



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

South Cheshire College

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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 South Cheshire College carried out in June 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 overall organisation of work-based learning is highly effective
- the College supports students on higher education programmes in a comprehensive manner.

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:

- address in the developing Teaching and Learning Strategy how the approach to higher education will lead to improvement in the quality of learning opportunities
- improve access to core texts to meet the study needs of full-time higher education students
- continue to develop its study skills handbook and mentor guide and make these fully available in the next academic year.

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 South Cheshire College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of The Manchester Metropolitan University, Liverpool John Moores University, the University of Chester, the University of Wolverhampton, and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mr Jonathan Baker, Professor Paul Brunt, Mrs Trudy Stiles (reviewers) and Dr John Hurley (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, employers 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. 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 awards, section D of this report summarises details of the Foundation Degree programmes delivered at the College.

4 South Cheshire College is a tertiary college situated on a single campus in Crewe and is the sole provider of post-16 education in the town. Its mission states that 'South Cheshire College promotes quality teaching and learning in a supportive environment. It aims to respond flexibly to the educational and training needs of its communities, anticipating, identifying and satisfying these needs efficiently and effectively.' The College provides a diversity of programmes and offers courses in all subject sector skills areas with the exception of land-based programmes. At the time of the visit, there were 6,339 current student enrolments. About 30 per cent of learners are enrolled on GCE AS and A-level programmes. The College attracts students from throughout South and East Cheshire and surrounding regions.

5 The College is a member of a higher education consortium which includes Macclesfield College, Mid-Cheshire College and Manchester Metropolitan University. It receives the majority of its funding directly from HEFCE via this consortium. The total enrolment on higher education courses in 2010-11 is 433 students (396 full-time equivalents). A total of 35 full-time and 13 part-time staff teach on higher education programmes.

The following higher education programmes are provided by the College:

University of Chester

- FdSc Complementary Therapeutic Practice for Health and Wellbeing (year 2 only)

Liverpool John Moores University

- FdSc Construction and Surveying (year 1 only)
- BSc (Hons Top-up) Building Management and Surveying

The Manchester Metropolitan University

- FdA Business Management
- FdA Film Production and Management (year 2 only)
- FdA Graphics and Digital Media
- FdA Hospitality Management
- FdA Public and Community Services
- FdA Supporting Teaching and Learning
- FdA Tourism Management
- FdSc Coaching and Sports Development
- FdSc Engineering (Electrical/Electronic)
- FdSc Engineering (Mechanical)
- FdSc Enterprise Computing
- PGCE and PCET
- Higher Education Certificate - Counselling
- Graduate Diploma - Counselling

University of Wolverhampton

- FdSc Construction (year 2 only)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The agreement with The Manchester Metropolitan University is for collaboration and specifically states that it is not a partnership. The University retains responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards. The College is required to implement procedures to ensure compliance with the standards established by the University, supported by link tutors. External examiners are appointed by the University. The College is responsible for the operation of the programmes as outlined in the definitive document for each, which is established at validation. These differ slightly according to the status of a programme: whether it is unique to the College, run by two or more colleges in the consortium, or franchised from the University. In particular, this influences the degree of responsibility, in the College, for curriculum development, writing and moderating assignments.

7 The University of Chester and Liverpool John Moores University maintain overall responsibility for standards, through validation processes and through link tutors. External examiners are appointed and course teams approved by the University. The College is responsible for discharging all functions of teaching, assessment, course management and student support to the universities' required standards. The University of Wolverhampton agreement retains all major responsibilities, with the College undertaking supported delivery.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Since the Developmental engagement the College has moved to new buildings which include an area of the Learning Resource Centre specifically for the use of higher education students. The Foundation Degree franchised from the University of Wolverhampton has been superseded by a Foundation Degree plus BSc Top-up Degree programme validated by Liverpool John Moores University. There is a slight increase in

numbers enrolled on higher education courses in the current year although two programmes did not attract sufficient applicants to run a first year in 2010-11. These will continue to be offered in 2011-12.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A submission was compiled by a student representative as a study project for his Foundation Degree course. The information base was drawn from survey data made available by the College and from meetings with student representatives. The content of the final submission was agreed by student representatives. The report usefully assessed progress from the student submission for the Developmental engagement concluding that many of the matters raised there had been satisfactorily addressed. Continuing concerns were formal contact with, and progression to, the awarding body partners. The report demonstrated high levels of overall satisfaction with the quality of learning opportunities.

10 Students met reviewers during the course of the visit. Students broadly confirmed the findings of the written submission, emphasising concerns relating to changes in the progression arrangements to Manchester Metropolitan University during their course and some limitations of book stock. Students expressed satisfaction with the arrangements for teaching, learning, assessment and support.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

11 Responsibility for managing the standards of provision in the College resides with the Principal, vice principals and the Senior Management Team. Higher education programmes are line managed through the College's faculty structures. Within each faculty there is a Quality Manager responsible for standards. The quality managers, together with the College's Quality Assurance Manager, are collectively responsible to the Principal.

12 Each higher education programme has its own course team leader, with responsibility for the operation of the programme. Course team leaders have specific responsibility for maintaining regular course team meetings, ensuring that the College and awarding body quality assurance procedures are followed. Team leaders also convene internal assessment boards, liaise with the awarding body link tutor and the external examiner and provide an annual report to the awarding body on the operation and development of the programme.

13 The Vice Principal: Adult Skills, Higher Education and Business Development, has specific strategic responsibility for higher education, supported by a Higher Education Coordinator. A Higher Education Communication Strategy outlines the responsibilities, inter-linkages, and reporting pathways of a number of managing and coordinating groups. A higher education operational group is concerned with aspects of the overall coordination of provision, and a quality assurance and development committee oversees the effectiveness

and strategic development of higher education. Other groups ensure the involvement of all the major stakeholders in the provision of higher education programmes at the College, including students. The Strategy maintains effective communication between faculty management of higher education and the coordinating structures. The steering groups meet on a regular basis. Their role is to ensure that the requirements of both the Academic Infrastructure and the various stakeholders are satisfied.

14 Staff demonstrate good knowledge of the management structure for higher education and the internal and awarding body reporting processes. There is consistency across the provision and the team considers that the structure and responsibilities for higher education in the College are clear and coherent.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 The Academic Infrastructure is embedded through the processes of validation and re-validation conducted with the awarding bodies. All programmes match the requirements of the FHEQ and Foundation Degrees the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. College staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the Academic Infrastructure, including the adherence to standards, the process for validation of new courses, the assessment process and the linkage of learning outcomes to relevant benchmarks. Staff also have a clear understanding of the role of external examiners and awarding body link tutors.

16 The College applies rigorous and robust assessment policies and procedures, meeting awarding body assessment regulations, which mirror the precepts outlined in the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. Students are well informed about the assessment process and the relevant regulations. They are also aware of the linkage of intended learning outcomes to assessments and subject benchmarks.

17 Foundation Degree programmes focus on academic and work-based learning, are based on collaborative partnerships with employers, and provide for widening participation through flexible delivery modes and assessments. There is close alignment with the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. The Developmental engagement found good practice in the assessment of work-based learning. This has been disseminated effectively across the provision. Employers and placement providers maintain good communication with the college tutors. Employers are aware of their responsibilities in providing feedback to tutors on the performance of the student in a work-based role. In a number of programmes, including construction, film production and management, employers are involved in the course design. Employers are complimentary about the way that the flexible approach of the College allows for the incorporation of required working practices in the placements and the quick resolution of any problems that have arisen during placement work. Students commented favourably on the organisation of work placements by the College and are aware of how the employers comment on work practice observations. The overall organisation of work-based learning is highly effective and is confirmed as good practice.

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

18 The College is responsible for the management of the standards for higher education in collaborative and franchised programmes. Proposals to offer new Foundation Degrees go through an approval process in the College before submission to the awarding body. Once a programme is approved, it is subject to the awarding body and college

stipulated quality assurance procedures, including performance and resource monitoring, internal verification, teacher observation, external examining and programme review.

19 Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the process by which standards are maintained to meet the requirements of the awarding bodies. The College maintains a quality policy and a Quality Manual, including processes for internal audits. Quality managers meet on a regular basis with the university link tutors. Course reviews and quality action plans are submitted to the awarding bodies annually and outline any improvements that are required.

20 All course teams meet at least once each term to complete, on an incremental basis, a course review. The course review is the principal means in the College of monitoring and reviewing performance. At the end of the year, any actions that derive from the awarding body quality assurance processes, including external examiner recommendations, are incorporated into a programme's course review action plan. The Higher Education Quality and Development Committee maintains an overview of higher education standards across the College.

21 Course teams also carry out internal verification both of student work and assignment briefs. External examiner reports identified that academic standards, assessment and student feedback, and examination boards are efficient and fair. The Developmental engagement found robust internal verification procedures in place and recommendations from the Development engagement have been actioned.

22 Course teams monitor and respond to student feedback during the review process. Feedback may originate from the annual National Student Survey, internal college feedback through surveys, or from issues raised by student representatives who attend course team meetings. Student representatives are a central part of the College's Student Voice strategy and structure. Equality, diversity and inclusion are also standing agenda items on course review meetings.

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

23 The College has effective staff development procedures and policies that require all staff to undertake a minimum of 50 hours per annum of staff development or industrial experience. The balance between the two depends on the role of the individual and college priorities for the current year. College priorities include encouraging higher education staff to develop their qualifications to master's level or above through links with awarding bodies, and to improve their professional skills. Higher education staff have opportunities to undertake specific training in areas including assessment, course management and scholarly activity. The Cheshire Higher Education Consortium also runs a number of curriculum groups to help support staff teaching on higher education courses in the colleges.

24 Individual staff development needs are agreed through an annual professional development review. This matches individual development requirements to college priorities outlined in the faculty business plans. Staff records demonstrated engagement with continuing professional development through attendance at college and awarding body courses relating to assessment and standards. There is good evidence of the upgrading of qualifications with about two-thirds of staff teaching on higher education having achieved or undertaking qualifications at level 7 or above. This is currently the principal mechanism for subject updating, although college records show some participation in conferences and industrial updating.

25 The Higher Education Coordinator and the course team leader carry out staff induction to higher education teaching when a tutor joins a programme. The College is developing a Higher Education Tutor's Handbook. It is planned for the handbook to be distributed widely for the coming academic year. The team considers that this will be an effective mechanism to ensure consistency of practice.

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?

26 Overall responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those for managing academic standards, as described in paragraphs 11 to 13. All programmes are delivered within designated curriculum areas, and faculty curriculum leaders are responsible for the quality of programmes and new course development. Responsibility for monitoring the quality of learning opportunities operates through the higher education Operational Group and Quality Assurance and Development Committee. This dual management structure dovetails efficiently and effectively at operational and strategic levels. The team judges these arrangements to be effective with respect to the quality of learning opportunities.

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

27 The arrangements described in paragraphs 18 to 22 provide a secure framework for interaction between the College and the awarding bodies. For each programme, university link tutors, some of whom contribute to the teaching, play an important liaison role in ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities meets the requirements of the university. The College assures the distinctive elements of its Foundation Degree provision in line with the awarding body's requirements. Internal systems to ensure the quality of teaching, learning and academic support are identified in paragraphs 30 to 36.

28 The College has a clear system for capturing the learner voice. Each cohort elects a student representative who attends Student Voice meetings and course meetings allowing students to comment on programme delivery, college systems and resources. Staff record major student issues in the relevant annual monitoring reports and student contributions inform the College's action plans. This indicates that there are systematic processes for gathering student feedback about the quality of learning opportunities, which the team considers to be working effectively. Students have access to course committee minutes via their virtual learning environment, and the College displays responses to issues raised by students on display screens. Scrutiny of the minutes of the Student Voice meetings, higher education Operational Group and Quality and Standards Committee identify appropriate actions being taken to address issues associated with student learning opportunities.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

29 The College's engagement with the Academic Infrastructure through validation procedures is described in paragraph 15. The College is well informed about the Academic Infrastructure and engages with it extensively. For example, the College's approach to disability is well aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students*. Students appreciate the well-organised support for work-based learning which reflects the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*.

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

30 Mechanisms are in place through which teaching and learning are monitored and enhanced. The College has an annual programme of teaching observation, with the most recent set of observations showing 95 per cent of higher education sessions being graded as good or better. New staff are required to complete appropriate qualifications, and there has been a recent audit of the qualifications of staff teaching at higher education level.

31 Staff confirm that the observation process is supportive and have valued the consequent sharing of good practice. The teacher provides a detailed lesson plan that includes learning outcomes against timed teacher and learner activities. The observer records a commentary of the lesson together with strengths and areas for development. Prior to their feedback session, the teacher writes a self-evaluation of significant strengths and areas for development so that together they can produce an action plan. Staff valued the openness of their peers and confirmed that their teaching practice had improved through the processes of constructive scrutiny and reflection.

32 The College seeks to use a varied range of teaching and learning approaches to reflect the diverse profile and learning styles of its students. Programme teams identify action necessary to address any issues raised by students or external examiners concerning learning opportunities as part of the programme's self-assessment process. The implementation of action plans is monitored. At the time of the review, the College was in the process of developing a Teaching and Learning Strategy. It would be desirable for the developing strategy to specifically address how the approach to higher education will lead to improvement in the quality of learning opportunities.

33 All the Foundation Degree programmes contain a large proportion of work-based learning and focus particularly on skill development. The College has, in response to the Developmental engagement, developed a Work-Based Learning Mentor Guide which sets out the main responsibilities of the employer, student and tutor, expectations and assessment of competence during the placement, and the principal stages of work-based learning. Work-based learning is supported and monitored by tutor visits to the workplace.

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

34 Responsibility for the recruitment of students rests with the College. In addition to direct progression from further education, the College attracts mature students from the community. All students have a college-wide induction, including an introduction to the virtual learning environment, skills, and subject-specific elements. Students are assessed during induction to identify special needs, such as dyslexia or problems with literacy and numeracy, which are then supported centrally. Students found the induction process to be a positive experience which informed them about the expectations of higher education. The evaluation of support mechanisms features in the annual course review processes, as does the analysis of retention and learner voice data.

35 There is a well-established tutorial system which offers academic support to students from their initial acceptance on the programme to completion. One-to-one tutorials are a regular feature of the student experience, which are highly valued and apply equally to full and part-time students. Tutors give clear, positive feedback on students' written assignments on a standard feedback sheet, supported by the annotation of scripts. Students stated that feedback to them was timely, constructive and helpful for improving their performance and grades. As identified in the Developmental engagement, both tutors and handbooks provide guidance on the level of work required in order to succeed. Some programmes make use of an online tutorial recording system, which integrates attendance and progression information.

36 Students confirmed that they greatly value the support which the College provides for their programmes. The College's higher education provision is successful in widening participation and raising students' aspirations. Careers guidance and advice for higher education students is provided centrally and from within the programme areas. Students particularly value the advice received from course staff, which often draws upon the career insights available through the extensive and close industrial links that the College enjoys. The comprehensive manner in which the College supports students on higher education programmes reflects good practice.

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

37 The arrangements for staff development are described in paragraphs 23 to 25. The College provides an extensive programme of staff development to support staff in their teaching and tutoring roles. Specific staff development support responds to individual staff reviews and strategic steers identified by heads of faculty.

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?

38 There is a clear and comprehensive Higher Education Learning Resources Policy which identifies the role the learning resources service plays in providing a full range of appropriate resources. All students benefit from access to a range of well-designed, specialised, professional facilities. The new college building is of a high quality and the campus offers some recreational and study space specifically for higher education students. The equipment and classroom resources are also of a high standard. Students are generally positive about all aspects of the resource provision to support their learning. The team concludes that specialist resources for learning are of high quality and are managed effectively.

39 The provision benefits from a large and diverse range of teaching staff, including many part-time specialist practitioners who are appropriately qualified and bring a wealth of vocational experience. Despite the high number and disparate backgrounds of staff, they operate within committed, cohesive and well-managed academic teams.

40 The College has prioritised an expansion of the Learning Resource Centre's resources, however, some students raised the difficulty they experience in obtaining hard copies of core texts. They attribute this to a shortage of multiple copies, or problems with the arrangements for short-term loans. It is desirable that the College improves access to core texts to meet the study needs of full-time higher education students. The work of the Learning Resource Centre's staff team is efficient and the College has evolved an effective strategy for electronic learning. The range of support materials, schedules and discussion

groups on the virtual learning environment indicates a proactive approach to electronic learning. The continued development of electronic learning presents a challenge to both staff and students, but all unit leaders are required to conform to a minimum specification of online learning materials. The team concludes that the College has effectively identified, and is successfully monitoring, the learning resources required to support achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programmes.

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?

41 The College publishes a dedicated Higher Education Prospectus that provides a useful introduction to each Foundation Degree programme; examples of students' experience and progression; and information on assessment, fees, support and progression. The same information is held on the college website from which the Prospectus can be downloaded or ordered from the College. The website pages have readily accessible controls for increasing the font size and for changing foreground and background colour schemes to accommodate various visual disabilities. Students consider the college website to be very informative.

42 The College also provides a comprehensive range of additional publications. A college Adult Learning Guide includes an informative page on Foundation Degrees that details mode of study, tuition fees and additional costs. Information on part-time courses also provides the days and times of study. A well-presented college Work-Related Training brochure for employers has a section on Foundation Degrees, including a case study. The College publishes a general Student Handbook that provides information on the support and services available to all students. There are also two compact Z-cards: one for library information and the other for essential college information. Large print and Braille versions of college information are available.

43 Programme handbooks for all courses are provided in collaboration with the awarding bodies, with the result that the layout and content varies. The FdSc Engineering programme specification includes detailed information on the purpose and expectations of work placements. Information on, for example, plagiarism varies considerably within the handbooks. College and programme handbooks are also available on the virtual learning environment together with other necessary course information, such as assessment schedules. The team encourages the College in its efforts to achieve consistency through supplementary publications and online resources.

44 Since the Developmental engagement, the College has published a comprehensive advanced study skills booklet. First year students on some programmes have benefitted from its pilot use. Some handbook information is more usefully detailed and partial revision of the booklet would be helpful. The reviewers would then encourage its use across the higher education provision. The Developmental engagement also identified as good practice a mentor guide developed and used by a few programmes. An enhanced mentor guide in accessible language that clearly states the roles and responsibilities of the mentor, together with what to expect from the College and the student, has been produced.

Again, the new document has been piloted and the reviewers encourage its use across the Foundation Degree provision, incorporating any employer feedback. It is desirable that the College continues to develop its study skills handbook and mentor guide and make these fully available in the next academic year.

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

45 The College publishes course information and programme handbooks with branding shared with the awarding bodies. All information is discussed with the consortium and awarding bodies at yearly meetings and partnership reviews. The College has internal procedures to ensure the accuracy of the public information held on its website and in the Prospectus. Inaccuracies are identified and rectified through a twice-yearly information audit. Course team leaders, link tutors, the Higher Education Coordinator, Marketing Manager and Vice-Principal are all actively involved in checking new and revised materials. Students and employers are involved in checking the accuracy and completeness of information that refers directly to them. Approval to publish is obtained prior to publication.

46 Responsibilities for shared information vary with each awarding body. The College has full responsibility for procedures to ensure the accuracy of this information on programmes validated by the University of Chester, subject to audit. For The Manchester Metropolitan University programmes, this responsibility is shared with the University. Material relating to The Manchester Metropolitan University programmes available to prospective and enrolled students must be approved by the relevant faculty. Ultimate responsibility for the effective control of the accuracy of all public information is retained by the University.

47 Through the annual higher education marketing survey, the College seeks students' views on marketing activities and published information. Students confirmed that the initial advice and guidance they received through the website or form tutors was helpful, accessible and accurate.

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

48 A Developmental engagement in assessment was held at the College in June 2010. The lines of enquiry were:

Lines of enquiry 1: Do assessment strategies provide consistency across all subject areas and are they in line with the academic expectations of the awarding higher education institution?

Lines of enquiry 2: Do work placements provide appropriate opportunities for students to gather work-based assessment evidence and how is this process supported by the College and by employer involvement?

Lines of enquiry 3: Is the information published and issued to students in relation to assessment fit for purpose and is the information appropriate, relevant, accurate and timely?

49 Good practice was identified in the assessment processes, including marking, verification and feedback to students. Some programmes showed well-developed approaches to the assessment of work-based learning. Students engaged in work-based assessments were supported by tutorial visits and a close involvement of work-place mentors and employers. In turn, employers and mentors were supported by clear guidance on their role in supporting and feeding back on student progress. Staff development and inter-college moderation systems in the consortium gave support for good assessment practice.

50 Recommendations encouraged active management of assessment standards to achieve greater consistency in implementing better practice in the College. This included linking intended learning outcomes more consistently to assignment briefs and assessment feedback and making students aware, more systematically, of academic writing skills and good academic practice. There was encouragement to share the good practice in work-based learning more consistently across the programme.

D Foundation Degrees

51 The College provision has remained stable since the Developmental engagement, with 14 Foundation Degrees offered, including engineering and construction subjects, electronic arts, business, hospitality and tourism, sports, education and public services. Validation of construction has moved from the University of Wolverhampton to Liverpool John Moores University, and a new BSc (Hons Top-up) in Building Management and Surveying has been introduced. Only professional qualifications in teaching and counselling are offered in addition to Foundation Degrees.

52 The strengths identified in the Development engagement, particularly in respect of the support and integration of work-based learning, are confirmed by the Summative review. The College offers highly competent and effective management of the standards and quality of its Foundation Degrees with clear reference to qualification benchmarks and relevant areas of the *Code of practice*.

53 All the conclusions stated in paragraphs 54 to 60 apply to Foundation Degrees.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- the overall organisation of work-based learning is highly effective (paragraphs 17, 29, 33)
- the College supports students on higher education programmes in a comprehensive manner (paragraph 36).

Integrated quality and enhancement review

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

57 The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:

- address in the developing Teaching and Learning Strategy how the approach to higher education will lead to improvement in the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 32)
- improve access to core texts to meet the study needs of full-time higher education students (paragraph 40)
- continue to develop its study skills handbook and mentor guide and make these fully available in the next academic year (paragraph 44).

58 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.

59 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.

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

South Cheshire College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2011

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall organisation of work-based learning is highly effective (paragraphs 17, 29, 33) 	<p>Further enhance employer forums and employer contribution to programmes</p> <p>Disseminate the good practice across all college HE programmes and to the wider Consortium</p>	<p>June 2012 with regular, interim updates</p> <p>December 2011</p>	<p>All course team leaders with support from the HE Coordinator and the Vice-Principal for Adult Skills, HE and Business Development</p> <p>Consortium Management and Resources Committee</p>	<p>Employers regularly attend College/ course events</p> <p>Dissemination is documented and identifiable</p>	<p>HE Quality Assurance and Development Committee</p> <p>HE Operational Group</p> <p>Management Team meetings</p> <p>HE Operational Group</p> <p>Consortium meetings</p>	<p>Minutes of college meetings</p> <p>Course reviews</p> <p>Employer and course evaluations</p> <p>Course documentation</p> <p>Minutes of meetings, including Consortium meetings</p> <p>Self-Assessment Report</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College supports students on higher education 	<p>Deliver a seminar to disseminate good practice at the HEI Partner Conference in</p>	<p>June 2011</p>	<p>Conference organisers</p> <p>Course team</p>	<p>Workshop/ seminar is delivered</p>	<p>HE Operational Group (reported to HE Quality Assurance and</p>	<p>Conference evaluation feedback</p>

programmes in a comprehensive manner (paragraph 36).	2011-12		leaders/ HE Coordinator		Development Committee) Consortium meetings	Minutes of Consortium meetings
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is desirable for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address in the developing Teaching and Learning Strategy how the approach to higher education will lead to improvement in the quality of learning opportunities (paragraph 32) 	Formalise current practice into an explicit part of the College's Teaching and Learning Strategy, demonstrating measurable outcomes	December 2011	Senior Management Team Quality Assurance Manager	Strategy is produced, effectively implemented and disseminated across the College	Senior Management Team HE Quality Assurance and Development Committee	Minutes of meetings Course reviews Self-Assessment Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve access to core texts to meet the study needs of full-time higher education students (paragraph 40) 	Review the book stock for each programme Identify key, core texts and the number available/ratio to student group	October 2011	Learning Resource Centre Manager in conjunction with Vice-Principal Adult Skills, HE and Business Development HE Coordinator	Library stock corresponds to College Learning Resource Centre policies Library stock reflects course documentation requirements	Senior Management Team HE Quality Assurance and Development Committee (through HE Operational Group)	Minutes of meetings Library Service Level Agreement Physical check of library resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop its study skills handbook and mentor guide and make these fully available in the next academic year (paragraph 44). 	<p>Ensure that the Study Skills Handbook and Mentor Guide are issued to all students at induction and to all returning second year students</p>	September 2011	Marketing Manager/ HE Coordinator	<p>Induction checklists show Handbook and Guide have been issued by each course</p>	HE Operational Group	<p>Minutes of meetings</p> <p>Agenda for HE Week</p> <p>Student feedback</p>
	<p>Deliver a continuous professional development session at a HE Operational Group meeting to ensure that staff understand the documents and can discuss them with their students</p>	September 2011	HE Co-ordinator	<p>Session is delivered</p>	HE Quality Assurance and Development Committee	
	<p>Review the usage of the Study Skills Handbook and Mentor Guide during HE Week</p>	November 2011	HE Co-ordinator		HE Operational Group	

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