



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Wakefield College**

**November 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 (FHEQ)*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*
- 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 Wakefield College carried out in November 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 College's committee and management structures which provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and help assure the standards and quality of the students' learning experience
- the measures that the College has taken, in cooperation with its awarding bodies, which engender a good understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among staff
- the monitoring and action planning arrangements which help assure standards and the quality of learning experiences
- the involvement of employers at programme level, which significantly enhances the students' learning experiences in the relevant subject areas
- the significant focus on the provision of learning support to higher education students with disabilities, which notably improves the learning opportunities available to those students.

### Recommendations

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

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

- review, benchmark and monitor its virtual learning environment provision and develop clear policies and requirements to ensure it provides parity of support for students in all curriculum areas and modes of study
- ensure that all aspects of the College's statement of student entitlements, known as the Higher Education Footprint, are consistently applied for the benefit of all students and that current best practice in this regard is more widely disseminated.

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

- adopt a more strategic approach to staff development to ensure that all needs are identified, that all staff undertake necessary activities and that this is monitored
- extend the opportunities available for employers to enhance their valuable contributions to the development of higher education at both subject and strategic levels
- take steps to develop suitable arrangements to ensure and respond to student

representation at all levels.
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## 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 Wakefield 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, the University of Bradford and the University of Huddersfield. The review was carried out by Ms Amanda Broughton, Dr Michael Edmunds, Mr John Skinner (reviewers) and Mr Peter Clarke (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated quality and enhancement review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

3 In order to assist HEFCE to gain information to assist with the assessment of the impact of Foundation Degree (FD) awards, section D of this report summarises details of the FD programmes delivered at the College.

4 Wakefield College is the only general further education college located in and serving the Wakefield Metropolitan District and adjacent communities. It has three campuses: two in Wakefield and the SkillsXchange campus at Glasshoughton in Castleford in the north east of the District. These three campuses cater for 16-18 year olds and adult students, both full and part-time. Higher education programmes are delivered at all three campuses. The College has some 11,000 students, with 640 (440 full-time equivalent) on higher education programmes. It is structured with five academies, four of which deliver higher education programmes.

5 The College's higher education strategy reflects its overall mission which is 'transforming lives through learning...inspiring young people, adults and employers through world-class learning and challenging them to fulfil their potential for the benefit of their communities'.

6 The College offers the following higher education programmes, with full-time equivalent numbers shown in parentheses.

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## **Edexcel**

Part-time:

- HNC Business (21)
- HNC Construction (4.5)
- HNC Construction (Civil Engineering) (6)
- HNC Electrical/Electronic Engineering (18)
- HNC Mechanical Engineering (22)
- HNC Operations Engineering (4.5)

Full-time:

- HND Business (10)
- HNC Music Performance (14)
- HND Music Performance (9)
- HND Theatre (19)
- HND Performing Arts (Performance) (19)

## **Leeds Metropolitan University**

Full-time:

- FdA Commercial Photography (19)
- FdSc Computing (13)
- FdSc Health Related Exercise and Fitness (18)
- FdSc Sports Performance Coaching (20)
- FdA Management and Business Enterprise (26)
- FdA Web Design (19)

Full-time or Part-time:

- BA (Hons) Business and Management (19)
- FdA Logistics and Supply Chain management (5)

Part-time:

- FdA Young Children's Learning and Development (55)
- FdA Management for Children's Care (8)

## **University of Bradford**

Part-time:

- FdSc Engineering (0)

## **University of Huddersfield**

Part-time:

- BA Early Years with Early Years Professional Status (14)
- BA (Hons) Education and Professional Development (9)
- Certificate in Education (59)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (5)
- Certificate in Teaching Literacy in the Lifelong Learning Sector (4.5)
- Certificate in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages in the Lifelong Learning Sector (2)



## **Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies**

7 The College is a member of a consortium for the University of Huddersfield programmes. Assessment instruments are produced at the University, following consultation, and are common across the consortia. The University of Bradford provision has similar arrangements. The programmes awarded by Leeds Metropolitan University were developed by the College and validated by the University. The College has responsibility for assessment on these programmes within the parameters set at validation and subject to approval by external examiners. Overall, the memoranda of agreement clearly define the responsibilities of the College and the validating universities at institutional level.

8 The College has approval from Edexcel to deliver a range of higher national programmes. The College determines the nature of these through its choice of standard Edexcel modules according to Edexcel rules. Day-to-day maintenance of quality and standards in the delivery of the provision is the responsibility of the College. Edexcel appoints external examiners.

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

9 At the time of the visit, the College was in the process of expanding its city centre site. It plans to close the Thornes Park site and relocate the relevant provision to the city centre site for the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year. The College is in continuing dialogue with awarding bodies regarding their relationships and is investigating opportunities to develop its higher education portfolio with current partners and with possible new ones.

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

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. This was produced from information gathered from in-house surveys and from views gathered through focus groups conducted by the Widening Participation Adviser and the HE Careers Adviser. The responses of these groups to a set of outline questions were then summarised by the Widening Participation Adviser and agreed by the students involved. The submission was helpful in enabling reviewers to develop their agendas for the visit. The reviewers also held valuable meetings with students during the 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 College has strong, mutually supportive and constructive partnership arrangements with its awarding bodies, particularly Leeds Metropolitan University and Huddersfield University, which underpin the management of academic standards. Respective responsibilities are clearly set out and supported by well-articulated systems to support the management process.

12 As part of the Regional University Network of Leeds Metropolitan University, the College operates within the framework of the University's Higher Education Scheme which specifies particular managerial roles and processes. This includes the role of Scheme Leader which is currently undertaken by the College's Director of Higher Education, who works closely with the University's academic contact. They hold regular update meetings and cooperate in preparation for validation and periodic review events. The University has recently introduced collaborative delivery coordinators to work alongside College staff and undertake development and monitoring activities in relation to the assigned awards. College staff confirmed that regular visits have taken place and have enhanced their links with their counterparts at the University. The collaborative delivery coordinators report on the outcomes of these development and monitoring activities to the Associate Dean responsible for collaborative provision at the University. Reports also go to the relevant Faculty Board as well as the Partnerships and Collaborative Provision Committee.

13 College staff confirmed that their attendance at various forums at the University have had a positive impact upon enhancement of programmes and the development of links with the University and other members of the Regional University Network. These forums cover a range of areas including Sport and Leisure, Widening Participation, Library Practitioners and Personal Development Planning. The University is also represented on examination committees and boards which take place at the College. Examination boards are chaired by University representatives.

14 As part of the University of Huddersfield Professional Certificate in Education and Training Consortium, the College has a Centre Manager who coordinates teacher training provision. The role of the Centre Manager is clearly defined with explicit procedures for operation of quality management and reporting to the University. The University appoints a Designated Academic Liaison Officer to work with the College Centre Manager. Examination boards and committees take place at the University. Course committee meetings are held at the College and staff attend the regular monthly network meetings.

15 The College senior management structure was under review at the time of the team's visit. The appointment of an Assistant Principal with executive responsibility for higher education, academic and access issues was pending. Responsibility for the management of standards and the quality of learning in higher education is integrated within the whole College management structure. To further support management and deliberation relating to higher education, the College has developed a separate higher education committee structure with clear links to the wider managerial and decision-making framework. The Higher Education Quality and Standards Committee, chaired by the Director of Higher Education, brings together programme area managers who have higher education within their remit, the Director of Quality and Performance and cross-college service managers. It is proving effective in enhancing cross-college monitoring of student and external examiner feedback and engaging curriculum and service area managers in dialogue regarding quality improvement. It forwards issues to the Senior Management Team for action.

16 The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Enhancement Group (Development Group) enables academic and support practitioners from across the College to discuss and share information about higher education provision and contribute to the development of policy and practice. Staff confirmed that this is an excellent forum for sharing good practice and to disseminate changes to the Academic Infrastructure. For example, the group has worked on development of the College's Assessment Policy and on mapping sections of the *Code of practice* to programmes. The work of the group was highlighted as good practice in the Developmental Engagement. As part of the College's move to integrate its higher education strategy within the wider strategy of the College, the Higher Education Strategy Committee makes recommendations to inform the Senior Management Team's strategic management decisions. The College's committee and management structures, which

provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and help assure the standards and quality of the students' learning experience, represent good practice.

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

17 The Academic Infrastructure is incorporated within the quality assurance procedures that the College applies to meet the requirements of its awarding bodies. In meetings with the team, staff demonstrated their understanding of the components of the Academic Infrastructure and gave examples of how they applied it in the development and delivery of higher education programmes, in particular in relation to programmes validated by Leeds Metropolitan University and Edexcel. Staff confirmed that programme design is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the awarding bodies and reflects the principles and precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. Templates prepared for validation incorporate programme specifications, while consideration of subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ ensure appropriate levels for the award.

18 Foundation degrees align with the Foundation Degree qualification benchmark. Validation and approval documents record the involvement of employers in the initial design process and during validation events. They also demonstrate the centrality of work-based learning in course content and in teaching and learning.

19 Staff have a sound understanding of the Academic Infrastructure and engage with it effectively. They have undertaken mapping of the provision to sections of the *Code of practice* to evaluate and improve their procedures, for example, those sections relating to disability and careers advice. It is intended that the staff intranet site for higher education, which is being developed, will provide updates and signposting to QAA publications, including the Academic Infrastructure. The measures which the College has taken, in cooperation with its awarding bodies, to engender a good understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among staff represent good practice.

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

20 A range of quality assurance processes and structures assures the College that it discharges its responsibilities for the provision effectively. These include regular meetings with awarding body representatives, the external examining process, the operation of examination boards and committees and periodic review processes undertaken with the awarding bodies. The recent institutional review and scheme periodic review by Leeds Metropolitan University, and the revalidation of the education qualifications and related provision undertaken by the University of Huddersfield, confirmed that the College is fulfilling its obligations to ensure that the standards of higher education provision meet the requirements of its partner universities.

21 The College has effective reporting and monitoring processes. Each programme completes an annual monitoring report and quality improvement plan using a specific higher education template. This template is comprehensive and action focused, it satisfies the needs of HEFCE and the awarding bodies, but retains a further education-based approach to statistical analysis. It would be helpful if the College adopted a system which reflected the standard higher education approach and enabled classification of student results. The annual monitoring reports and quality improvement plans feed into the College's higher education annual monitoring report which reflects on all higher education provision. This was introduced by the Director of Higher Education in 2010-11 to strengthen annual

monitoring and facilitate the identification of areas for improvement and good practice across the College. The Higher Education Quality and Standards Committee will oversee the report and action plan. In addition, actions from all annual monitoring reports feed in to the programme area reviews within the academies. These then feed into the overall College Self Assessment Report. The College uses an automated system to facilitate effective monitoring of actions by those responsible for implementation and oversight. The team considers the specific monitoring and action planning arrangements developed to assure standards and the quality of learning experiences within the higher education provision of the College to be a feature of good practice.

22 Programme teams for University of Huddersfield provision complete monitoring reports using the awarding body template. Programme managers, along with course leaders, oversee the implementation of quality improvement plans emanating from the annual course reports. The Director of Higher Education produces an annual Scheme Report for Leeds Metropolitan University reflecting on standards and quality of the relevant courses. The University does not make a formal written response to this report, but there is a process of continuing discussions with the Director of Higher Education.

23 External examiners appointed by the universities and Edexcel confirm that the standards and quality of the provision are sound and that students are achieving the intended learning outcomes. There is effective monitoring of external examiner reports. The Director of Higher Education sees all of them and ensures that actions are picked up in the annual monitoring reports and actions plans. These in turn feed into the Higher Education Annual Monitoring Report. In this way the College responds systematically to external examiner reports, for example, actions relating to weakness in performance in the Foundation Degrees in Sports Performance Coaching and Health Related Exercise and Fitness in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 were identified and remedied. Because of the consortium arrangements for the University of Huddersfield provision, it is usually not possible to identify college-specific issues within external examiner reports. However, the College benefits from area-based moderation events.

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

24 The management and delivery of staff development involves an integrated combination of College, partner and individual staff-directed activities. Arrangements for staff development are set out in the Continuing Professional Development Policy which includes an appendix specifically addressing support for scholarly activity for staff involved in higher education. Developmental needs for individual staff are identified as part of the annual appraisal process, which is complemented through reference to annual monitoring reports and quality improvement plans, and teaching observation. In addition, the Director of Higher Education, directors of academy, and the Higher Education Strategy Committee identify specific needs arising for teams or individuals as part of the annual planning process.

25 Staff development records, including those for staff registrations for higher awards, are held by the Quality and Professional Development Unit. In addition to the central college staff development budget, which all staff can access, the Director of Higher Education has a budget to support staff development and scholarly activity. This is used specifically to support individual members of staff to undertake higher level qualifications and attend external events and short courses. A higher education research and scholarly activity fund was established in 2009 to support specific higher education initiatives. A member of staff, having been supported by the College to complete an MSc, has accessed the higher education research and scholarly activity fund in order to buy out time for him to produce a paper for publication.

26 Collaborative working with university partners makes an important contribution to the enhancement of academic standards and learning opportunities. The University of Huddersfield and Leeds Metropolitan University provide development and networking events for tutors, librarians, and administrative staff. The University of Huddersfield provides direct support for tutors undertaking higher awards and funds research projects involving staff from partner institutions. Currently, two members of staff are undertaking master's qualifications through this route, and one tutor is undertaking a DEd. In addition, staff have attended a variety of events including equality and diversity training, tutor development days, and annual conferences. Staff confirmed that they receive details of staff development opportunities from Leeds Metropolitan University, and have accessed relevant events.

27 The College has been an active partner in the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network and staff have benefited from professional development opportunities available through the network, as well as the opportunities created through partnership approaches to curriculum innovation and other projects. It is anticipated that the networking will continue through the legacy arrangements following the closure of the network. All of the above provide valuable staff development opportunities, which have benefited members of several programme teams. However, there is no overarching strategic approach, which ensures that all staff undertake appropriate activities. The team considers it desirable that the College adopts a more strategic approach to staff development to ensure that all needs are identified, that all staff undertake necessary activities, and that this is monitored.

**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?**

28 Arrangements for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those relating to academic standards detailed in paragraphs 11 to 16.

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

29 The processes by which the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its responsibilities are explained in paragraphs 20 to 23. Through its discussions with staff and review of documentation the team concluded that the College has effective mechanisms for ensuring that it meets its obligation to its awarding bodies to provide appropriate learning opportunities for its students.

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

30 The different awarding bodies require different levels of engagement with the Academic Infrastructure from College staff. Significant areas of the content and operation of the Edexcel and University of Huddersfield programmes are externally determined. The Leeds Metropolitan University programmes are developed by the College and as such

require a wider awareness of the Academic Infrastructure. This development process is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the University and reflects the principles and precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 7*

31 The team reviewed programme specifications, validation documentation, evidence of mapping against *Code of practice* and benchmarking statements. It also noted that the HE Quality and Standards Committee included in its terms of reference developments in the Academic Infrastructure and their implications for the College. There was also much informed discussion with staff concerning mapping against benchmarking statements, the levels of higher education work, and the adjustments required to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The team concludes, on the basis of this evidence, that the College and its staff are effectively engaging with the Academic Infrastructure.

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

32 The College has an effective annual monitoring process which includes consideration of the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence for this comes from progression and achievement data, teaching observations, comments from external examiners and student feedback. The process culminates in the annual higher education monitoring report which is considered by the HE Quality and Standards Committee. This in turn conveys necessary actions to the Senior Management Team. The monitoring report is based on the annual reviews completed for each programme using a specific template developed for higher education provision. The Course reviews also contribute to the annual Academy Quality Reporting process.

33 The College has drawn up a statement setting out student entitlements known as the Higher Education Footprint. It describes student entitlements to direct staff contact hours, as well as access to tutorial support, support for employability, personal development planning, and access to the use of information and learning technology. The Footprint is currently used for curriculum planning to ensure equitable treatment of students in terms of teaching across the higher education provision. It is a positive step, which is still under development in regard to the higher education students, where its current implementation is largely related to taught hours. It is intended that this document will contribute to the student charter, which the College is developing in response to recent government policy proposals, and to the revision of the College Higher Education Teaching and Learning Strategy being undertaken by the Director of Higher Education.

34 In their meeting with the team, employers were very positive about their relationships with the College staff at course level. They reported being involved in programme delivery in several curriculum areas as well as contributing to programme development and validation. Several offer placement opportunities for staff and students, contribute as visiting speakers, mentor staff, and employ completed students. Contributions have included live performance projects in performing arts, commercial briefs for clients in web-design and computing, and a range of work-related projects and assignments negotiated with employers. The involvement of employers at programme level significantly enhances the students' learning experiences in the relevant subject areas and is a feature of good practice. However, this high level of employer involvement does not extend across all curricular areas. In addition, the College does not have an overarching forum for involving employers from across the provision. The team considers it desirable that the College extends the opportunities available for employers to enhance their valuable contributions to the development of higher education at both subject and strategic levels.

35 The College is developing a virtual learning environment on a commercial platform. The review of module sites and discussions with staff and students indicate that practice is variable in relation to the development of virtual learning sites. Students reported very positively on the availability of virtual learning environments in some areas, but noted limited availability in others. In the more developed areas, there is some interactivity and the provision of much valuable information on screen. There is no College policy or guidelines on the extent to which courses or modules are required to develop virtual learning environment support. This is a lost opportunity, particularly given the significant numbers of part-time higher education students recruited by the College. The team considers it advisable that the College reviews, benchmarks and monitors its virtual learning environment provision, and develops clear policies and requirements to ensure it provides parity of support for students in all curriculum areas and all modes of study.

36 The College provides centrally generated data relating to retention which is monitored throughout the year at course level and by academies, and reviewed regularly at senior team meetings. The annual reviews and reports sampled by the team demonstrated an appropriate use of statistical data although much was reported and analysed in terms more familiar to further than higher education. For example, retention, success and achievement statistics would not facilitate comparison with higher education standard benchmarks.

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

37 The Footprint provides a comprehensive statement of each student's entitlement to, amongst other things, a named personal tutor and individual tutorials, accessible opportunities to develop individual skills for effective learning, specialist tutor support, access to online materials for self-directed study, and opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and engage in personal development planning. In meetings with the team and in their written submission, students reported general satisfaction with the personal tutor support they receive through a variety of locally derived arrangements. In discussions with the team, staff indicated that several innovative arrangements for providing personal tutor support to part-time students are being developed. However, there is little evidence that this part of the Footprint is being consistently implemented or monitored across the College. The team considers it advisable that the College ensures that all aspects of the Footprint are consistently applied for the benefit of all students and that current best practice in this regard is more widely disseminated.

38 The College makes considerable additional learning support and guidance available to disabled students through its additional learning support services. It has achieved the Dyslexia Quality Mark for its dyslexia-friendly practices at the Thornes Park Campus and has been diligent in raising awareness among staff and students of the application process for the disabled student. There is effective liaison between course teams and the learning support tutor with special responsibility for higher education, to ensure that appropriate and reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students. The College is currently participating in a project managed by the Higher Education Academy focussed on the meaningful engagement of disabled students. The significant focus on the provision of learning support to higher education students with disabilities notably improves their learning opportunities and represents good practice.

39 Students' views about their support are solicited through the Student Perception of College survey which is regularly and frequently used by staff in their reviews and reflections on their programmes. In several cases where problems were identified and dealt with, the surveys were quoted as useful sources of information providing both warning and background information. Survey data is also incorporated into the annual review and

planning processes within academies and service centres. The College has a formal Learning Involvement Strategy which ensures that students have effective representation on programme-level committees. However, there is, as yet, no forum for students across all higher education programmes to make their general views known and to share experiences. The team considers it desirable that the College takes steps to develop suitable arrangements to ensure and respond to student representation at all levels.

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

40 The Developmental Engagement concluded that it was desirable that the College develop staff development programmes to include regular higher education-related activities, and also ensure that all relevant staff development and scholarly activity is recorded. At the time of the Developmental Engagement, the College staff development programme for 2010-11 had already been planned and arranged, but the College was able to hold a useful Higher Education Conference day in July 2011. The College has made other effective moves to support staff development related to higher education learning opportunities as described in paragraphs 24 to 27. This has led to support for staff engaged in several relevant developmental activities. While these are relatively isolated events at present, and relatively limited in relation to the size of the provision, the team were encouraged by discussion with senior staff who expressed their intention to expand this activity.

**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?**

41 The College is responsive to the views of students in its management of learning resources. It gathers student feedback on key resources through a variety of means including tutorial discussion, module reviews, student representation on course committees, internal surveys and through the National Student Survey. When students at Thornes Park campus reported problems with access to suitable computer facilities and concerns with noise levels within the Learning Resource Centres, actions were taken. Laptop computers are now available on loan to students for use on site and study rooms are made available exclusively for higher education students. These measures are seen as immediate tactical solutions pending the move to the city centre site, which includes increased space for higher education. Some part-time higher education students at the SkillsXchange campus have experienced problems resulting from theft of library stock. The College is installing new security gates.

42 The College's Estate Strategy has identified the city centre site for development and by September 2012 it is intended that programmes will be relocated here from Thornes Park. Some facilities are of high quality and well matched to the professional needs of students. For example, Thornes Park campus provides professional theatre, specialist dance, drama, music and recording facilities, and a technology suite. These specialist facilities will be transferred to the former Wakefield Museum, in the City Centre, which is being converted for the purpose. In addition to college-based resources, students on University of Huddersfield programmes have access to online resources and library facilities at the University. Students on Leeds Metropolitan University programmes have limited access to University library facilities. Generally higher education students are highly satisfied with key resources for their programmes.

43 There are strong employer links on many courses and good examples of employer involvement in providing learning opportunities. At their meeting with the team, employers from a range of industries stated that students are being well served by the resources



provided by the College and that the provision is both current and relevant to employment. External examiners' reports across the range of programmes comment favourably on the resources available on all three sites.

**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?**

44 The College produces a range of materials relating to the higher education portfolio in general, and to specific programmes, in line with its collaborative arrangements. Materials include a higher education prospectus and course information leaflets which are available in print and electronically through the College website. The collaborative agreements with Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Huddersfield clearly set out the College's delegated responsibilities for producing and publishing relevant programme-specific materials. Leeds Metropolitan University and Edexcel give more responsibility to the College for the production of marketing and publicity materials, programme specifications, module specifications, course handbooks and any other material pertaining to the delivery of the courses. The University of Huddersfield consortium retains responsibility for the production and publication of information relevant to its programme including the publication of examination results. For programmes validated by Edexcel and Leeds Metropolitan University, the College is responsible for producing the examination results in line with guidelines from those institutions.

45 The College website includes a clearly signposted area for higher education which provides an appropriate and accessible range of general information and course specific material. All programmes have a detailed handbook which is made available to students in printed format and through the virtual learning environment. For Leeds Metropolitan University and Edexcel courses, a common college template has been developed to ensure greater standardisation of information. These handbooks are a valuable aid to students as they provide them with learning aims and outcomes, assessment details and processes, support and facilities, regulations and appeals processes. The University of Huddersfield and the University of Bradford produce the course handbooks for their awards. Where practicable, course teams are also required to provide a module handbook for each unit or module of study. These provide more detailed guidance on module learning aims, content and assessment.

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

46 There are clearly understood processes in place to assure the accuracy and completeness of information. The College has an agreed marketing calendar, with deadlines for the production of key documents. The production of publicity and marketing information is coordinated centrally in the College through the Marketing Department, with a requirement for oversight and final approval prior to publication from senior management and awarding bodies. The College prospectus is planned well in advance with senior managers and those responsible at course level for ensuring that course information is

accurate. Course information leaflets, which provide a single source for both the hard-copy prospectus and course information hosted on the website, are stored in an electronic data base and are audited and updated twice a year. Amendments to website information are controlled by the web master who operates in the College's Marketing Department.

47 The Developmental Engagement identified that programme specifications were not always made available to students and stakeholders, unless requested or through the initiative of the course team. However, the key details of the specifications were presented to students in an accessible format through publications such as course and module handbooks. The College now ensures that programme specifications are made available through the student intranet. It is also considering ways in which they can also be viewed on the College's website while still ensuring version control.

48 The College surveys students at the start of and during their programmes to ascertain their views on the information they receive. Most students who have used the prospectus and/or website consider the information to be accurate, informative and easy to understand. It is also judged to give good insight into the College's provision. Meetings with students confirmed that the information they received prior to enrolment gave an accurate picture of the courses on which they subsequently enrolled. In addition to finding the published material appropriate, students commented favourably on the pre-enrolment interview events held at the College.

**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**

49 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in October 2010. The lines of enquiry were as follows.

- The effectiveness of the College's processes and procedures for setting assessments and internal marking, in maintaining academic standards.
- The College processes for managing formative and summative feedback on assessment and the contribution of feedback to improving students' learning.
- The accuracy and completeness of information on student assessment contained in publicity and promotional material, programme specifications, course handbooks and other documentation, and the contribution of assessment information to supporting students' learning.

50 The Developmental engagement team identified several areas of good practice. The College has close working relationships with the awarding bodies which contribute significantly to the quality of the assessment processes; it also has excellent links to employers which provide students with opportunities to undertake live projects and other forms of realistic work-based assessment. A flexible approach to assessment enables methods to be tailored to the particular learning needs of students. This is reinforced by the wide range of methods and media used to provide assessment feedback. The HE Development Group provides a valuable forum for developing and sharing good practice in areas including assessment.

51 The team also made several recommendations. The College was advised to continue to work to ensure consistency and parity in the quantity of assessment across programmes. The team considered it desirable that the College should extend the use of staff module evaluations and develop their evaluative quality; it should continue to address the effectiveness of actions taken to address issues raised by external examiners over the Foundation Degrees in Sports Performance Coaching and in Health Related Exercise and Fitness; and staff should ensure that they implement proper referencing of student work and provision of bibliographies. It was also considered desirable that the College developed its staff development programmes to include regular higher education-related activities and ensure that all such activities are recorded; extend employer links on some programmes to enhance employer feedback to students and the assessment strategy; publish, in their entirety, programme specifications for access by all interested parties; and disseminate across the higher education provision, the good practice seen in the HND Performing Arts course handbook. The College should also continue to develop the format of feedback sheets on Leeds Metropolitan University programmes to improve clarity of feedback in relation to learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The College has worked with its awarding body to address these issues.

## D Foundation Degrees

52 The College offers nine Foundation Degrees validated by Leeds Metropolitan University, in curricular areas including business and management, young children's learning and development, sports coaching and health, computing and web design, and photography. It also offers a Foundation Degree in engineering validated by the University of Bradford, although this has not recruited for the past two years due to lack of demand, and currently has no students registered.

53 All of the items of good practice and recommendations referred to in paragraphs 57 to 60 apply equally to the Foundation Degree provision.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- the College's committee and management structures which provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and help assure the standards and quality of the students' learning experience (paragraphs 15, 16, 21)
- the measures that the College has taken, in cooperation with its awarding bodies, which engender a good understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among staff (paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 31)
- the monitoring and action planning arrangements which help assure standards and the quality of learning experiences (paragraphs 21, 32)
- the involvement of employers at programme level, which significantly enhances the students' learning experiences in the relevant subject areas (paragraphs 34, 43)

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

- the significant focus on the provision of learning support to higher education students with disabilities, which notably improves the learning opportunities available to those students (paragraph 38).

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

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

- review, benchmark and monitor its virtual learning environment provision and develop clear policies and requirements to ensure it provides parity of support for students in all curriculum areas and modes of study (paragraph 35)
- ensure that all aspects of the College's statement of student entitlements, known as the Higher Education Footprint, are consistently applied for the benefit of all students and that current best practice in this regard is more widely disseminated (paragraphs 33, 37).

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

- adopt a more strategic approach to staff development to ensure that all needs are identified, that all staff undertake necessary activities and that this is monitored (paragraphs 27, 40)
- extend the opportunities available for employers to enhance their valuable contributions to the development of higher education at both subject and strategic levels (paragraph 34)
- take steps to develop suitable arrangements to ensure and respond to student representation at all levels (paragraph 39).

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

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

61 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.

Wakefield College action plan relating to the Summative review: November 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 College's committee and management structures which provide a strong focus on higher education issues within the College and help assure the standards and quality of the students' learning experience (paragraphs 15, 16, 21)</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Higher Education committee and sub committees through the Annual Higher Education Monitoring Report and oversight from the College Senior Management team</p> <p>Ensure oversight of higher education quality and standards is maintained in the context of recent senior management changes and changes to meetings structures and reporting arrangements</p>	Ongoing	Dean of Higher Education	Effective higher education strategy and reporting arrangements	The Principalship	<p>Review and monitoring activities undertaken with awarding bodies</p> <p>Annual Higher Education monitoring</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the measures that</li> </ul>	Continue to work with	Ongoing	Dean of Higher	Compliance with	Assistant Principal	The review and

<p>the College has taken, in cooperation with its awarding bodies, which engender a good understanding of the Academic infrastructure among staff (paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 31)</p>	<p>awarding bodies and exploit opportunities to engage in mutual activities to understand the Academic Infrastructure and the emerging UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)</p> <p>Ensure Higher Education Teaching and Learning Enhancement Group meetings contain regular updates on developments in the Quality Code and showcases good practice across provision</p> <p>Monitor staff training needs in relation to the Quality Code</p> <p>Ensure updates to the Quality Code are notified on the staff higher education website</p>		Education	<p>Expectations of the Quality Code</p> <p>Appropriate standards and quality on higher education programmes</p> <p>Updates and information relating to the Quality Code are on the staff higher education website</p>	- Academic and Higher Education	<p>monitoring activities undertaken with awarding bodies</p> <p>External examiner reports</p> <p>Student satisfaction surveys</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the monitoring and action planning arrangements</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure the Higher Education Quality and Standards Group</p>	Ongoing	Dean of Higher Education	Evaluative reports and effective action planning to maintain	The Principalship	Review and monitoring activities

<p>which help assure standards and the quality of learning experiences (paragraphs 21, 32)</p>	<p>continues to review the evaluative quality of course monitoring and the use of evidence to support this process</p> <p>Continue to refine the Higher Education Annual Course Monitoring report template to ensure robust evaluation and action planning across the provision</p> <p>Continue to ensure action plans are monitored at course and programme level</p>			<p>and enhance standards and quality</p>		<p>undertaken with awarding bodies</p> <p>Minutes of the Higher Education Quality and Standards Group</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the involvement of employers at programme level, which significantly enhances the students' learning experiences in the relevant subject areas (paragraphs 34, 43)</li> </ul>	<p>Enhance and extend forms of employer engagement in the curriculum via the College Employer Engagement Strategy Group</p> <p>Ensure Higher Education Teaching and Learning Enhancement Group has regular discussion of current curriculum and development plans with regard to</p>	Ongoing	<p>Programme Managers</p> <p>Course Leaders</p> <p>Dean of Higher Education</p>	<p>Increased number and wider range of work-based and work-related learning activities</p> <p>Good practice shared across higher education provision</p>	Dean of Higher Education	<p>Annual Course Monitoring</p> <p>Minutes of Higher Education Teaching and Learning Enhancement Group</p> <p>Minutes of Employer Engagement Strategy Group</p>

	employer involvement, and showcase good practice					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the significant focus on the provision of learning support to higher education students with disabilities, which notably improves the learning opportunities available to those students (paragraph 38).</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to communicate with staff and students regarding the excellent range of additional learning support services provided by the College</p> <p>Maintain and extend, where possible, links with external bodies, such as the Higher Education Academy to focus and disseminate good practice</p>	Ongoing	Additional Learning Support Officer for Higher Education	<p>Positive feedback from students</p> <p>Current high levels of up-take of DSA maintained</p> <p>Student success rates maintained/improved</p>	Dean of Higher Education	<p>Learner feedback via student perception of course, National Student Survey, focus groups, etc</p> <p>Higher Education Monitoring Report produced by Dean of Higher Education</p>
<b>Advisable</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>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review, benchmark and monitor its virtual learning environment provision and develop clear policies and requirements to ensure it provides parity of support for students in all</li> </ul>	<p>Review current staff usage of the virtual learning environment</p> <p>Development benchmark statements describing a hierarchy of potential use of the virtual learning environment</p>	July 2012	Quality and Professional Development Manager; ILT Development Manager; Dean of Higher Education	<p>Increased student satisfaction</p> <p>Improved retention and success</p>	<p>Assistant Principal - Quality and Performance</p> <p>Assistant Principal - Academic and Higher Education</p>	<p>Annual course monitoring</p> <p>Review of virtual learning environment usage</p>



<p>curriculum areas and modes of study (paragraph 35)</p>	<p>Agree minimum level of expectation of staff usage across all provision</p> <p>Provide programme of continuing professional development to enhance staff skills and promote engagement with higher levels of usage of the virtual learning environment</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all aspects of the College's statement of student entitlements, known as the Higher Education Footprint, are consistently applied for the benefit of all students and that current best practice in this regard is more widely disseminated (paragraphs 33, 37).</li> </ul>	<p>Using 'Footprint' as a basis, develop Charter for students with clearly stated entitlements, including personal tutorial support</p> <p>Review current tutorial support and develop clear statements of entitlement and practical arrangements at course level which are communicated to students and align to aims of Charter and Footprint</p> <p>The review and evaluation of</p>	<p>September 2012</p>	<p>Dean of Higher Education</p>	<p>Increased student satisfaction</p> <p>Improved retention and success</p>	<p>Assistant Principal - Academic and Higher Education</p>	<p>Annual course monitoring</p> <p>Student feedback from National Student Survey</p> <p>Course surveys</p>

	effectiveness of tutorial support to be incorporated into the annual course monitoring process					
<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>adopt a more strategic approach to staff development to ensure that all needs are identified, that all staff undertake necessary activities and that this is monitored (paragraphs 27, 40)</li> </ul>	<p>Develop a programme of annual College continuing professional development events shaped by priorities emerging from annual course monitoring, annual updating of the Higher Education Strategy, and the Teaching and Learning Strategy, and developments in the Quality Code</p> <p>Continue to support individual members of staff wishing to undertake professional development and scholarly activities relating to College</p>	September 2012	QPD Manager Dean of Higher Education	<p>Increase in higher education staff engagement with College continuing professional development programme and scholarly activities</p> <p>More consistent engagement across courses</p> <p>Systematic recording of relevant activities in individual continuing professional development logs</p>	<p>Dean of Higher Education</p> <p>Assistant Principal - Academic and Higher Education</p>	<p>External examiner comments</p> <p>Annual appraisal</p> <p>Teaching observation</p>

	<p>priorities and external developments - as above</p> <p>Set targets for and monitor the impact of staff development through the appraisal process, observation of teaching and learning, and annual course and service monitoring</p> <p>Re-write the Higher Education Staff Development Policy to clarify the College's strategic approach to staff development, and the expectations relating to staff engagement in development, and ensure that this is communicated to all managers, teachers and supporters of learning</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extend the opportunities available for employers to enhance their valuable</li> </ul>	Continue to exploit opportunities for employer involvement presented through the College Employer Engagement Strategy	Ongoing	Course Leaders Programme Managers	Range of work-based and work-related learning models and opportunities for students refined	Dean of Higher Education  Assistant Principal - Academic and HE	Annual course monitoring  DLHE survey results

<p>contributions to the development of higher education at both subject and strategic levels (paragraph 34)</p>	<p>Higher Education Teaching and Learning Enhancement Group to ensure regular discussion of current curriculum and development plans with regard to employer involvement and showcase good practice</p>			<p>and/or increased</p> <p>Increased number of awards designed in collaboration with employers</p> <p>Increased student satisfaction</p> <p>Improved graduate employability</p>	<p>Assistant Principal - Commercial Activities</p>	<p>National Student Survey and College student survey results</p> <p>Minutes of Higher Education Teaching and Learning Enhancement Group</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take steps to develop suitable arrangements to ensure and respond to student representation at all levels (paragraph 39).</li> </ul>	<p>Establish cross-college Higher Education Forums, which will meet at least twice a year and engage students from across all higher education provision</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>Widening Participation Adviser</p>	<p>Representative student attendance at Higher Education Forums</p> <p>Issues raised by students fed into college decision making processes and evidence of actions taken</p> <p>Increase in student-led activities undertaken to improve the quality of learning experience across all higher education provision</p>	<p>Dean of Higher Education</p>	<p>Annual Higher Education monitoring process</p> <p>Student satisfaction surveys</p>

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