

St Mary's College, Twickenham

FEBRUARY 2007

Preface

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

To do this QAA carries out reviews of individual HE institutions (universities and colleges of HE). In England and Northern Ireland this process is known as institutional audit. QAA operates similar but separate processes in Scotland and Wales.

The purpose of institutional audit

The aims of institutional audit are to meet the public interest in knowing that universities and colleges are:

- providing HE, awards and qualifications of an acceptable quality and an appropriate academic standard, and
- exercising their legal powers to award degrees in a proper manner.

Judgements

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 and the academic standards of its awards
- 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 standards of its awards.

These judgements are expressed as either **broad confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence** and are accompanied by examples of good practice and recommendations for improvement.

Nationally agreed standards

Institutional audit uses a set of nationally agreed reference points, known as the 'Academic Infrastructure', to consider an institution's standards and quality. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*, which include descriptions of different HE 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 the what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study. They outline the intended knowledge, skills, understanding and attributes of a student completing that programme. They also give details of teaching and assessment methods and link the programme to the FHEQ.

The audit process

Institutional audits are carried out by teams of academics who review the way in which institutions oversee their academic quality and standards. Because they are evaluating their equals, the process is called 'peer review'.

The main elements of institutional audit are:

- a preliminary visit by QAA to the institution nine months before the audit visit
- a self-evaluation document submitted by the institution four months before the audit visit
- a written submission by the student representative body, if they have chosen to do so, four months before the audit visit
- a detailed briefing visit to the institution by the audit team five weeks before the audit visit
- the audit visit, which lasts five days
- the publication of a report on the audit team's judgements and findings 20 weeks after the audit visit.

The evidence for the audit

In order to obtain the evidence for its judgement, the audit team carries out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the institution's own internal procedures and documents, such as regulations, policy statements, codes of practice, recruitment publications and minutes of relevant meetings, as well as the self-evaluation document itself
- reviewing the written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences
- exploring how the institution uses the Academic Infrastructure.

The audit team also gathers evidence by focusing on examples of the institution's internal quality assurance processes at work using 'audit trails'. These trails may focus on a particular programme or programmes offered at that institution, when they are known as a 'discipline audit trail'. In addition, the audit team may focus on a particular theme that runs throughout the institution's management of its standards and quality. This is known as a 'thematic enquiry'.

From 2004, institutions will be required to publish information about the quality and standards of their programmes and awards in a format recommended in document 03/51, *Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final guidance*, published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The audit team reviews progress towards meeting this requirement.

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ISBN 978 1 84482 651 3

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A report, in lieu of institutional audit, based on enquiries undertaken in the academic year 2005-06, in connection with the College's successful application for taught degree awarding powers.

Following an application by St Mary's College, Twickenham (the College or St Mary's) to the Privy Council, seeking the grant of its own taught degree awarding powers, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was asked to advise the Privy Council as to whether such powers should be granted, based on the Government's criteria. A team of QAA assessors visited the College in 2005 and 2006 to carry out a scrutiny based on the application. Following QAA's subsequent recommendation to the Privy Council, the College was granted taught degree awarding powers in August 2006.

To arrive at its conclusions the team of assessors reviewed quality assurance procedures in operation, spoke to members of the Board of Governors, to members of staff throughout the College and to current students. The team observed meetings of Academic Board, Planning and Resources Committee, Validation and Review Committee (VRC), Teaching, Learning and Staff Development Committee (TLSDC) and Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC), and read a wide range of documents relating to the way the College manages the academic aspects of its provision.

At the same time as the College was undergoing QAA scrutiny, it was also due to be engaged in a QAA institutional audit. The purpose of audit is to provide public information on the quality of the opportunities available to students and on the academic standards of the awards it offers. Audit leads to a judgement of confidence in the management of the quality and standards of the awards being offered by the institution. However, when an application for taught degree awarding powers has been successful, it can also be

concluded, on the basis of the evidence reviewed, that a judgement of broad confidence can be made on the management of quality and standards, therefore no further institutional audit visit is required. This brief report therefore provides public information, drawn from the taught degree awarding powers, which would normally be included in the scope of an audit report.

Academic standards is a way of describing the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an award (for example, a degree). It should be at a similar level across the United Kingdom.

Academic quality is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.

This report provides a summary of the findings of the assessor team, focusing on those areas that are relevant to institutional audit. The report also highlights some matters that a future institutional audit team may wish to pursue.

The contents of this report reflect the position of the College as it was at the time of the conclusion of the scrutiny in April 2006. At that time its title was St Mary's College, Twickenham; following the conferring of degree awarding powers by the Privy Council in August 2006, the College is now titled St Mary's University College.

Outcome

As a result of its enquiries, the view of the team of assessors is that:

- broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the quality of its academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards.

In due course, the institutional audit process will include a check on the reliability of the information set published by institutions in the

format recommended in the Higher Education Funding Council for England's document, *Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final guidance (HEFCE 03/51)*. At the time of the taught degree awarding powers scrutiny the College was alert to the implications of *HEFCE 03/51* and was moving in an appropriate manner to fulfil its responsibilities in this respect.

Background and institutional structures

1 St Mary's is a Catholic Foundation with a mission to provide high-quality academic and professional higher education within a collegial ethos inspired and sustained by Christian values. The College was founded in 1850 by the Catholic Poor Schools Committee to meet the need for teachers to provide education for the growing numbers of poor Catholic children. Until 1975, the College was primarily concerned with teacher education; since that time it has diversified its provision. St Mary's has been an autonomous institution for over 150 years and has been providing degree-level programmes of study for more than half this time. The College began a validation arrangement with the University of London in 1920. Since the start of the 1983-84 academic year, following the University of London's decision to discontinue its validation activities, all St Mary's students have been registered for undergraduate and postgraduate awards of the University of Surrey. In 1996, the College successfully obtained accredited status from the University, which delegates the authority to validate and approve programmes and to exercise delegated powers of quality management, subject to satisfactory annual reporting to the University. From 2007, all St Mary's students other than those studying for research degrees will be registered to the College's own awards.

2 Oversight of the strategic direction and character of the College is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Governors, which has a close working relationship with senior staff, three of whom are members of the Board,

an arrangement that ensures that the Board is informed of developments within the College. The Principal is the Chief Executive of the College and is supported in this role by three full-time vice-principals, and one part-time vice-principal who is also a head of school. Together these constitute the senior management team. The vice-principals have designated areas of management responsibility, broadly covering: finance; academic development and teaching, learning and research; quality assurance; and information strategy and human resources strategy.

3 The College is organised into five schools (Communication, Culture and Creative Arts; Education; Human Sciences; Management and Business Enterprise; Theology, Philosophy, and History), each led by an executive head of school. Other staff are organised into conventional service departments, again each led by an executive head. Central to the academic regulation of the College is the Registry, headed by the Registrar, who acts as secretary to key committees of the College and the Board of Governors.

4 In meetings with the Principal and his team the assessor team found clarity of intention and management direction, and indications of excellent relations with both staff and governors. The senior management view of the strengths of the College - its distinctiveness; its collegial ethos; its readiness for critical self-evaluation; and its highly positive staff-student relationships - seemed to the team to be accurate, and this was supported by their own observations and by other measures such as the National Student Survey. Conversations with members of staff at all levels indicated that the senior management team enjoyed considerable trust and confidence from the staff they manage.

5 Academic Board is responsible for all academically related matters of the College. It is chaired by the Principal and comprises 20 members, at least half of whom are senior managers, including the vice-principals and all heads of academic schools. Much of the business of the Board receives prior discussion

by its standing committees: Planning and Resources Committee (PRC); VRC; TLSDC; RSC; Innovation, Development and Outreach Committee and Ethics Committee. The assessor team noted, however, that typically the Board reserves final decision-making to itself on many of the academic matters considered by committees. The team also noted that the PRC, despite its formal line of report, was in many respects a management committee.

6 Each school has a school board or equivalent management board. In each case, these provide a forum for the communication and discussion of institutional and school policy. School boards are chaired by the head of school and include the programme and academic directors together with school representatives on college-level committees. This provides for useful two-way communication between the school committees and the college committees, particularly with regard to those committees concerned with strategy and development. The assessor team found school boards to be an effective instrument for supporting school management and for effectively communicating College policy.

7 Programme boards, which report to Academic Board, are responsible for 'efficient management, administration, organisation, monitoring and development of the programme'. The boards at programme level that were observed by the assessor team appeared to be highly effective as a means of getting feedback from and consulting students. While there is a broad similarity of agenda items between meetings, the team observed that the manner in which the items are managed was variable, with some boards relying on oral reports, and others on written ones.

8 The assessor team recognised that the institutional scale of St Mary's facilitated effective informal exchange, that its mission was clear and fully accepted and that collegiality was pervasive, all of which contributed to effective management of quality and standards. However, the team also formed the view that in some areas of academic decision-making in the College's committees

there may have been an overreliance on personal oral report and explanation, and too little reliance on written argument and policy. The team noted that there was considerable repetition of committee business at different levels of the College and that, perhaps as a result, decision-making on some issues could take considerable time.

The effectiveness of institutional procedures for assuring the quality of programmes

9 Academic Board's responsibility includes oversight of academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement, and the monitoring and development of the regulatory framework. Academic Board discharges this responsibility through a number of standing committees, primarily its VRC and its TLSDC, both chaired by vice-principals. The College regards VRC as essentially being concerned with quality management, while the focus of TLSDC is seen as enhancement.

10 The College regards quality assurance as a collective responsibility. At school level, the heads of school, supported by academic directors and programme directors, are responsible for the management of quality and standards. Programme boards in schools report to VRC, while school Teaching and Learning Groups report to TLSDC. This interplay between college-level and school-level groups is designed to facilitate consultation, dissemination and the sharing of good practice.

11 The Registry supports standards and quality management in a variety of ways. The Registrar, who reports directly to a vice-principal, is responsible for strategic issues and for enhancement, and takes the lead in policy development on behalf of Academic Board. An Assistant Registrar is responsible for day-to-day operational issues. The Registry provides administrative support for validations, reviews and monitoring and acts as a source of advice for staff.

12 The academic regulations of the College set out the framework that governs the programmes and awards for all of its higher education provision. The application of the regulations and their annual review are approved by the Academic Board. College-wide regulations are complemented by subject regulations provided for individual programmes. A College working group undertook a thorough review of the regulatory framework and the College's modular scheme during 2000-01. The review took into account the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*, published by QAA, and the regulations of the University of Surrey, as well as the University's mapping against the FHEQ, augmented by the adoption of SEEC level descriptors. Evidence seen by the assessor team confirmed that this process had been thorough.

13 The validation and review procedure requires reference to appropriate subject benchmark statements. All new programmes and those undergoing revalidation are required to have programme specifications. Periodic review takes the form of revalidation on a quinquennial cycle. When a programme is modified by more than 25 per cent, this triggers a revalidation.

14 Proposals for new programmes have to be signed off by the Director of Finance and the Director of Information Services and Systems to affirm the availability of resources. Before going to VRC, proposals are presented to PRC, which, inter alia, considers the costings and resource implications in more detail. The assessor team was told that heads of service are involved in all decisions at PRC. VRC determines whether or not a programme may proceed to validation and oversees the validation process.

15 Validation and revalidation events require the presence of at least two academics external to the institution and, for vocational programmes, a representative of employers. Wherever it is appropriate, the College seeks professional, statutory or regulatory body

(PSRB) accreditation, which ensures that the requirements of those bodies are taken into account. Appropriate PSRBs are also invited to participate in validations and revalidations. Validation reports are submitted together with a response from the programme team to VRC, which, if it approves the report and response, submits them to Academic Board. VRC maintains oversight of the fulfilment of conditions and recommendations. Once changes have been incorporated, a definitive validation document is sent for the approval by an external member of the validation panel.

16 Monitoring and review of programmes is carried out by a well-established system of annual report. Each programme is required to evaluate the quality of the student learning experience and student achievement through an annual monitoring statement on quality matters submitted to VRC. This statement includes an analysis of student progression and achievement data. Since 2003-04, the schools have been required to provide an overview review report, which is also presented to VRC. St Mary's is an institution with a strong and well-established focus on student needs and views and, as such, regards student feedback as critical to its strategy for improvement. The student voice is heard through a variety of mechanisms and student representation on college committees is good. The assessor team was in no doubt as to the responsiveness of the institution to the views of its students.

17 As it was not an awarding body at the time of the scrutiny, the College's scope for collaborative provision was limited. Nonetheless, the College has a number of collaborative partnerships, which it manages fully cognisant of the relevant section of the *Code of practice* and with the full agreement of the University of Surrey as the awarding body. Most of the collaborative provision is taught by College staff, or by part-time staff employed by the College. Proposals for collaborative provision are submitted to PRC, which assesses the proposal against the mission of the College and its Corporate Plan, evaluates the appropriateness of the proposed partner and

ensures that the resources are sufficient. The programme director concerned is required to complete a well-specified risk assessment that informs PRC's decision. Programmes are required to state how quality and consistency across sites of delivery will be assured. Following approval by PRC, a memorandum of agreement is drawn up and a visit made to the prospective partner to assess the adequacy of the infrastructure. The report is considered by PRC.

18 The College clearly benefits from the advice of its external examiners and external members of validation panels. External examiners confirmed the responsiveness of the College to their comments. The assessor team also saw examples of how the College seeks to maximise the impact across the College of enhancements that stem from external reviews.

19 While finding much positive evidence of self-evaluation, the assessor team also found, in some of the evidence available to them, that there was not a uniformly pervasive philosophy of critical self-evaluation across the College. For example, they found variability in self-evaluation across the support services and considerable variation in the quality and usefulness of the annual statements of quality presented to VRC.

20 The assessor team found that some detailed aspects of the operation of the College's quality assurance procedures could be more consistently and rigorously applied. In approvals of modifications at VRC, for example, not all external examiners' comments were provided, although this is a requirement. In a similar example, a validation event was completed notwithstanding the omission of evidence identified as important by the external members. As already noted, the College's formal committee relationships in relation to academic decision-making may benefit from review. The assessor team found that some of the deliberative processes relating to quality assurance, for instance the consideration of the *Code of practice*, can be slow, almost ponderous. While the assessor team agrees that current practice leads to a high degree of consultation and ownership of issues, the time

taken over some developments could have deleterious consequences. The assessor team encourage the College to seek ways of speeding up deliberative processes without destroying the undoubted benefits that accrue from the current approach.

21 Overall, the assessor team concluded that the College's systems, regulations and procedures for managing quality assurance operate effectively in securing the quality of student learning opportunities.

The effectiveness of institutional procedures for assuring the standards of awards

22 The College regards externality as being crucial to its strategy for quality assurance and enhancement. The College's external examiners, who are drawn from a broad range of institutions, play a key role in assuring the comparability of standards and achieving consistency of practice. The assessor team met with a number of external examiners, all of whom confirmed the appropriateness of standards and the consistency of application of the moderation procedures. They also confirmed that they are consulted on all modifications and revalidations.

23 The College publishes grade-related assessment criteria that set out the level of achievement required for each classification at each level. The criteria, which are differentiated by the type of assessment, are published in the academic regulations (given to all staff) and in student handbooks. The students met by the assessor team confirmed that they knew what was expected of them. Anonymous marking has been introduced for all written work and blind double-marking is mandatory for dissertations and major projects. The College has issued guidelines for the blind double-marking of other assessments.

24 In order to ensure a measure of independence, the College's school boards of examiners are each chaired by a senior member of staff who has programme responsibilities in a different school. These independent chairs then

report the programme results to the central College Board of Examiners. Boards of examiners at programme level evinced a well-developed, shared understanding of practice. The assessor team felt that the chairs of boards were supported by a common understanding of procedure which encouraged ease and consistency of operation and the assessor team considered independence and objectivity to be particularly strong features of boards. The team formed the opinion that the good organisation and efficiency and secure decision-making typical of the examination boards derived in large part from secure and stable written regulations that enabled consistency of practice to be achieved over time.

25 The University of Surrey, as the awarding body, appoints a College external examiner to attend the College Examination Boards to ensure that practice is in line with the regulations and practice of the University and the sector. The College External Examiner confirmed the responsiveness of the College to his input.

26 The assessor team concluded that the regulations and procedures for managing academic standards at St Mary's are well designed and fit for purpose and that the College values the comments and advice of external examiners and is responsive to them. The College exercised its delegated responsibility for the standards of awards in a thorough and proper manner.

The effectiveness of institutional procedures for supporting learning

27 TLSDC has an explicit remit for quality enhancement and in particular is responsible for the development and maintenance of the College's learning and teaching policy and its associated strategy and action plan. Each school has a learning and teaching action plan that is derived from the College's own Learning and Teaching Strategy and action plan. The assessors' observations of TLSDC indicated that it took its responsibilities seriously, and that there was clear evidence of enhancement resulting from its work.

28 The College has a commitment to the encouragement of high standards in teaching, and has established a range of institutional strategies to develop and enhance staff competencies in teaching. These include College-wide staff development activities, staff appraisal on a developmental model, a co-tutoring teaching observation scheme, mentoring new staff and a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) for new and inexperienced staff, which is not obligatory, although engagement is strongly encouraged. The College has also set up a management structure to implement and monitor staff development, including vesting responsibility with a vice principal, and establishing the part-time post of Teaching and Learning Coordinator, who has responsibility for the management of the PGCHE and who liaises with the schools' teaching and learning representatives. Although heads of schools have overall responsibility for staff development, it is academic directors who have the day-to-day responsibility for the development of staff within specific programmes, and who take part in the processes of appraisal and staff development for the staff they manage. Staff met by the assessor team confirmed that they felt well supported with respect to staff development, including conference attendance.

29 At the time of the scrutiny, the College had only recently moved from a biannual system of appraisal to an annual one, although the majority of staff met by the assessor team had in fact been appraised within the last year. The outcomes of the system of peer observation are confidential between the members of staff, each of whom chooses his or her 'pair'. The team took the view that this limits both the opportunities for the spread of good practice and the identification of serious weaknesses. The same is true of students' module evaluations, the detailed results of which are confidential to the tutor concerned.

30 All undergraduate students attend a central induction session that includes talks from staff in the support services and the learning resources centre. This is complemented by programme-level induction,

at which point students receive their programme handbook and the general handbook, *Studying at St Mary's*. Taught postgraduate students receive inductions only at the programme level. The College and the Students' Union jointly review the induction process each year. The College has also organised a pre-entry induction day for undergraduate students. The College is very sensitive to the needs of students as individuals and seeks to meet those needs by having a clear strategy for identifying and addressing them. A Special Needs Officer, working with coordinators in schools, oversees the support for students with special needs. Students confirmed to the assessor team their satisfaction with the induction arrangements.

31 Students are clear about what is expected of them and are familiar with the College's assessment criteria. Students confirmed to the assessor team that coursework together with constructive feedback is returned in a timely manner, usually within a week, and that tutors will typically read draft assignments before submission. The results of the National Student Surveys carried out in 2005 and 2006 strongly support these statements. However, the College is aware that there has been some room for improvement in order to ensure consistent high-quality feedback and it has undertaken actions to improve the position, which have been noted and commended by external examiners.

32 As has been noted in earlier paragraphs of this report, feedback from students is welcomed and acted upon by the College. For example, all Programme Board minutes are available without restriction on the College's website. Students as a result feel involved and valued and do feel that the College is responsive.

33 Students told the assessor team that they are highly appreciative of the information produced by the College, induction materials and course packs in particular. The College's website is well organised to make it easy for students to locate the information they need. The team found the information produced by the College to be accurate, complete and honest.

34 The adequacy of learning support resources is assured through the thoroughness of the programme approval process outlined above (paragraphs 13 to 15). Resource issues are highlighted through annual monitoring. Any urgent resource issues that arise throughout the year may be dealt with by the executive at its weekly meetings. Where there are significant resource implications, the assessor team found that resource requirements may be built into the annual strategic planning meeting. Students gave the team examples of how the College responded positively when resource issues were identified.

35 The College invests significantly in its central student services unit, which provides a range of support to students in areas such as finance, accommodation, special needs and counselling. These services are complemented by the Chaplaincy and the Students' Union, both of which work effectively in partnership with Student Services to provide excellent support that is warmly appreciated by students. The assessor team found that the Chaplaincy plays a role that goes beyond the spiritual and, as noted in the QAA subject review report on Education, that its 'far reaching spiritual and pastoral care extends to those of all faiths and none'.

36 At the time of the scrutiny, the College had received only three formal complaints since a procedure was published as part of the Student Charter in 1995. The complaints procedure was revised (and is published separately on the College's website) in January 2006. The procedure is designed to be fair and to preserve confidentiality and provides a suitable element of independence to ensure fairness and consistency. As would be expected, complainants are urged to seek a local resolution of any problems. That there have been so few formal complaints at St Mary's is testimony to its success in creating an open and supportive learning community. The procedure for appeals is published as part of the Regulations of the College, which delegate responsibility to the College for level 1, but lodge the responsibility with the University of Surrey for higher levels of study. The assessor team found both procedures wholly satisfactory.

37 The College has a comprehensive Equal Opportunities Policy, which is driven by the aim, stated in its Student Charter to: 'Work to create a College community free from discrimination and harassment based on differences such as age, race, religion/beliefs, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and nationality'. The College strives to achieve this in many ways, but the inclusive, community ethos that pervades the institution evinces its success in this respect.

Conclusions

38 The assessor team believes broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of the College's current and likely future management of the quality of its academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards. The team found that the teaching and learning infrastructure of St Mary's College is well resourced and monitored through highly effective interaction with its student body, which clearly values the supportive environment and community ethos the College provides. The results of the National Student Survey in 2005 and 2006 clearly demonstrate that the students value their experience at St Mary's.

39 Through its consultative and inclusive way of working, the College provides ample opportunities for staff to contribute to the ongoing development of policy and influence decisions. The assessor team noted good examples of enhancement through the Teaching, Learning and Staff Development Subcommittee of Academic Board. They would, however, encourage the College to seek ways of deriving more information from module evaluations and peer observation without compromising confidentiality. The team noted the high level of student satisfaction with the quality of learning and teaching, and with the broader experience of the College as an academic community; students greatly value the College's responsiveness to issues that they raise.

40 The College has sound regulatory framework and procedures that are overseen by

Academic Board. The committee structures cover all necessary purposes and the involvement of academic staff across committees supports effective dialogue and consultative decision-making. Students are appropriately represented on boards and committees at institution and school level. The committee decision-making processes, while thorough, can sometimes be unduly protracted; remits and lines of report may in places confuse academic and management authority. The College will wish to continue to keep its committee structure under review.

41 The College's quality assurance procedures are generally sound and effectively managed. Programme approval is a comprehensive multistaged process with appropriate external representation at formal validation events. The assessor team noted, however, some inconsistencies and variations in rigour with which the procedures were applied. The annual monitoring and review process appears robust, although the team noted some variability in the degree of critical reflection applied. Periodic review takes the form of quinquennial revalidations. The team would encourage the College to ensure greater consistency in the application of its procedures across the College.

42 Academic standards are maintained by a well-managed assessment process and through effective boards of examiners at programme and College levels. The external examiner system appears to contribute significantly to assuring the standards of the College's academic awards. The evidence indicated that the College was responsive to the advice of its external examiners and that of its validating University, and the assessor team judged that the system worked well in assuring the standards of awards.

Appendix

St Mary's College, Twickenham's response to the audit report

St Mary's University College welcomes the report in lieu of institutional audit and expresses appreciation to the Quality Assurance Agency for the approach taken by the assessors which, while intensive and extensive, was professional and courteous. The University College is pleased at the overall judgement of the report that broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of its current and likely future management of the quality and standards of its academic awards.

We are particularly pleased by the report's conclusions that the teaching and learning infrastructure of St Mary's is well resourced and monitored through highly effective interaction with the student body, that there is a sound regulatory framework in place, and that academic standards are maintained by a well managed assessment process.

There are some aspects of practice which the University College is encouraged to refine or to keep under review. These matters are being addressed through the University College's established processes for monitoring and review. We look forward to sharing progress in these areas with QAA in the future.

