



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Leeds City College**

**May 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 City College carried out in May 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 reflective and developmental approach that has led to effective and consistent structures and processes used for managing and assuring the College's higher education
- the careful planning and operation of the role and scope of the Higher Education Development Office offers support and direction to staff particularly for the peer review and for the effective checklist for award leaders
- management information is used in an analytical and robust way in general and particularly to identify and support failing courses
- higher education staff find the peer observation to be helpful and supportive of their development
- students are extremely appreciative of the approachability, flexibility and different mechanisms of contact with their individual tutors supported by email and the virtual learning environment
- the College is committed to promoting staff development through opportunity and enhancement and the identification and spread of good practice
- the operation and the planned development of the virtual learning environment is offering enhanced learning opportunities to students
- the allocation of one extra hour of remission for every three hours of higher education contact, in addition to their staff development allocation, gives higher education staff valued time for scholarly activities and other higher education duties.

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a recommendation for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

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

- consider the potential benefits of introducing a more formal and consistent approach to obtaining employer feedback.

## 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 City College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University, Teesside University, the University of Bradford, the University of Huddersfield and the University of Leeds. The review was carried out by Mrs Catherine Fairhurst, Mr Gary Hargreaves and Dr Michael Edmunds (reviewers) and Ms Penny Blackie (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 partner institutions; contact with employers; 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 City College was formed on 1 April 2009 as a result of a merger of Leeds College of Technology, Leeds Thomas Danby College and Park Lane College. It has become one of the largest colleges in England with more than 50,000 students and a turnover in the region of £80m a year. Although the first intake to Leeds City College was in September 2009, the higher education provision builds on long and successful legacies of the higher education offered by the three merged colleges. The College mission is 'to be recognised as an exceptional College providing life changing skills and experiences for individuals, businesses and communities'. It is committed to providing high quality provision. There are currently 587 full-time and 590 part-time higher education students, amounting to 1,026 full-time equivalents who are studying on five campuses. The programmes are taught by 98 members of staff, many of whom also teach on further education courses. The College has partnerships with Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Bradford, the University of Huddersfield, the University of Leeds and Teesside University. Most of the higher education provision is directly funded.

5 The higher education awards funded directly and indirectly by HEFCE are listed below, beneath their awarding body, with the full-time equivalent numbers of students for 2010-11 in brackets:

## **Edexcel**

- HNC Building Services (9)

## **Leeds Metropolitan University**

- FdA Airline & Airport Management (12)
- FdSc Animal Health and Welfare (28)
- FdSc Applied Computing (40)
- FdSc Applied Networking (23)
- FdA Business (13)
- FdA Business Management (77)
- FdA Children's Care Learning & Development (72)
- FdSc Computer Systems and Networking (16)
- FdA Counselling Skills & Studies (15)
- FdA Creative Writing (21)
- FdSc Electrical & Electronic Engineering (45.3)
- FdSc Food Science & Manufacturing Technology (5.66)
- FdA Legal Studies (31)
- FdSc Network Infrastructure (14)
- FdA Photography (42)
- FdSc Plant Use and Design (1.5)
- FdA Public Services (11)
- FdA Retail (20)
- FdA Security Management and Consultancy (40)
- FdA Social Care (18)
- FdA Sport Coaching and Development (91)
- FdA Theatre Studies (13)
- FdSc Wildlife Management and Conservation (19)
- FdA Young Children's Learning and Development (4)
- FdA Pensions Administration & Management (co-funded) (64)
- Certificate in Higher Education: Counselling (3.5)
- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (14.5)
- BSc (Hons) Animal Management (11)
- BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering (35)
- BA (Hons) Business (23)
- BSc (Hons) Applied Computing (10)
- BA (Hons) Photography (11)

## **University of Bradford**

- FdSc Health & Social Care (45)

## **University of Huddersfield**

- PGCE/Cert ED (47.5)
- BA (Hons) Education & Training (11)

## **University of Leeds**

- Year 0 Foundation Year Inter Disciplinary Science (45)



## Teesside University

- FdA Complementary Therapies (24)

## Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The College's responsibilities for higher education are specified within the formal agreements of the awarding bodies. The different reporting requirements are clearly identified and set out in a responsibility matrix. The responsibilities are defined and executed in accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. The development of internal policies and procedures is based on the relevant sections of the *Code of practice* and modelled on them. The agreements cover appropriate requirements in relation to academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information, although the detail varies in line with the scope and scale of the collaboration. The College has established a matrix which sets out these responsibilities clearly and thus avoids confusion.

7 Leeds Metropolitan University validates most of the higher provision at the College. The College sees itself as an important member of Leeds Metropolitan University's Regional University Network which allows the College considerable freedom to develop proposals for validation. This partnership has 24 college groups and provides validation opportunities for more than 11,000 students to take higher education qualifications in their own local environment. The Network is headed by an associate dean with administrative and academic support. Leeds Metropolitan University has recently set up a Collaborations Office within the Registrar and Secretary's Office to provide regulatory guidance and audit facilities. The College has recently undergone successful revalidations with the University of Huddersfield and Teesside University.

## Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 To manage the growth in higher education which resulted from the merger, the College invested in a higher education infrastructure, the Higher Education Development Office, to develop common policies and procedures and to monitor their implementation and effectiveness. This infrastructure gives the College the capacity to manage further growth and future proposed mergers. The Higher Education Development Office has worked to ensure that consistent quality systems and procedures are embedded across the whole provision. The College will take a view on applying for Foundation Degree awarding powers over the next three years. During 2009-10 the College undertook a review of the higher education provision to maximise efficiency and effectiveness and to avoid duplication of the curriculum. This has led to a number of courses being withdrawn and similar provision on separate campuses being consolidated. The College has increased student numbers through a successful bid to HEFCE for 342 co-funded places.

9 In 2010, the Higher Education Development Office had a further restructure with the posts of Director of Higher Education and the Higher Education Manager being combined to form a new post of Head of Higher Education. Senior management responsibilities lie with the Vice Principal for Adult, Community and Higher Education. Following the merger, the College appointed pathway leaders to support course teams regarding quality processes, reviews and monitoring. One aim of these appointments was to work across the campuses, share good practice and to help develop the identity of the College's higher education. To enable the Head of Higher Education to have a more strategic role, the College is introducing higher education curriculum area managers in faculties. The College recognises

that the pathway leaders have completed their original role and will now have just one Pathway Coordinator who will report to the Head of Higher Education.

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

10 The student written submission reflects the views of a wide range of students studying on many different courses within the College's HEFCE-funded higher education provision. Meetings took place with students across four campuses, so that students from all courses had the opportunity to attend. Students were invited to produce their own submission, but unanimously elected to have an external facilitator conduct the sessions and write the initial report while retaining editorial and submission rights. This was also supported by the Students' Union. Students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and made a helpful contribution to a meeting during the review visit.

## **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 The newly merged College introduced structures and processes specifically designed to support, monitor and enhance the merger and management of its higher education provision in 2009. These include the dedicated Higher Education Development Office led by a Head of Higher Education, a support system of pathway leaders, a Higher Education Committee, a Teaching and Learning Committee and a Higher Education Assessment Policy. The Higher Education Committee determines the shape and direction of higher education within the College and reports to senior and executive leadership teams and the Academic Board. At the time of the review, the College considered that these procedures had achieved much of their purpose, and in turn needed to be reviewed and replaced with alternatives that took account of the current maturity of the structures of the new College. This review is underway and the team considers that the changes, which include the introduction of the Pathway Coordinator, will enhance the management.

12 The responsibility for managing higher education standards lies with the Higher Education Development Office. The Higher Education Development Office provides an effective infrastructure for the higher education provision which the staff have adopted enthusiastically. This includes the design, development, delivery, quality assurance, marketing and promotion of courses. This Office includes a dedicated Higher Education Registrar, administrator, Admissions Officer and apprentice, to support the four higher education pathway leaders. Robust internal quality assurance mechanisms are monitored by the Higher Education Development Office in a number of ways: through the committee structure, the annual peer review process and the annual higher education review. The reflective and developmental approach that has led to effective and consistent structures and processes used for managing and assuring the College's higher education is a feature of good practice.

13 The higher education peer review and the annual review are conducted rigorously and generate action plans from all higher education staff in comprehensive and evaluative

analysis of the provision. In particular, the team considers that the peer review is a comprehensive and open method of achieving consistency and improvement across the College. The Higher Education Development Office has also developed a checklist that award leaders are required to complete throughout the year. Both new and experienced award leaders commented on the usefulness of this document to guide their practice and promote consistency across all campuses. The careful planning and operation of the role and scope of the Higher Education Development Office offers support and direction to staff, particularly for peer review. This and the effective checklist for award leaders is good practice.

14 The College has been developing its use of management information since the merger. It is working to improve the range and accuracy of data available at all levels, even though it already uses a wide range of data including, for example, retention, achievement and success reports. There is a probing and effective system to help identify failing modules and courses, which becomes part of the internal quality and inspection audit process. The involvement of the Principal ensures that appropriate action is taken. Management information is used in an analytical and robust way in general and particularly to identify and support failing courses and is a feature of good practice.

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

15 The Academic Infrastructure is embedded in the awarding body regulations and the College's policies and procedures. All courses take full account of the FHEQ, the subject benchmark statements, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*, programme specifications and the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. The Guide to Higher Education Quality Assurance supports the commitment to implement procedures and practices across the College, in particular the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. Awarding bodies determine the regulatory framework and curriculum development in the five indirectly-funded partnerships. The staff described the extensive use they make of the Academic Infrastructure, national occupational standards, professional body qualification requirements and other employer input in designing the curriculum.

16 External examiners are a valued part of the system for assuring standards. Following the Developmental engagement, their reports are now widely available to students and staff, provide helpful and developmental feedback, and are used to inform discussions and the creation of action plans across the College. Award or pathway leaders respond to these reports in accordance with set procedures, confirm actions and monitor progress. The Higher Education Development Office compiles a summary of issues arising from the external examiners' reports and other aspects of the assessment processes and includes this summary in the Higher Education Annual Review for consideration by the Higher Education Committee.

### **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?**

17 The College quality assurance and enhancement systems set the standards to be achieved and identify expectations in line with the awarding body requirements. The awarding body representatives the team met reinforced the strength of the positive and productive close working relationship the College has with its six partners in ensuring standards of higher education. The College is careful to avoid any possible confusion by maintaining separate arrangements for each course. For the directly-funded provision, the College has significant responsibilities for curriculum design and quality assurance as laid out in the Higher Education Scheme. This delegates responsibilities for directly-funded

provision to the College, including the recruitment of students, setting of learning outcomes, setting of all assessment processes and the conduct of the Board of Examiners. Responsibilities for indirectly-funded programmes are more equally shared between the partners. For the Leeds Metropolitan University Regional University Network, a scheme board is responsible for the quality assurance and overall policy for courses within the scheme. The scheme annual quality report is incorporated into a College annual review along with points from the annual reviews for the other awarding bodies. This report is considered by the College's Higher Education Committee and subsequently by the College's Education Standards Committee.

18 An annual planning event for the Leeds Metropolitan University scheme is held at the end of each academic year. It ensures that all awards and modules are current and that modules are delivered and assessed in a manner that will ensure that students have a quality learning experience. It is followed by a scheme approvals board to approve the outcomes of the deliberations, for example, any modifications. Other awarding bodies have course and university-specific expectations relating to curriculum and assessment.

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

19 The College works with its awarding bodies to develop an appropriate range of staff development activities to support and enhance the maintenance of standards. The Procedures and Regulations for Higher Education Development and Training, published for 2010-11, guides the staff development activities that support higher education, and provides a generic procedure for evaluating the impact of continuing professional development in all areas. This draws on the results of staff appraisal. The Peer Review Report, January 2011, noted the comprehensive staff development programme, supported through the Higher Education Committee, that encourages professional updating, including the acquisition of professional and higher qualifications. Examples of effective practice include development days for new staff, staff being invited to moderation events in advance of joining award teams, and frequent use of mentors, including e-mentors to facilitate the development of the virtual learning environment. The peer review system is an important means of identifying good practice, which is then effectively shared using one of three annual staff development days as a 'sharing good practice day'.

20 The College Higher Education Strategy 2009-12 includes an objective to develop a research profile through scholarly and pedagogical activities. The staff valued the opportunities provided by the College for their professional development, including 10 days' recorded scholarly activity each year, but acknowledged that the pressure of other duties could limit the scholarly activity undertaken. The College is reviewing its practice with the aim of further supporting and encouraging higher levels of activity for all higher education staff.

**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?**

21 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities, are described in paragraphs 11 and 12. Comprehensive higher education policies include those on assessment, e-learning, the accreditation of prior learning, learner entitlement and a Higher Education Guide to Quality Assurance. It was evident from meetings with staff that the responsibilities and reporting structures are clear and well understood.

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

22 The awarding bodies are confident that the College is fulfilling their agreed responsibilities for ensuring that students receive appropriate learning opportunities and all give extensive support to these long-standing well-established relationships. An external examiner has also remarked on comment which commends the strong working partnership between the College and Teesside University. Learning opportunities are considered as part of the approval and review processes both at the College and by the awarding bodies. This and the external examiner scrutiny assures the College that it is fulfilling its obligations to the awarding bodies and the team agrees.

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

23 The design and approval of courses take appropriate account of the Academic Infrastructure (see paragraph 15). The team confirms the peer review findings that processes and practices meet the *Code of practice* precepts, particularly those on collaborative provision, disabled students, external examiners, assessment of students, programme design, approval, monitoring and review, work-based and placement learning, and admissions. External benchmarks are used across the higher education provision and full use is made of the Academic Infrastructure to underpin the delivery and monitoring of learning opportunities across the courses.

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

24 The College assures itself of the quality of learning opportunities through formal teaching observation and peer observation, student feedback and quality assurance processes which include annual planning and review. The Teaching and Learning Strategy is reviewed annually and a Teaching and Learning Committee reports regularly to the Higher Education Committee. In 2010 the College introduced a pilot peer observation process for staff teaching only higher education courses to enhance teaching through sharing good practice with colleagues. Higher education staff find the peer observation to be helpful and supportive of their development. The pilot observation scheme will now be rolled out across the higher education provision.

25 The College has responded appropriately to the Developmental engagement recommendation that it develop guidance for students on the effective use of the web-based resource to detect plagiarism by including an appropriate section in all student handbooks. The students the team met were clear about the nature of plagiarism and the penalties that any offence would attract. The College is continuing to develop its practice in regard to

plagiarism avoidance and detection, including sessions in its effective core personal and professional development modules, and the use of the virtual learning environment for the electronic submission of assignments.

26 Course team members regularly attend meetings at their partnership university and College award leaders have effective relationships with link tutors. Students have access to facilities at their partner universities but make the best use of those that are nearest to the College. Students confirmed that they use the library and online facilities of their partner university on a regular basis. They also participate in events and activities, for example a mooted competition with other university students.

27 There is extensive employer involvement in the learning experience, especially on the Foundation Degrees. Several courses have employer boards to advise staff on industry-related matters. The external examiner for the HNC Building Services commended the enrichment links demonstrated by external lecturers and visits. Students on many courses have the opportunity to present group projects to industry. Another commendable feature of the Higher Education Development Office is that the Business Development Manager seeks employer input. The Developmental engagement in assessment concluded that employers make a valuable contribution by offering students challenging work placements, by advising on course design and by contributing as external speakers, all of which the students appreciate. The personal, professional and development modules act as a focus for work experience, work-based learning and reflecting on students' experience and employability skills. Students confirmed that their learning opportunities are enhanced by external speakers such as professional photographers and practitioners from the National Health Service, and expressed their appreciation of how closely theory is related to practice in the workplace. Although employer involvement is appreciated by students, the College does not always receive feedback from employers. The team recommends that it is desirable for the College to consider the potential benefits of introducing a more formal and consistent approach to obtaining employer feedback.

28 Students are able to provide feedback on the quality of their learning opportunities to the College and the awarding bodies in a variety of ways. Formal feedback is through module evaluation and internal surveys, as well as the National Student Survey. Student feedback is analysed, evaluated and considered at various levels, including module evaluation at course team meetings with student representatives, with pathway leaders, the Higher Education Annual Report, and the Academic Board. Students also participate in the peer review process. Students are aware of whom to approach and how to suggest changes and raise concerns. They gave the team a number of examples where change has been effective, for example adjusting evening timetables to suit students' needs.

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

29 The College has a clear commitment to support full and part-time students. The Developmental engagement commended the support for part-time students who appreciate the different mechanisms of contact, such as one-to-one interviews, telephone conversations, email contact and the use of the virtual learning environment, that help to improve their understanding of assessment and other aspects of their learning. There is a range of College-based and university financial and pastoral support services available to students. The major focus of student support is the personal tutorial system. Students are extremely appreciative of the approachability and flexibility of their tutors and their methods of contact, supported by email, telephone and the virtual learning environment.

30 All academic staff have attended a training programme on students with additional needs, and students are encouraged to disclose their additional learning needs at any time throughout the year. Staff indicated examples of special arrangements made for blind,

visually impaired and dyslexic students. Applicants to higher education courses who require additional support have access to enhanced support during admission through the Higher Education Admissions Officer who assists with applications from applicants with disabilities.

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

31 The College Strategic Plan seeks to 'extend a training and development strategy which will deliver the key capabilities and competencies needed by the College to create and sustain an environment that will nurture the personal learning and development of staff'. See paragraphs 20 to 21 for the staff development policy and procedures. The Higher Education Committee ensures good support for staff development opportunities with the provision of a comprehensive programme, including an annual higher education conference. Staff new to higher education have an induction process. Effective examples of staff development include staff who have retained their membership of professional bodies; organised a Network Academy, thus obtaining professional updating in high-level information technology; made a presentation to the Huddersfield consortium of 24 partners on non-Western education theorists; and attended and presented at a number of academic conferences. The team concludes that the College is committed to promoting staff development through providing opportunity and enhancement of practice and the identification and spread of good practice.

### **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?**

32 The need for a wide range of learning and specialist learning resources is identified through the comprehensive approval process and annual reviews. The College discusses the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources through the Higher Education Committee. Course teams are also able to bid for equipment and staff development through the Higher Education Development Fund, for example specialist software to support electrical and electronic engineering courses, and fees for master's degrees.

33 There are effective communications between the Library+ (a name chosen by the students) and the academic staff. The library staff attend course committees, develop and update module reading lists and provide study skills. The University of Huddersfield offers specialised training to education librarians. Students have access to personal computers and the internet for six days a week. A higher education study area in the library is networked with information technology equipment for students. Students appreciate the online learning resources and the ways in which they are being developed. Students find the virtual learning environment comprehensive in content and easy to use both remotely and within the College. This confirms the Development engagement conclusion that students regard the virtual learning environment as a positive resource. Further development of the virtual learning environment is planned. This will offer enhanced learning opportunities to students, for example through e-mentors, e-learning materials developers, electronic communications and tracking assessments. Students find the virtual learning environment comprehensive in content and easy to use both remotely and within the College. The operation of the virtual learning environment is good practice.

34 Each head of faculty has responsibility for staffing, identified in course proposals submitted to the Higher Education Committee. Staff records are scrutinised by the College and the awarding bodies approve that qualifications are at the right level. Staff acknowledge that the College supports them well. The allocation of one extra hour of remission for every three hours of higher education contact, in addition to their staff development allocation,

gives higher education staff valued time for scholarly activity and other higher education duties. The team considers this to be good practice.

**The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities as required by the awarding 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?**

35 The partnership agreements with the awarding bodies identify clearly the responsibilities delegated to the College in relation to publishing, much of which the partner universities approve directly. This information covers the higher education prospectus, course leaflets, course and module handbooks and programme specifications, as well as supporting documents for staff. Information is in printed and electronic formats. The latter includes the College's website and the staff and student portals on the virtual learning environment. On the College's website there is a well-designed and comprehensive section relating to higher education, which includes student handbooks and information about accommodation and fees. Arrangements with the awarding bodies also make clear the approval process for on-course and promotional information. The College provides a range of other published materials including the College Strategic Plan, and information to employers.

#### **What arrangements does the College have in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information the College has responsibility for publishing?**

36 The Higher Education Committee is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of public information. All published information, including that on staff and student portals, is subject to rigorous scrutiny by pathway leaders, heads of faculties, the Head of Higher Education and awarding bodies. Although the published information may vary according to the requirements of the awarding body, the College provides standard templates to ensure accuracy, completeness and consistency. Completed templates are then reviewed and robustly audited by the Higher Education Development Office. For example, all course handbooks include programme specifications, detailed information about assessment, plagiarism and student support. Similarly, although module handbooks may differ according to the awarding body requirements, they still provide students with comparable information, and are subject to a robust monitoring process. Students confirmed that standardised course handbooks and documentation, including assessments, are helpful, and also noted that where any inaccuracies are identified, changes are made swiftly and students informed.

37 There are well-understood protocols for the creation, approval and signing off of public information. The College monitors the accuracy of its published information through the award leaders who create the content for course information sheets, as well as course and module handbooks. These are then approved and signed off by the pathway leaders, head of faculty and the Head of Higher Education and then by the awarding body. The Head of Higher Education also signs off the prospectus with the Higher Education Admissions Officer.



**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 took place in May 2010 and covered all the higher education provision. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College and ensured that all IQER core themes could be addressed:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How does the College ensure that its assessment processes encourage effective learning and maintain the appropriate academic standards?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How do the College's procedures for providing feedback to students benefit their learning?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How does the College ensure that students receive accurate and comprehensive information about assessment?

39 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. The College's considered, systematic and effective structures, introduced consistently across the higher education provision very soon after the merger, encourage effective assessment practices and help maintain appropriate standards. The rigorous internal peer review process has proved an effective vehicle for reflection and team building across the new institution. The relevance and increasing academic challenge of assessments; and the variety, clarity and detail of assessment briefs, offer innovative opportunities for vocational practice and work-based learning. Employers make a valuable contribution to assessment design by offering students challenging work placements with negotiated work-based projects, and by advising on assessments in a range of higher education programmes. Detailed, constructive and developmental feedback, delivered by a variety of methods, enables students to improve their performance. The support for part-time students, who appreciate the different mechanisms of contact, helps to improve their understanding of assessment tasks and outcomes. Course handbooks contain clear, accurate, helpful information, including the intended learning outcomes, and are matched to effective assessment briefs which also make the learning outcomes transparent.

40 The team also made two recommendations. It considered that it would be desirable for the College to develop guidance on the effective use of the web-based resource to detect plagiarism in order to support academic honesty without developing student dependency. It would also be desirable for the College to ensure that external examiner reports are shared with students in accordance with the HEFCE publication *Review of the Quality Assurance Framework: Phase two outcomes*, October 2006.

## D Foundation Degrees

41 A key feature of the College's higher education strategy is to focus on the need 'to establish progression routes from further education to Foundation Degrees and honours degrees and effectively manage the provision in a difficult economic climate'. Foundation Degrees are validated by three awarding bodies, 25 as part of the Leeds Metropolitan University Higher Education Scheme. Progression to level 6 honours degrees is offered at the College in five subject areas. The Universities of Bradford and Teesside each validate one Foundation Degree award. Foundation Degrees are offered in a wide range of curriculum areas in both full-time and part-time modes for those already working in the appropriate sector. The largest number of enrolments is in applied computing, business and management, children's care learning and development, electrical and electronic engineering, health and social care, photography, and security management and consultancy. A review of the higher education provision post-merger has led to the closing of some courses and the consolidation of others into one course.

42 The College has aligned the development of Foundation Degrees with the Academic Infrastructure, particularly the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Course teams have involved employers in the design, delivery, review and formative assessment. In business management, for example, the National Health Service has been closely involved and releases employees from the workplace to study at the College. Local photographers offer work placements, guest lecturers and subject advice. The College has recognised the challenges of the changing economic environment and has been successful in being allocated 342 co-funded student numbers for the FdA Pensions Administration and Management. The Foundation Degree developments support the College's mission to provide life-changing skills for individuals, businesses and the communities. The College is considering applying for Foundation Degree awarding powers.

43 The areas of good practice and recommendations identified during the Summative review are common to the whole provision. They are listed in the main conclusions, paragraphs 44 to 47.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

44 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Leeds City College 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, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Bradford, the University of Huddersfield, the University of Leeds and Teesside University.

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

- the reflective and developmental approach that has led to effective and consistent structures and processes used for managing and assuring the College's higher education (paragraphs 11 and 12)
- the careful planning and operation of the role and scope of the Higher Education Development Office offers support and direction to staff, particularly for peer review and for the effective checklist for award leaders (paragraph 13)
- management information is used in an analytical and robust way in general and particularly to identify and support failing courses (paragraph 14)

- higher education staff find the peer observation to be helpful and supportive of their development (paragraph 24)
- students are extremely appreciative of the approachability, flexibility and different mechanisms of contact with their individual tutors supported by email and the virtual learning environment (paragraph 29)
- the College is committed to promoting staff development through opportunity and enhancement and the identification and spread of good practice (paragraphs 31)
- the operation and the planned development of the virtual learning environment is offering enhanced learning opportunities to students (paragraph 33)
- the allocation of one extra hour of remission for every three hours of higher education contact, in addition to their staff development allocation, gives higher education staff valued time for scholarly activities and other higher education duties (paragraph 34).

46 The team also makes a recommendation for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies:

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

- consider the potential benefits from introducing a more formal and consistent approach to obtaining employer feedback (paragraph 27).

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 standards of the awards of its awarding bodies.

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 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.

50 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 City College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 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 reflective and developmental approach that has led to effective and consistent structures and processes used for managing and assuring the College's higher education (paragraphs 11 and 12)</li> </ul>	To continue to monitor and review structures and processes	May 2012	HE Team	Effective structures and processes in place	HE Committee Senior Leadership Team	Good HE Annual Peer Review reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the careful planning and operation of the role and scope of the Higher Education Development Office offers support and direction to staff particularly for peer review and the effective checklist for award leaders (paragraph 13)</li> </ul>	To continue to review the role of HEDO and the support offered to higher education staff	May 2012	HE Team	Staff evaluations of development events  Comprehensive higher education staff development	HE Committee	Staff evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>management information is used in an analytical and robust way in general and particularly to identify and support failing courses (paragraph 14)</li> </ul>	To monitor and review the use of management information to ensure that it is used effectively to support	March 2012	HE Team	Strong higher education provision	HE Committee Executive and Senior Leadership Team	Composite higher education reports  Course

	the development of higher education					review and planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>higher education staff find the peer observation to be helpful and supportive of their development (paragraph 24)</li> </ul>	To adapt this as College Policy following the successful pilot	Sept 2011	All higher education staff and College Observation Team	Good quality higher education provision supported by student evaluations	HE Committee Senior and Executive Leadership Team	Student evaluations Staff feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students are extremely appreciative of the approachability, flexibility and different mechanisms of contact with their individual tutors, supported by email and the virtual learning environment (paragraph 29)</li> </ul>	To continue to monitor and review student support	May 2011	All higher education staff	Well-supported students	HE Committee	Student evaluations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College is committed to promoting staff development through opportunity and enhancement and the identification and spread of good practice (paragraph 31)</li> </ul>	To offer a full staff development programme including specific higher education events in addition to the College staff development programme. To continue with the HE Sharing Good Practice Day	May 2011	HE Team and HR	A comprehensive staff development programme with opportunities for sharing good practice	HE Committee	Staff and Student Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the operation and the planned development of the virtual learning environment is offering enhanced learning opportunities to students</li> </ul>	To continue to review and monitor the development of the virtual learning environment to ensure the optimum learning	May 2011	All higher education staff and virtual learning environment managers	An interactive virtual learning environment offering enhanced learning opportunities for	HE Committee	Student feedback External examiner and employer

(paragraph 33)	opportunities for students			students		feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the allocation of one extra hour of remission for every three hours of higher education contact, in addition to their staff development allocation, gives higher education staff valued time for scholarly activities and other higher education duties (paragraph 34).</li> </ul>	To formalise the approach to scholarly activity so that it is recorded and disseminated	May 2011	HE Team and all HE staff	An established scholarly activity programme	HE Committee	<p>Membership of HEA</p> <p>Events for disseminating good practice and scholarly activity</p>
<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 considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider the potential benefits from introducing a more formal and consistent approach to obtaining employer feedback (paragraph 27).</li> </ul>	To review the approach to obtaining employer feedback and how it could be used	May 2011	HE Team	Consistent and effective procedures to obtain employer feedback	HE Committee	Valuable feedback from employers to be used when reviewing awards

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