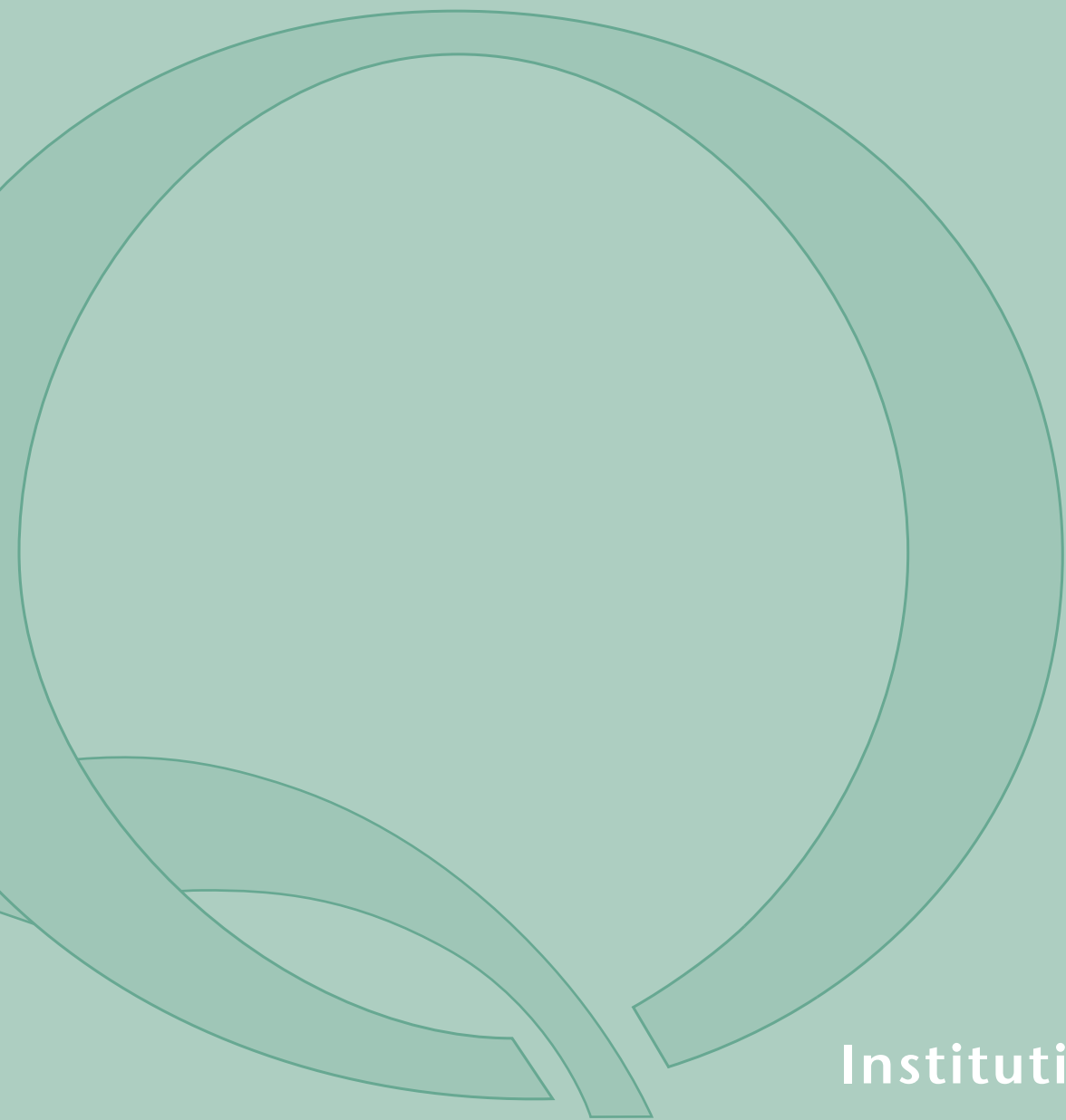




QAA



Institutional audit

Leeds Trinity & All Saints

MAY 2009

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Preface

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

In England and Northern Ireland QAA conducts Institutional audits, on behalf of the higher education sector, to provide public information about the maintenance of academic standards and assurance of the quality of learning opportunities provided for students. It also operates under contract to the Higher Education Funding Council in England and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland to provide evidence to meet their statutory obligations to assure the quality and standards of academic programmes for which they disburse public funding. The audit method was developed in partnership with the funding councils and the higher education representative bodies and agreed, following consultation with higher education institutions and other interested organisations. The method was endorsed by the former Department for Education and Skills. It was revised in 2006, following recommendations from the Quality Assurance Framework Review Group, a representative group established to review the structures and processes of quality assurance in England and Northern Ireland, and to evaluate the work of QAA.

Institutional audit is an evidence-based process carried out through peer review. It forms part of the Quality Assurance Framework established in 2002, following revisions to the United Kingdom's approach to external quality assurance. At the centre of the process is an emphasis on students and their learning.

The aims of the revised Institutional audit process are to meet the public interest in knowing that universities and colleges in England and Northern Ireland have:

- effective means of ensuring that the awards and qualifications in higher education are of an academic standard at least consistent with those referred to in *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and are, where relevant, exercising their powers as degree-awarding bodies in a proper manner
- effective means of providing learning opportunities of a quality that enables students, whether on taught or research programmes, to achieve those higher education awards and qualifications
- effective means of enhancing the quality of their educational provision, particularly by building on information gained through monitoring, internal and external reviews, and feedback from stakeholders.

Institutional audit results in judgements about the institutions being reviewed. Judgements are made about:

- the confidence that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of its programmes
- the confidence that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards.

Audit teams also comment specifically on:

- the institution's arrangements for maintaining appropriate academic standards and quality of provision of postgraduate research programmes
- the institution's approach to developing and implementing institutional strategies for enhancing the quality of its educational provision, both taught and by research

- the reliance that can reasonably be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the institution publishes about the quality of its educational provision and the standards of its awards.

If the audit includes the institution's collaborative provision, the judgements and comments also apply to collaborative provision, unless the audit team considers that any of its judgements or comments in respect of the collaborative provision differ from those in respect of the institution's 'home' provision. Any such differences will be reflected in the form of words used to express a judgement or comment on the reliance that can reasonably be placed on the accuracy, integrity, completeness and frankness of the information that the institution publishes, and about the quality of its programmes and the academic standards of its awards.

Explanatory note on the format for the report and the annex

The reports of quality audits have to be useful to several audiences. The revised Institutional audit process makes a clear distinction between that part of the reporting process aimed at an external audience and that aimed at the institution. There are three elements to the reporting:

- the **summary** of the findings of the report, including the judgements, is intended for the wider public, especially potential students
- the **report** is an overview of the findings of the audit for both lay and external professional audiences
- a separate **annex** provides the detail and explanations behind the findings of the audit and is intended to be of practical use to the institution.

The report is as concise as is consistent with providing enough detail for it to make sense to an external audience as a stand-alone document. The summary, the report and the annex are published on QAA's website.

Summary

Introduction

A team of auditors from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) visited Leeds Trinity & All Saints (the College) from 19 to 21 May 2009, to carry out an Institutional audit. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the learning opportunities available to students and on the academic standards of the awards that the College offers.

Outcomes of the Institutional audit

As a result of its investigations the audit team's view of the College's is that:

- confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards it delivers on behalf of the University of Leeds
- confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Institutional approach to quality enhancement

The College has adopted a systematic approach to the appraisal and enhancement of the quality of students' learning opportunities across all levels of the institution.

Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

The College's arrangements for postgraduate research students are soundly based, and the research environment and postgraduate research student experience meet the expectations of section 1 of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*.

Published information

Reliance can largely be placed on the accuracy of the information the College publishes about the quality of its educational provision and the standards of the awards it delivers on behalf of the University of Leeds, but some problems of communicating with students have yet to be resolved, and aspects of accuracy and accessibility would benefit from management attention.

Features of good practice

The audit team identified the following areas as being good practice:

- the planned and strategic review of the committee structure and the inclusive and effective manner in which its findings were implemented
- the meticulous tracking of actions through the committee system
- the use of the summary overview of external examiners' reports to contribute to the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities
- the clarity and comprehensiveness of assessment criteria
- the distinctive character, strategic importance and successful outcomes of the College's well-organised and effectively implemented placement scheme for all students
- the identification of the enhancement opportunities provided by the introduction of academic profiles.

Recommendations for action

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

- take steps to put in place the timely delivery of training for all student committee representatives
- ensure that external examiners' reports are shared with student representatives as a matter of course, in accordance with HEFCE 06/45
- revise its module descriptor forms, to make clear the relationship between module and programme learning outcomes
- facilitate student access to the rules on progression and classification of awards
- move expeditiously towards a decision on the anonymous-marking of coursework
- consider further its range of mechanisms for achieving the full and active participation of students in quality management
- improve academic departments' liaison with Learning Information Services, to facilitate the timely and systematic provision of learning resources for new and existing programmes
- undertake a formal review of its engagement with an overseas partner institution
- improve the effectiveness of the ways in which it brings academic information to the attention of students.

Reference points

To provide further evidence to support its findings, the audit team investigated the use made by the College of the Academic Infrastructure, which provides a means of describing academic standards in UK higher education. It allows for diversity and innovation within academic programmes offered by higher education. QAA worked with the higher education sector to establish the various parts of the Academic Infrastructure which are:

- the *Code of practice*
- the frameworks for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in Scotland
- subject benchmark statements
- programme specifications.

The audit found that the College engages constructively with the Academic Infrastructure.

Report

Preface

1 An Institutional audit of Leeds Trinity & All Saints (the College) was undertaken between 19 and 21 May 2009, following a lengthy interaction for the purpose of considering the College's application for taught degree awarding powers. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the management of the academic standards of the awards the College makes on behalf of the University of Leeds (the University) and of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

2 The audit team comprised Emeritus Professor G Chesters, Mr P Lloyd, and Miss S Riches, auditors, and Miss G Hooper, audit secretary. The audit was coordinated for QAA by Professor R Harris, Assistant Director, Reviews Group.

Section 1: Introduction and Background

3 Leeds Trinity & All Saints traces its origins to 1966, with the foundation of two Roman Catholic teacher training colleges: Trinity College for women and All Saints College for men. These colleges, which diversified their provision in 1974 to include a wider range of degree programmes, merged to form Trinity and All Saints College in 1980. The College adopted its present title in 2007. While the College values its Roman Catholic tradition, becoming a founder member of the Confederation of Church Colleges in 2002, it is committed to inclusiveness and to respecting the integrity of staff and students of all faiths and none.

4 Since its inception, the College has offered programmes leading to awards of the University of Leeds (the University). Its Strategic Plan 2007-2012 expresses its three key strategic aims as: to be recognised as a well-managed, autonomous higher education institution demonstrating excellence across all activities; to empower individuals, enabling them to contribute to their communities as productive, enterprising and creative citizens of the world, and to establish an enhanced and distinctive profile within a range of communities.

5 The College has 2,650 full-time equivalent students (of which 2,300 are undergraduates, 300 taught postgraduates and five research students; the remainder are taking non-credit bearing courses). Full-time students account for 95 per cent of the undergraduate and almost three-quarters of the postgraduate population. With 110 full-time equivalent teaching staff, the College has a ratio of 24:1.

6 The College is a collaborative partner of the University and stated that it does not have collaborative arrangements of its own as defined by QAA. It does, however, have at least one partnership agreement not so defined, to which further reference is made in this report (see paragraph 43).

7 The College's previous Institutional audit resulted in a judgement of broad confidence in its current and likely future capacity to manage the quality of its programmes and the academic standards of its awards. The audit team identified seven features of good practice and made three recommendations, one of which, the training of student representatives, is the subject of a similar recommendation on this occasion (see paragraph 27). The remaining recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily.

8 Of particular significance since this audit has been an Effectiveness Review, which led to significant changes to culture and structure. This major exercise, which was conducted in parallel with a review of the portfolios of senior staff, entailed widespread and inclusive discussion and debate: the audit team found the planned and strategic review of the committee structure and the inclusive and effective manner in which its findings were implemented constitute a feature of good practice.

9 The College's senior academic body, Academic Board, is supported in its quality management responsibilities by: the Academic Standards Committee; the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, and the Research and Enterprise Committee. Of these, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee was established in the wake of the Effectiveness Review, with a quality enhancement brief and to monitor the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, a strategy, in the words of senior staff, involving a commitment to 'putting students first'.

10 The Quality Support Unit plays a significant role in central administration. Its duties include: maintaining the online Academic Quality Handbook; organising validation events and internal academic audits; administering, analysing and reporting on student surveys, and coordinating a wide range of committees. The audit team found that the meticulous tracking of actions through the committee system constitutes a feature of good practice.

11 The College is structured academically around three faculties (Arts and Social Sciences; Education, and Media, Business and Marketing), each further divided into departments. Faculties are led by deans; their deliberative structures include a quality and standards committee with fixed terms of reference; each department has a student staff academic committee, also with fixed terms of reference; the minutes of the latter are required to be received by the former.

Section 2: Institutional management of academic standards

12 The College uses external examiners at subject level, with a procedural external examiner sitting on the College Board of Examiners. The audit found: nomination procedures, terms of appointment, and roles and responsibilities are clear and appropriate; examiners receive comprehensive advice and information in a bespoke handbook; the required reporting format is appropriate; external examiners' reports prompt well-focused and timely debate, and responses are, as noted above (paragraph 10) meticulously tracked. Nevertheless, in that student members of student staff academic committees do not have full access to the reports, it is desirable for the College to ensure that external examiners' reports are shared with student representatives as a matter of course, in accordance with HEFCE 06/45 (see also paragraph 50).

13 Academic Standards Committee receives an overview report of matters raised by external examiners. This report, which is ultimately submitted to the University, identifies: generic issues relating to quality and standards; matters for consideration and action, and aspects of good practice for dissemination. The use of the summary overview of external examiners' reports to contribute to the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities constitutes a feature of good practice.

14 Programme approval, monitoring and review are based on specific institutional expectations: these are clearly articulated in a manner the audit team found in all respects satisfactory. Programme approval was found, following careful scrutiny, to be detailed, probing and challenging, and to pay close attention to modules' contribution to programmes. For major and minor modifications, a simpler procedure is in place: although generally robust, unlike programme approval, this does not require discussion of the relationship between module and programme objectives. It is desirable for the College to revise its module descriptor forms, to make clear the relationship between module and programme learning outcomes, both at the point of approval and subsequently in revised programme specifications.

15 Annual review, based on the evaluation of modules rather than programmes, contains an appropriately wide range of statistical data, as well as qualitative information and analysis. The ensuing reports contribute to the faculty annual review reports submitted to Academic Standards Committee, which in turn contribute to the College's annual review report to the University. The Academic Standards Committee was found to ensure, through the meticulous tracking described earlier (see paragraphs 10, 12) that all items requiring attention are thoroughly and promptly addressed.

16 Periodic review (internal audit) normally focuses on departmental management of quality (assurance and enhancement) and academic standards: internal audit teams include independent external specialists, but not students. Internal audit was found to be an intensive and well-managed process, which engages external advice and expertise and is manifestly capable of making robust judgements.

17 The College also has a procedure for commissioning individual thematic audits: so far, the only such audit, on professional development placements (see paragraph 34), took place a year prior to the audit visit. The event itself, though substantively helpful, was not without procedural difficulties; the College is currently reflecting on the experience, and has yet to decide on its future.

18 Programme approval, annual review and periodic audit were found to contribute to the assurance of the quality of students' learning opportunities and the management of academic standards; the process meets the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*.

19 It was found that all documentation relevant to the concerns of this audit refers extensively to the Academic Infrastructure, and that the College seriously addresses professional, statutory and regulatory bodies requirements. The College makes visible and frequent use of external reference points in assuring the quality of students' learning opportunities, and in setting and maintaining academic standards.

20 College assessment policies, procedures and regulations provide detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of all individuals and bodies concerned. The audit team confirms the ready availability of assessment criteria and the particularly helpful nature of module criteria; the clarity and comprehensiveness of assessment criteria constitute a feature of good practice.

21 The fullness and accessibility of this information contrast with the inaccessibility of information on degree classification and progression. While the classification rules are publicly available, they are not readily accessible, nor are students pointed to them; and the indicative criteria used to determine borderline cases are deemed confidential, for reasons which the audit team was unable to establish. In the interests of transparency, it is desirable for the College to facilitate student access to the rules on progression and classification of awards.

22 The College was found to be variably responsive to student concerns: on the one hand, it responded positively to representations by the Students' Union concerning a regulation making satisfactory attendance an eligibility criterion for assessment; on the other it responded to similar representations on the anonymous-marking of coursework by instituting a research project not due to report until 2013. This timescale aligns uncomfortably with the commitment (see paragraph 9) to 'putting students first': it is desirable for the College to move expeditiously towards a decision on the anonymous-marking of coursework.

23 The College was found, for the most part, to use management information thoughtfully and comprehensively in its management of quality and standards: the use of a trend analysis of grade distributions and an analytical report identified such issues as interprogramme variations in progression and award classification was particularly noted, although it was also found that a paper on module failure rates did not receive the same priority.

24 Overall, and with due reference to the recommendations contained in this section, the audit team found that confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the College's present and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards it delivers on behalf of the University.

Section 3: Institutional management of learning opportunities

25 The College deploys a variety of mechanisms to ascertain student opinion of both academic provision and support services: it is committed to using the findings to inform quality assurance and enhancement, and to keeping the mechanisms themselves under review. The audit team found the questionnaire system successfully elicits student opinion, and although students reported that they are not always made aware of resultant action, overall, it is confirmed that the College has effective mechanisms for gathering and responding to internal and external surveys of student opinion, and is working conscientiously to enhance them.

26 The College's Student Charter specifies students' rights, privileges and obligations. These include the right to be provided with opportunities to evaluate their programme and experience, but does not afford similar rights to: be represented within institutional deliberative structures; participate fully in the quality management of their own learning, or be involved in College decision-making. The Charter is reviewed annually by the Principal and triennially by the Board of Governors; these reviews are not formally undertaken in partnership with the Students' Union, although the Union is invited to contribute informally. Students appeared to have little knowledge of the Charter.

27 The Students' Union is represented on all institutional-level committees relevant to this audit, and participates in strategic planning exercises. A report on student representation and feedback commissioned in academic year 2007-08, however, led to the removal of student representation from faculty quality and standards committees, and to a renewed emphasis on departmental student staff academic committees. The College acknowledges that this approach swims against the tide of current practice. Whereas faculty quality and standards committees would provide representatives with the opportunity to participate in quality management, student-staff academic committees, while regarded by the College as a key element of its quality framework, are consultative not executive, work with varying degrees of regularity and do not feature centrally in the experience of most students. In addition, notwithstanding a recommendation in the College's previous Institutional audit, the training of representatives has not occurred systematically since November 2007: it is desirable for the College to put in place the timely delivery of training for all student committee representatives.

28 More generally, while it is appreciated that in a small collegial institution informal means of communication can appear more effective than formal ones, such an approach, while necessary, is unlikely to be sufficient if students are to be engaged as full partners in the management of their learning. The College's attempts to reassess this area of activity are therefore to be encouraged; it is desirable for it to consider further its range of mechanisms for achieving the full and active participation of students in quality management.

29 The College aims to strengthen the link between research and scholarship, on the one hand, and the enhancement of learning and teaching (on the other), and it is confirmed that a suite of structures and a range of quality management procedures are in place to help it do so. At present, the academic staff engaged in research or scholarly activity are unevenly spread, one faculty currently being considerably more research-active than the other two. While only in a small minority of departments can student learning currently be described as underpinned by significant research strengths, the College encourages all staff to demonstrate how scholarly activity generally informs and enhances their teaching. It is confirmed that College managers are making systematic efforts at institutional level to promote the spread of a research culture and to ensure that, in the longer term, it underpins the curriculum.

30 The College, which is extending its internet connection to halls of residence and has introduced an on-campus wireless network, takes an integrated approach to the provision of learning resources. Its e-Learning Strategy constitutes a framework for development, and the College has recently established a new intranet and a virtual learning environment offering

24-hour access to e-resources. Students regard this, after some teething problems, as a valuable addition to learning support.

31 Under the College's accreditation agreement, students are entitled to use the University Library, albeit without remote access to electronic resources (see paragraph 50). The College has confirmed that it will negotiate a commercial agreement with the University to permit access to the University Library for all students following the drawing-down of degree awarding powers, and that this will continue until its learning resources are sufficient for the College's own taught programmes of study. The importance of this commitment is underlined by the fact that user surveys of the College's own library provision have yielded disappointing results, around 30 per cent of students considering it insufficient. While the College has made efforts to address this problem, the problem itself is not new. It is desirable for the College to improve academic departments' liaison with Learning Information Services, to facilitate the timely and systematic provision of learning resources for new and existing programmes.

32 The College Admissions Policy sets a recruitment framework within which programmes set their own requirements and procedures. The process is centrally supported and monitored, and departmental staff with admissions responsibilities spoke highly of the training, service and support they receive. In the absence of a formal policy, the College expresses its commitment to widening participation in a range of activities; it is currently considering how best to strategise its efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented groups.

33 The College is committed to providing its students with a full range of support services, delivered in an integrated manner. In their written submission, students described this support as excellent, a view confirmed in the course of the audit. At departmental level, the progress tutor system aims to integrate pastoral and academic support. The system, about which students are generally positive, while pointing also to a degree of variability in tutors' performance, is carefully monitored, and potential enhancements are under consideration. Programme and module handbooks viewed were found to be generally satisfactory, although both content and online availability vary somewhat across departments.

34 The College's vocationally orientated programmes are both distinctive in themselves and associated with a strong record of graduate employment. All students undertake one or two 20-credit six-week professional placements. This scheme, which meets the expectations of the relevant section of the *Code of practice*, was the subject of a thematic audit in 2008 (see paragraph 17). This highlighted: the unique nature of the provision; students' belief that it enhances their employability; positive feedback from participating employers, and the number of students offered posts (temporary or permanent) by their placement employer. The audit team found the scheme distinctive in character, of strategic importance and very successful. The distinctive character, strategic importance and successful outcomes of the College's well organised and effectively implemented placement scheme for all students, together constitute a feature of good practice.

35 The College's support systems were found to be effective in meeting students' needs on a continuing basis, and integrated with the learning process. Students spoke of the friendliness of the College and the accessibility of staff, although they also considered communication mechanisms overly complex and not clear, partly due to the duplication of methods used. This view is given consideration later in this report (see paragraph 50). Nevertheless, taken as a whole it is confirmed that the College's arrangements for student support are appropriate and effective.

36 Staff appointment procedures were found to be rigorous and fair. Induction arrangements are in place, and newly appointed academic staff with fewer than three years' higher education experience are required to pass a specified proportion of the University's teaching award scheme. Professional development review (appraisal) is obligatory: the most recent report stated that 84 per cent of staff had completed and submitted forms. The scheme is now supported by academic

profiles, or template-based curricula vitae, first compiled to address the application for taught degree-awarding powers and now to be maintained and updated annually in order to ensure the currency of staff expertise; demonstrate how research and scholarship contribute to teaching; inform professional development review, and strengthen future external quality engagements. The audit team found the identification of the enhancement opportunities provided by the introduction of academic profiles a feature of good practice.

37 A significant proportion of the staff development budget is devolved to faculties. Deans produce their own staff development plans in alignment with the College Plan; these are subject to institutional-level approval, monitoring and review. While there is currently some uncertainty about future arrangements for central responsibility for overseeing academic staff development, faculty and departmental arrangements were found to achieve a proper balance between individual and institutional aspirations.

38 It is confirmed that the College has in place such arrangements as will ensure that academic staff are academically and, where appropriate, professionally competent to deliver the higher education programmes for which they are responsible.

39 The audit team found that confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the College's present and likely future management of the learning opportunities available to its students.

Section 4: Institutional approach to quality enhancement

40 A strong commitment to quality enhancement, discernible throughout the College, drives the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the many worked-through action plans associated with it. The College anticipates that the increased representation of academic staff on Academic Board and the creation of a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee with an explicit enhancement brief will ensure that this continues. The College employs a variety of methods of identifying and disseminating good practice; it uses external examiners' reports to inform its enhancement agenda (the overview of such reports has already been identified as a feature of good practice (see paragraph 13); it makes effective use of a range of statistical data (see paragraph 15), and in appointing a Planning and Information Officer it has further strengthened its capability in this area.

41 The audit team found that the College makes genuine attempts to engage students in its enhancement agenda, particularly by collecting, acting on and tracking the responses made to feedback on educational provision; survey results lead to timely and detailed action plans, addressed at all institutional levels. Nevertheless, the College acknowledges that it faces difficulties in respect of student representation and implementing those aspects of its 'putting students first' agenda (see paragraphs 27, 28) which would acknowledge and enhance students' role as partners in the management of their learning.

42 It is confirmed that the College has adopted a systematic approach to the appraisal and enhancement of the quality of students' learning opportunities across all levels of the institution.

Section 5: Collaborative arrangements

43 The College stated that it does not have any collaborative arrangements as defined in the *Code of practice*. It does, however, have an agreement with an overseas university covering six awards and based on a Memorandum of Understanding that permits final-year undergraduates or graduates of the partner institution to apply, as individuals, to enter the final year of study at the College; on successful completion they receive a second undergraduate degree from the University of Leeds. The College considers that this arrangement is not strictly collaborative, and did not draw attention to it in the context of this audit. Nevertheless, the Memorandum alludes to joint undergraduate degree programmes; the partner institution is advertising the possibility of dual awards (see paragraph 49), and there is evidence that a host department in the College regards the arrangement as based on dual awards. The College may wish to consider the risks associated with the re-use of credit in an academic collaboration that, does not involve progression to a higher academic level and does not, and, since the College does not consider the agreement a collaborative arrangement as defined by QAA, is not intended to, meet the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. It is desirable for the College to undertake a formal review of this arrangement.

Section 6: Institutional arrangements for postgraduate research students

44 The College's five part-time postgraduate research students are all in one faculty, most are in a centre of excellence in one department, and all but one are graduates of the College. The College participated in the QAA Review of research degree programmes in 2006; this confirmed that its ability to secure and enhance the quality and standards of provision was appropriate and satisfactory. The College has addressed the Review's one recommendation by including student representation on its Research and Enterprise Committee.

45 The College's arrangements for research degree students have been mapped against relevant external reference points, including the relevant section of the *Code of practice*. The College only accepts research students where it has research strengths, where it can supply a trained and research-active supervisor, and where it can secure a second supervisor from the University. The audit team found that these arrangements are satisfactory in conception and clearly communicated. The Research Degree Student Handbook, sent to all new students and updated annually, specifies students' rights and responsibilities in some detail. While found to be generally informative and helpful, the Handbook would be strengthened further were it to explain more fully the availability or otherwise of opportunities for teaching experience, which are likely to be limited, and the University's electronic library resources, which can be accessed on-site only (see paragraph 31).

46 The Postgraduate Research Tutor has a very wide range of responsibilities for the admission, progress and welfare of research degree students themselves, as well as being the College's main point of contact with the University. In broad terms these liaison activities enable the College to interact with the University as if it were a University faculty.

47 Assessment follows the procedures of the University in all respects; it is confirmed that students are made fully aware of regulations and criteria. The College operates a complaints procedure, details of which are available via the intranet; appeals are a University responsibility.

48 The College's arrangements for postgraduate research students are soundly based, and the research environment and postgraduate research student experience meet the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes*.

Section 7: Published information

49 The audit involved consideration of the College's response to the requirements of HEFCE 06/45 concerning the public availability of information about academic standards and quality of higher education provision. It was found that: the restructuring of the College's website had resulted in information about academic standards and quality being located on the new intranet, which is only accessible to staff and students, and the issue of external access to quality management publications will be included in a current review of the intranet. It was also found, as noted above, that inaccuracies exist in the way in which the College's engagement with an overseas partner institution is described on its partner's website (see paragraph 43).

50 The students' written submission commented generally favourably on the availability and utility of a range of guides and handbooks, including programme and module handbooks, placement handbooks and a guide to academic writing. It noted also, however, that student representatives had made suggestions for improving electronic communications with students and the Student Handbook, by making it available online, with separate links to each section. In discussion, students confirmed the general accuracy of information, but reiterated that scope exists for improving the effectiveness of communications. The audit team found weaknesses in both hard copy and online information: programme-level information is not always available on the intranet; the College has yet to share external examiners' reports as a matter of course with student representatives (see paragraph 12), and information on the rules for progression and classification of awards is either not readily available or regarded as confidential (see paragraph 21). It is desirable for the College to improve the effectiveness of the ways in which it brings academic information to the attention of students.

51 Reliance can largely be placed on the accuracy of the information the College publishes about the quality of its educational provision and the standards of the awards it delivers on behalf of the University, but some problems of communicating with students have yet to be resolved, and aspects of accuracy and accessibility would benefit from management attention.

Section 8: Recommendations and features of good practice

52 As a result of its investigations the audit team found that:

- confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards it delivers on behalf of the University of Leeds
- confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

Features of good practice

53 The audit team identified the following areas as being good practice:

- the planned and strategic review of the committee structure and the inclusive and effective manner in which its findings were implemented (paragraph 8)
- the meticulous tracking of actions through the committee system (paragraphs 10, 12, 15)
- the use of the summary overview of external examiners' reports to contribute to the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities (paragraphs 13, 40)
- the clarity and comprehensiveness of assessment criteria (paragraph 20)
- the distinctive character, strategic importance and successful outcomes of the College's well organised and effectively implemented placement scheme for all students (paragraph 34)
- the identification of the enhancement opportunities provided by the introduction of academic profiles (paragraph 36).

Recommendations for action

54 It would be desirable for the College to:

- take steps to put in place the timely delivery of training for all student committee representatives (paragraphs 7, 27)
- ensure that external examiners' reports are shared with student representatives as a matter of course, in accordance with HEFCE 06/45 (paragraphs 12, 50)
- revise its module descriptor forms, to make clear the relationship between module and programme learning outcomes (paragraph 14)
- facilitate student access to the rules on progression and classification of awards (paragraphs 21, 50)
- move expeditiously towards a decision on the anonymous-marking of coursework (paragraph 22)
- consider further its range of mechanisms for achieving the full and active participation of students in quality management (paragraph 28)
- improve academic departments' liaison with Learning Information Services, to facilitate the timely and systematic provision of learning resources for new and existing programmes (paragraph 31)
- undertake a formal review of its engagement with an overseas partner institution (paragraph 43)
- improve the effectiveness of the ways in which it brings academic information to the attention of students (paragraph 50).

Appendix

Leeds Trinity & All Saints' response to the audit report

Leeds Trinity University College welcomes the report of the Institutional audit of 2009 and is reassured by the judgement from QAA, as expressed in the outcomes of the engagement, that confidence can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the University College's current and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards delivered and in the soundness of the University College's current and likely future management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

This Institutional audit was undertaken in May 2009, following an engagement to scrutinise the Institution's successful application for taught degree awarding powers. Subsequent to this successful outcome, the Privy Council has approved the change of name to Leeds Trinity University College.

Leeds Trinity is pleased that such an extensive and in depth scrutiny of provision resulted in no essential nor advisable recommendations in the Institutional audit report. The professional approach demonstrated by the audit team throughout the engagement was noted and valued by the University College.

Leeds Trinity University College is pleased that the report verifies the following aspects of good practice:

- the planned and strategic review of the committee structure and the manner in which its findings were implemented
- the use of the summary overview of external examiners' reports to contribute to the maintenance of standards and the enhancement of learning opportunities
- the identification of the enhancement opportunities provided by the introduction of academic profiles
- the positive impact on employability of the College's well organised and effectively implemented placement scheme for all students
- the meticulous tracking of actions through the committee system
- the clarity and comprehensiveness of assessment criteria.

The report makes several desirable recommendations. Work has begun to address these recommendations and each will be addressed through the coming academic year and progress will be monitored through the University College's deliberative structures. The University College is very aware that its students deserve the highest quality and standards of provision and is committed to ensuring that these expectations are met. The audit report is heartening testimony to its progress in making a reality of this commitment.

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