	ARP reports	ARP Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College deploys a range of mechanisms to capture student opinion, which is directly overseen by senior management and used to inform planning and decision making (paragraph 20)</li> </ul>	Review and report on student involvement strategy annually	March 2012 and annually	HoQS, Registry Manager	Annual Report, Student Survey	ASQA	Minutes of ASQA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there are rigorous and supportive arrangements in place for the observation of teaching that involve experienced external peers, inform staff development and clearly help to assure the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 21)</li> </ul>	Maintain review observation system and carry out annual review of process and procedures	January 2012	HoQS	Number of observations, grades awarded	LTA	Minutes of LTA, HE Sub-committee

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the overall architecture of the arrangements for student support provides a clear tutorial entitlement and extensive academic and pastoral opportunities for all students (paragraphs 22, 23)</li> </ul>	Ensure tutorial arrangements are clearly outlined in programme handbooks and/or virtual learning environment (VLE)	September 2011	HoQS	Tutorial arrangements clearly outlined and students aware of their entitlements	HE Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students are provided with comprehensive and up-to-date information about all aspects of their studies, using a range of easily accessed communication methods, including the pen drives that are issued to all students (paragraph 31).</li> </ul>	Review the use of the VLE across all programmes and implement improved use where needed to allow for better lines of communication for students	September 2011	Systems Development Manager, Web Developer	VLE presence, activities in place, number of practice-sharing events carried out	e-Learning Group, Members of HE Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee
<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 areas where it would be <b>desirable</b> to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all students fully understand the tutorial arrangements</li> </ul>	Ensure tutorial arrangements are clearly outlined in	September 2011	Programme Leaders	Student feedback through meetings and questionnaires	Members of HE Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee

	for their programme and their responsibilities within them (paragraph 22)	programme handbooks and/or VLE and as part of induction					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the student induction process with the purpose of ensuring that there are clear and consistent arrangements for returning students at levels 5 and 6 (paragraph 23)</li> </ul>	Review induction for all programmes to identify any inconsistencies and put in place a comprehensive induction plan for returning level 5 & 6 students	September 2011	HoQS	Students adequately inducted at level 5 and 6	Members of HE Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider the apparent disparity in the strategy for using highly valued external practitioners for direct teaching within the programmes, which is an area where students on some programmes feel disadvantaged (paragraph 25)</li> </ul>	Review use of external practitioners across all programmes and define expected standard.	September 2011	HoQS, Director of External Development	Improved engagement with external practitioners on those programmes identified	Members of HE Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue the development of the virtual learning environment to provide all students with access to the</li> </ul>	Develop an action plan for working with those programmes who do not	September 2011	Systems Development Manager, Web Developer	Greater use of the VLE across all programmes	e-Learning Group, members of HE Sub-committee	Minutes of HE Sub-committee

flexible and interactive course materials that are already available to those in the pilot subject areas (paragraph 32).	currently use the VLE to enable them to fully utilise the facilities of Moodle					
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**RG 720 05/11**

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