



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**City College Brighton and Hove**

**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 City College Brighton and Hove 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 agreement, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, 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 distinct management and organisational structure has created a clearly identifiable higher education culture at the College among staff and students
- the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure are well understood by staff, and are embedded on all programmes of study
- the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with the University of Brighton enhances academic standards and students' learning opportunities
- the highly effective learning and teaching strategy develops students' employability skills
- the College's proactive encouragement and support for staff to undertake small research projects enhances learning and teaching practice
- the support provided through teaching remission for staff to undertake scholarly activity and subject updating ensures currency of provision
- students and staff have access through the virtual learning environment to an extensive range of internal and external monitoring reports, course materials and policy documents, which provide them with full information.

### 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:

- develop clear policies and procedures for the management of course boards, ensuring that they are consistently held and that outcomes are recorded and reviewed by the Higher Education Board
- update student handbooks to ensure that they provide current, complete and accurate information and, where appropriate, further guidance for students on work placements.

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

- develop a process for responding to external examiners' reports which is in line with the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining*

- develop a formal strategy for staff development to ensure that existing good practice is further enhanced and more securely embedded, and that the impact of the development activities is measured
- facilitate a means for allowing greater interaction between higher education students to encourage cross-curricula discourse, and provide a cross-college forum for providing student feedback.

## A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at City College Brighton and Hove (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Brighton (the University). The review was carried out by Professor Robert Moreton, Mrs Maz Stewart, Ms Ruth Stoker (reviewers), and Mr Simon Ives (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 its awarding body, meetings with staff, students, and partner institutions, discussions with employers, reports of reviews by QAA, and 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*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4 The College is a medium-sized further education college, delivering a broad curriculum from entry level to undergraduate degree to a wide cohort of learners. The College is the largest provider of post-16 tertiary level learning in Brighton and Hove, providing 1,000 courses and qualifications to approximately 10,000 full and part-time students annually. The College's mission is to be 'an outstanding and responsive College at the heart of learning in Brighton and Hove'. The College enrolls higher education students on 14 programmes of study. Higher education courses have been a significant part of the College's portfolio for a number of years. The College has a longstanding partnership with its validating partner, the University of Brighton. Student numbers at the College have remained steady in recent years. For 2011-12, there are approximately 380 full-time and 85 part-time students on higher education programmes, amounting to 420 full-time student equivalents. Currently the College delivers 10 Foundation Degrees, two honours degree programmes and a part-time Certificate in Education and Professional Graduate Certificate in Post-Compulsory Education.

5 The higher education awards at the College funded by HEFCE are listed below under the awarding body followed by the number of full-time equivalent students.

### University of Brighton

- FdSc Biological Sciences (30)
- FdA Business (45)
- Certificate in Education/Professional Graduate Certificate in Post-Compulsory Education (36)
- FdSc Computing (Network Systems) (19)
- BA (Hons) Creative Music Production (12)
- FdA Digital Media Design (32)



- BA (Hons) Digital Media Design (12)
- FdA Fine Art (15)
- FdA Food and Culinary Arts (28)
- FdA Hospitality and Event Management (73)
- FdA Music Production (58)
- FdA Photography (32)
- FdA Travel and Tourism Management (28)

## **Partnership agreements with the awarding body**

6 The College has a strategic partnership with a single awarding body, the University of Brighton. Five programmes are delivered in a consortium with the University's partners and others are validated for delivery only at the College. The College has recently obtained approval in principle from the Open University to deliver a part-time FdA Financial Services which is projected to start in May 2012.

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

7 In 2008 the College created a new management structure for higher education. Historically, higher education had been dispersed through the various curriculum areas of the College and overseen by a central coordinating role. Since 2008-09, all programmes are located within a dedicated Higher Education Centre, with a Higher Education Manager, team and course leaders, and a higher education administrator. The most recent addition to the higher education portfolio is the BA (Hons) Creative Music Production programme which started in 2010-11 and provides progression from FdA Music Production. The College aspires to grow its higher education provision and is currently reviewing options to achieve this in light of the new funding landscape. It has recently submitted an Access Agreement to the Office for Fair Access.

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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The student written submission was prepared by the College based on feedback from students gathered through the National Student Survey and the College's own internal survey and feedback processes. The draft submission was circulated to all students for comments. During the review, the team held a productive meeting with students from a wide range of programmes, and a number of students confirmed that they had been invited to contribute and had seen copies of the written submission.

## **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?**

9 The College has a clear and effective higher education structure to support and maintain the standards of its provision. Senior management responsibility for higher

education rests with the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Planning. All higher education falls within a single curriculum area managed by the Head of Higher Education. There are four distinct subject areas: arts, service and business management, computing and science, and professional development. Each programme of study has a course leader, with subject areas managed by team leaders. Teacher training programmes are line-managed by the Head of Quality and Professional Development, and the Head of Higher Education oversees quality assurance arrangements. Higher education managers and teaching staff are supported by a dedicated administration service whose work is highly valued by the staff team.

10 The College has developed its own overarching higher education quality assurance framework. Strategic matters relating to academic standards are reported to the Senior Management Team and College Governors through the Higher Education Board and the Corporation Quality Committee. The Higher Education Board, chaired by the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Planning, is the key cross-college forum and is effective in overseeing the management of higher education. The board has clear terms of reference, and its membership includes the Head of Higher Education, student representatives, course and team leaders, senior staff of the University, the University's Partnership Manager, and link tutors. Its remit is to develop the higher education strategy, support programme development, monitor quality assurance processes, oversee the annual monitoring process and review the activities of course boards. The Higher Education Board reports to the Quality Committee of the College Corporation. This receives a regular higher education update and is involved in the College's strategic discussions. The distinct management and organisational structure has created a clearly identifiable higher education culture at the College among staff and students, and the team recognises this as good practice.

11 Course boards are required to meet at least twice a year and report to the relevant school board of the University as well as to the College Higher Education Board. The College regards course boards as an important part of the ongoing quality review process, and the importance of attendance and contribution by student representatives is stressed in student handbooks. For programmes run in a consortium with the University and a range of partners, course boards are conducted each semester within the relevant University school. College staff confirmed that they found these to be a useful forum for discussions about standards and quality, and a direct link with the wider curriculum delivery team. Minutes of these meetings are generally sent to the Head of Higher Education at the College, although this process is not always consistent.

12 Programmes validated for delivery at the College are expected to hold course boards three times a year. The Head of Higher Education and student representatives are invited to attend these meetings, and their entitlement to attend is clearly set out in the student handbooks. However, meetings have been sporadic and minutes have not always been taken, and the Higher Education Board has not therefore had the opportunity to review all the issues and actions emerging at course level. The team recognises that course delivery teams and student cohorts in some areas are small. Meetings between staff members and with students are often informal, and there are regular meetings between course and team leaders and the Head of Higher Education. However, the team consider it advisable for the College to develop clear policies and procedures for the management of course boards and ensure that they are consistently held, and that outcomes are recorded and reviewed by the Higher Education Board.

13 The structure of the Higher Education Management Group has changed significantly since the writing of the self-evaluation. The revised structure now focuses around three curriculum area team meetings for arts, science and computing, and service and business management. Monthly team meetings are held at varying times, which enables engagement by a wider range of full and part-time staff. Meetings continue to address operational matters, and discuss agendas set by the curriculum team leaders.

Although there are no formal terms of reference or set agenda items, action points are produced which are monitored by the Head of Higher Education. At the Developmental engagement the team considered that the Higher Education Management Group provided a useful cross-college forum to share good practice across subjects on common themes, including assessment. The team consider, however, that it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum team meetings. The College states that it intends to keep this new meeting structure under review, and the Higher Education Management Group may be reconvened if appropriate.

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

14 The Academic Infrastructure has become fully integrated into the College's quality assurance processes. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of and are fully engaged with the FHEQ and the *Code of practice*. Staff confirm that the programme validation and review process has helped embed their understanding of the relevant subject benchmark statements, and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Programme specifications make use of the relevant benchmark statements and are appropriate to the level of study. The College works to the University's Common Academic Framework, which is mapped to the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure.

15 Staff reported positively on their involvement in the development of the College's own Code of Practice on Assessment which is clearly mapped to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. The College has also developed a higher education information portal within its virtual learning environment which has a section devoted to the Academic Infrastructure and is accessible by both staff and students. The expectations of the Academic Infrastructure are well understood by staff, and are embedded on all programmes of study. The team consider this to be 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 the validating partner and awarding body?**

16 The Memorandum of Cooperation between the College and its awarding body clearly defines the responsibilities for each party, and these are well understood. There is a strong and effective relationship between the College and the University at various levels of provision. The University's Partnership Manager, link tutors and senior representatives from relevant faculties are active members of the College's Higher Education Board. Where programmes are run in consortium with other partners, there is considerable interaction and dialogue with curriculum teams at the University and other colleges. Course leaders from the College also attend school and faculty boards at the University. The Head of Higher Education attends the Academic Partnership Committee, where matters related to delivery across the University's further education partners are discussed. The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Planning receives papers and minutes, and attends periodic planning meetings with senior colleagues at the University. The team identified as good practice the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with the University which enhances academic standards and students' learning opportunities.

17 The University appoints external examiners who report on academic standards and students' learning opportunities. Reports are sent to the College and the University, and inform their annual monitoring reports. External examiners confirm that the level of study and student achievement is appropriate. Overall achievement rates are high across all courses, with marked year-on-year improvement for the FdSc Computing (Networked Systems) programme. External examiners' reports are mainly positive about teaching, learning and assessment. However, the College does not respond directly to external examiners with a

plan showing that appropriate action is being taken. Response to reports takes place through the annual course monitoring process, and external examiners generally monitor action taken by the College at subsequent visits. For consortium programmes the University produces a response related to all delivery partners. The team consider it desirable for the College to develop a process for responding to external examiners' reports which is in line with the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining*.

18 There is a robust annual monitoring process at programme and institutional level. Module reports gathered either through questionnaires or course discussion, which include student feedback, inform the annual course monitoring reports. The Higher Education Board scrutinises the reports which are also considered by the University's relevant course and faculty boards. The annual monitoring reports provide information as required in the University's Annual Academic Health Handbook. They are rigorous and include points raised by external examiners, as well as feedback from teaching teams and students. They also monitor action points from previous reports and set new targets.

19 The course monitoring reports inform an annual Institutional Academic Health Report. Action points from course annual reports feed through to the institutional report. Retention, progression and achievement data are considered at course and institutional level. Where data suggests there is poor student retention or achievement, the College is required to report explicitly on how these issues are being addressed. The 2010-11 institutional report identified three courses requiring special consideration. Concerns related to student progression and the examination resit rate, and the College provided a clear strategy for improvement. Staff are clear about the importance of the annual monitoring reports and use them to drive quality improvements at module, course and institutional level. The team considers that the quality reporting systems are thorough and effective.

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

20 The College is committed to ongoing staff training and development. An individualised approach to staff development for all higher education staff is effective and well understood. Annual appraisal allows for a structured discussion about individual development needs which are built into a professional development plan for the year. The professional development team manages a budget to support staff requests for a range of staff development activities. Staff are also supported in undertaking higher degrees (many supported through the University's fee waiver scheme), external academic engagement, industrial updating, and professional qualifications.

21 The College gives high priority to the recruitment, development and retention of appropriately qualified staff. There is a college-wide induction process for new staff. This includes an introduction to information technology processes, teaching technologies, safeguarding of students, and College and University policies. The relevant line manager also provides a tailored induction for staff depending on their background and experience of teaching on higher education programmes.

22 All staff teaching on higher education programmes have a reduction in annual teaching hours. This supports scholarly activity, which is actively encouraged. Staff take part in conferences and workshops through the University's Centre for Learning and Teaching, and are able to bid for research fellowships and project funding. The College arranges regular developmental events, such as in-house conferences for all higher education staff. Staff development sessions have included training on the Academic Infrastructure, assessment and moderation, periodic review, and peer observation of teaching. The team

consider that the support provided through teaching remission for staff to undertake scholarly activity and subject updating ensures currency of provision and is good practice.

**The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities as set out in its partnership agreement for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body.**

## **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?**

23 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities, and the associated quality assurance and enhancement processes, reflect those for managing academic standards. These are described in paragraphs 9 to 13. The Memorandum of Cooperation with the University clearly identifies responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities in four areas: staff development, learning and teaching, the learning environment, and the student experience.

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

24 The processes by which the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding body are described in paragraphs 16 to 19. Programme teams spoke positively about their partnership with the awarding body, the effective role of the link tutors, the staff development activities, and the consortium team meetings.

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

25 Engagement with the Academic Infrastructure is outlined in paragraphs 14 and 15. Programmes are aligned with the Academic Infrastructure at the time of validation and institutional approval. External examiners' reports confirm that the quality of learning opportunities is informed by course teams' understanding of the expectations of the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure. Appropriate consideration of the FHEQ, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant sections of the *Code of practice* support the quality of learning opportunities.

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

26 Teaching and learning strategies provide an appropriate blend of academic and work-related elements, and are designed to develop students' employability skills. Evidence from external examiners and the robust monitoring and review processes confirm there is an appropriate mix of vocational and academic study. Students spoke positively about the quality of teaching they receive, the effectiveness of small class sizes, and the accessibility and helpfulness of teaching and support staff.

27 Work-based learning features in many of the programmes under review, and reflects the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. The College engages well with employers to enhance students' learning, and to

provide opportunities for applied learning in the workplace. Appropriate account is taken of employment requirements including work placements, work-based assessments, live projects, and the use of staff with ongoing external work commitments. The Service and Business Management team hold twice-yearly industrial boards made up of local employers from relevant industries. Employers advise on curriculum development and attend presentations from students. Most courses feature guest speakers from the relevant industry. Students greatly appreciate this. These employment-focused activities are commended by external examiners. Students on science, business, photography, travel and tourism, and hospitality and event management programmes all undertake placements, and felt generally well supported. There is good practice in the highly effective learning and teaching strategy which develops students' employability skills.

28 The College has developed a peer observation scheme for teaching which is specific to higher education staff. All staff undertake four observations per year; twice as observer and twice being observed. Staff spoke positively about the process and felt that it had facilitated cross-curricula interaction and the sharing of good teaching practice. Feedback forms completed by staff show that the process encourages a reflective and self-critical approach, and that areas of good practice are identified, along with suggestions for improvement. The outcomes of observations inform individual development through the annual appraisal process, and have been shared through an annual teaching symposium.

29 Students' views about teaching and learning are sought, monitored and evaluated in a number of ways, formally and informally. These include student surveys, student meetings with course teams and the Head of Higher Education, end of module evaluations, and representation on course boards. Students commented positively during the review visit and confirmed that changes had arisen from their representations. The College conducts a first-year student survey which gives direct feedback on teaching and learning. The 2011 survey includes responses from level 4 and level 6 final year honours top-up students, and shows a high rate of overall satisfaction. The College relies heavily on the National Student Survey for its analysis of student views about teaching and learning, which are generally positive. However the current year returns show a reduction in satisfaction in several areas, and the College is addressing these issues through an action plan.

30 Assessment methodology is generally robust, and a broad range of assessment tasks is used across all programmes. The tasks set are appropriate, varied, and enable students to achieve at an appropriate level. Following the Developmental engagement in assessment, the College set up a working group to look at grading descriptors, which has since made a series of recommendations to the College Higher Education Board. This report was also submitted to the University's grade descriptors working group. Assessment criteria for students in most programme areas now include comprehensive guidance on how work will be graded, although further progress is needed in music. Students on arts programmes spoke positively about the impact of this clearer guidance.

31 In the FdA Music Production and BA (Hons) Creative Music Production programmes the course team reports that poor student performance is attributable to lack of understanding of the assignment specifications. Analysis of assignment briefs by the team demonstrates that the specifications are too brief, and further information needs to be provided for students. The team consider it would be desirable for the College to provide clearer assessment briefs and more comprehensive grading criteria for students on the FdA Music Production and BA (Hons) Creative Music Production programmes.

32 In response to a recommendation from the Developmental engagement, the College has run a staff development workshop to enhance understanding of the College's Code of Practice on Assessment. This was to ensure that all staff fully understand and implement the requirements of the policy in relation to moderation and double marking, and

to achieve consistency in assessment practice. A detailed module schedule for each course now indicates when double marking, internal moderation and external moderation are being used. These are included as annexes to the College's Code of Practice on Assessment and are made available to all markers through the Higher Education Hub, where information on policies and procedures are made available to staff.

33 The student submission indicates that there are still some issues with assignment feedback. Several external examiners identify good practice in relation to feedback to students, but some students feel that feedback is not always timely, nor is it always helpful and developmental. The College's work on providing fuller grading descriptors has partially helped resolve this concern, and students in the meeting with the team reported positively on the feedback they received.

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

34 A higher education office offers a dedicated service for students and provides a focal point for their support needs. The office has enabled students to access a range of College higher education services, and provides links into the University's support mechanisms. The College is responsible for providing pastoral support and personal tutoring to students. The entitlement is clearly set out in the University's tutoring policy and the College meets its obligations. Small staff teaching teams mean that the personal tutor is often also the course leader, or another member of the teaching team. Personal tutoring arrangements are communicated to students during the induction process, although students did not always appreciate that the two roles were often combined.

35 Study skills support has been further developed partly in response to a recommendation from the Developmental engagement. During the 2010-11 student induction an increased emphasis was placed on academic practice, and a new study skills pack was provided for all students. At the meeting with the team, students spoke positively about the recently introduced drop-in study skills sessions, and commented that they are now more aware of the support available. The College has also invested in specialist study skills software, which is accessible to students through the virtual learning environment. This supplements study skills support available at the University which is well publicised in induction and through the student handbooks.

36 Feedback from students is collected in a number of ways. There is a higher education student governor on the College Corporation, and student representatives attend the Higher Education Board. Course representatives are also encouraged to attend course boards. At module level, student feedback is collected either through feedback questionnaires or through discussions with staff. Student views about their support at the College are generally positive and broadly comparable with the sector as a whole. There are clear examples of the College responding to student feedback on issues related to quality of learning opportunities. However, there is no cross-college forum for higher education students, which the students felt would be helpful in enabling cross-curricula collaboration, and greater interaction as a student body. The team considers it desirable for the College to facilitate a means for allowing greater interaction between higher education students to encourage cross-curricula discourse, and provide a cross-college forum for providing student feedback.

37 The College analyses its retention data closely to enhance its support for students. There is an upward trend in student progression and achievement, with the overall progression rate at 87 per cent and overall achievement at 92 per cent. In 2010-11 student progression rates from year one to year two improved significantly for FdA Hospitality and Event Management and FdA Music Production.

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

38 The College's arrangements for staff development are outlined in paragraphs 20 to 22. The College aims to ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to perform their job roles effectively and has made a significant investment to support staff development. A number of specific arrangements for higher education staff are now in place. The College operates a research project scheme where staff bid for up to 50 hours' remission from teaching to pursue small research projects. Staff are enthusiastic about the benefits of the scheme, and were able to talk about projects in which they had been involved. They told the team that they enjoyed the opportunity to engage in scholarly activity, and had presented papers to peers at conferences at the University and in the wider academic community. In 2010-11 projects included developing student approaches to academic study skills, the feasibility of mapping the content of the FdSc Computing (Network Systems) to an additional professional qualification, and the needs of employers in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector. One member of staff recently won a University award for excellence in teaching. The College's proactive encouragement and support for staff to undertake small research projects, which enhance learning and teaching practice, is good practice.

39 The College has identified the need for a more strategic approach to its higher education staff development. Currently there is no explicit staff development strategy but there is an opportunity to identify specific themes that might enhance teaching and learning. There is a lack of clarity about the criteria for staff attending external events, and a wider range of staff could be undertaking research projects. There is a need for a greater focus on targeted staff development to support both pedagogic and subject development. The team considers it would be desirable for the College to develop a formal strategy for staff development to ensure that existing good practice is further enhanced and more securely embedded, and that the impact of the development activities is measured.

### **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?**

40 The College's annual business planning process identifies and allocates resources. The management structure enables the Head of Higher Education to present a resources bid annually to the Senior Management Team. Resource requirements are also evaluated and agreed as part of the initial programme validation process, at periodic review, and at institutional partner College review with the University. Programmes are all delivered at two College campuses. Resources are dispersed throughout the sites and each programme has its own dedicated base room. There is a dedicated higher education study and computer room, as well as library and refectory facilities. Easy access to the University libraries is a significant benefit for students.

41 Resources are subject to ongoing review through the annual monitoring process where comments from students and external examiners inform further investment. Evidence from the National Student Survey identified some dissatisfaction with specialist resources, especially in the arts area. Students in photography and digital media design have raised concerns about access to specialist studios on a drop-in basis outside contact teaching hours. The College has attempted to alleviate this problem by providing a timetable when drop-in sessions are available. It has also relocated all media loan equipment to the main College library where students can access equipment during opening hours. Students have also suggested that the general environment in some classrooms requires improvement, although staff state that recent timetable changes and upgrades to the teaching environment have resolved these issues. Part-time students were generally satisfied with the resources



available, and noted the effectiveness of the College Higher Education Hub in providing access to relevant documentation.

**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 body 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?**

42 The College is responsible for publishing a wide range of information to inform prospective and current students and other relevant stakeholders. These include a higher education prospectus; Higher Education Strategic Plan; student and staff handbooks and module guides; and a range of policies and procedures. The majority of published information is either hard copy or in electronic format, and there is a dedicated higher education section on the College's website. Published marketing and programme information is available in a variety of alternative formats in order to meet individual needs. The College is responsive to the specific needs of students, such as visual impairment, and publishes programme information in a variety of formats.

43 All programme specifications follow a University of Brighton template and are developed as part of the course validation process. Each programme specification makes reference to relevant subject benchmark statements. These are reviewed through annual course monitoring to ensure that they remain current and valid, and are available on the College website.

44 The College website has a dedicated area for higher education. All higher education programmes are listed within their curriculum areas. Advanced search facilities are available to support access to information on the College website. There is a hyperlink to the University website for fees and information on support services available to students. Accessing higher education information is straightforward, and the information available is comprehensive.

45 Student handbooks are produced for all higher education programmes and follow a standard College format. They are prepared by the Higher Education Officer in liaison with course leaders. The Head of Higher Education has overall responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the student handbooks. They contain very clear and accessible information on programme management and delivery, course content, and access to resources. Students confirmed that they found the recent handbooks to be greatly improved, and that information was clearly presented. There is consistent layout of the modules guidelines in the handbooks. However some information is no longer current, for example the FdA in Business and the FdA in Digital Media module descriptors with respect to named teaching staff and location of module delivery, and not all new information has been indexed in all handbooks. Students and staff reported that the handbooks were helpful and consistently used throughout the academic year.

46 Students reported that there is significant variation in the information and guidance provided on work placement and professional practice. In the FdA Travel and Tourism Management programme, clear work placement guidance, potential work placement opportunities and records of previous placements support the module information.

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

This information is available on StudentCentral, the University's virtual learning environment. However, in the FdSc Biological Science programme information is limited to the module descriptor, which specifies that it is the student's responsibility to identify their work placement. It is advisable for the College to update student handbooks to ensure that they provide current, complete and accurate information and, where appropriate, further guidance for students on work placements.

47 All students have access to the College's virtual learning environment. On some programmes there is strong evidence that course teams use this as an effective learning and resource tool. Students are generally enthusiastic in their evaluation of the electronic facilities available for their programme of study. Teaching teams acknowledged the variability in the use made of the virtual learning environment. Some programmes, for example the Professional Graduate Certificate of Education and the FdA Business programmes, use more interactive functions to support teaching and learning.

48 Students on programmes delivered in consortium with other partner colleges also have access to StudentCentral, the University's virtual learning environment. This allows for interactive work across the consortium, and for all students to have access to the same information. The Higher Education Hub provides both students and staff with excellent virtual access to a range of generic resources. These include full information related to quality processes, study skills, academic writing, and programme-specific information. Student access rights are restricted to their own programme information, while staff can access information on all programmes. Students and staff have access, through the virtual learning environment, to an extensive range of internal and external monitoring reports, course materials and policy documents, which provides them with comprehensive information. The team consider this to be good practice.

### **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?**

49 The College and the University have clearly prescribed and effective procedures for publishing and monitoring their policies and procedures. The University takes responsibility for publishing key policies, which guide the marketing and delivery of its collaborative programmes. The University's Partnership Manager is responsible for preparing University policies which affect partner colleges. These are ratified through the Academic Partnership Committee where the College is represented. The College reviews the legally required policies and procedures relating to health and safety, and safeguarding, as well as key College documents such as the Higher Education Strategic Plan. All higher education policies developed by the College, such as the peer observation procedures, are ratified by the Higher Education Board.

50 There are clearly defined collaborative partner procedures for checking the accuracy and completeness of published information. The College complies with the University's formal policy on the preparation of the programme specifications and module templates as set out in the Partnership Handbook. The University retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the public information prepared by the College on validated programmes is accurate and complete, and presented in a consistent format. The annual monitoring and external examiner reports provide good evidence that these policies are being effectively implemented.

51 The University's Partnership Handbook and the College's Marketing Policy specify joint responsibility for marketing and advertising. The College advertises higher education programmes through the use of a dedicated website, prospectuses and other print materials.

The University is prescriptive in ensuring that, for example, programme titles and descriptions are identical with those used by the University in its publications. Students reported that they had not been asked to comment on the effectiveness of marketing materials in aiding programme choice.

52 Course leaders regularly review the accuracy and completeness of programme documentation, particularly where there are changes to modules or other information following periodic review. The Head of Higher Education is responsible for overseeing the accuracy of information on the website, in conjunction with the Head of Marketing who has website management responsibility and oversees the preparation of promotional information, which is checked by the University to ensure accuracy.

**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**

53 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in November 2010. There were three lines of enquiry:

**Line of enquiry 1:** Students are provided with accurate and complete information on assessment on all programmes, which clearly explains how they are assessed.

**Line of enquiry 2:** Students are provided with constructive and timely feedback on assessed work, which supports their learning and development to an appropriate level.

**Line of enquiry 3:** Course learning, teaching and assessment strategies promote learning and effectively prepare students for progression to employment or further study.

54 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. These included the well developed structures and review processes; the development of the College's own Code of Practice on Assessment; the opportunity for staff to share good practice; the effective interactive relationship with the University of Brighton; the processes for monitoring the timeliness of returning assessed work; well embedded employability skills; and the peer observation of teaching.

55 The team also made a number of recommendations. It considered that it would be desirable for the College to ensure that all staff understand and implement the Code of Practice on Assessment; review information provided to students on progression to further study; implement a system for gathering information on student destinations; promote more effectively the study skills provision available; and review the use of grading criteria used on the arts programmes.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

56 The College offers 10 Foundation Degrees, in a wide range of curriculum areas to 360 students, which are validated by the University of Brighton. It strongly believes that Foundation Degrees form a valuable progression route for students wishing to progress from

further to higher education study in vocational areas within the College, and respond to the needs of local employers.

57 Foundation Degree provision falls within the overarching quality assurance and enhancement framework the College has in place for all its higher education programmes. The team confirmed that the College has well established links with employers who inform curriculum developments and are part of the validation process, which ensures that programmes are aligned with the expectations of the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. All areas of good practice and recommendations apply equally to the Foundation Degree provision.

## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

58 The team has identified a number of features of good practice in the 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 body. This was based upon discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding body, the University of Brighton.

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

- the distinct management and organisational structure has created a clearly identifiable higher education culture at the College among staff and students (paragraph 10)
- the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure are well understood by staff, and are embedded on all programmes of study (paragraph 15)
- the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with the University of Brighton enhances academic standards and students' learning opportunities (paragraph 16)
- the support provided through teaching remission for staff to undertake scholarly activity and subject updating ensures currency of provision (paragraph 22)
- the highly effective learning and teaching strategy develops students' employability skills (paragraph 27)
- the College's proactive encouragement and support for staff to undertake small research projects enhances learning and teaching practice (paragraph 38)
- students and staff have access through the virtual learning environment to an extensive range of internal and external monitoring reports, course materials and policy documents, which provide them with full information (paragraph 48).

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

- develop clear policies and procedures for the management of course boards, ensuring that they are consistently held and that outcomes are recorded and reviewed by the Higher Education Board (paragraph 12)
- update student handbooks to ensure that they provide current, complete and accurate information and, where appropriate, further guidance for students on work placements (paragraph 46).

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

- develop a process for responding to external examiners' reports which is in line with the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining* (paragraph 17)

- facilitate a means for allowing greater interaction between higher education students to encourage cross-curricula discourse, and provide a cross-college forum for providing student feedback (paragraph 36)
- develop a formal strategy for staff development to ensure that existing good practice is further enhanced and more securely embedded, and that the impact of the development activities is measured (paragraph 39).

62 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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 body.

63 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

64 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

City College Brighton and Hove 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 distinct management and organisational structure has created a clearly identifiable higher education culture at the College among staff and students (paragraph 10)</li> </ul>	<p>Retain current structure for managing Higher Education in business plan re-shaping</p> <p>Keep structure of team meetings to manage higher education under review to ensure fitness for purpose</p> <p>Build on good practice with staff forums to develop higher education culture among student groups</p>	June 2012 to June 2013	Senior Leadership Team; Head of Higher Education	<p>Publication of revised College Management Structure</p> <p>Actions and outcomes from team meetings</p> <p>Actions and outcomes from student forums</p>	Higher Education Board and Senior Leadership Team	<p>Staff and student feedback</p> <p>Periodic review outcomes</p> <p>Integrated quality and enhancement review outcomes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure are well understood by staff, and are embedded on all</li> </ul>	<p>Provision of annual training and support on working with the Quality Code for staff</p> <p>Assess implications of</p>	June 2012 and annually  Within	Head of Higher Education  Head of Higher	Staff feedback; Periodic review outcomes	Higher Education Board and Higher Education Management Team Meetings	<p>Staff feedback and course reports</p> <p>Student feedback</p>

programmes of study (paragraph 15)	<p>changes to Quality Code, and ensure that all staff are made aware of changes</p> <p>Publish links to elements of the Quality Code on the Higher Education Hub for staff and students each year</p> <p>Map College practices against sections of the Quality Code on responding to external examiners and placement learning</p>	<p>three months of the publication of the revised Quality Code</p> <p>Review of external examining and placement learning by June 2012</p>	<p>Education and Higher Education Team Leaders</p> <p>Head of Higher Education and Higher Education Officer</p> <p>Head of Higher Education and Higher Education Team Leaders</p>	<p>External examiner feedback</p>		<p>External examiner reports</p> <p>Reports to Higher Education Board</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the strong interactive relationship the College has developed with the University of Brighton enhances academic standards and students' learning opportunities (paragraph 16)</li> </ul>	Consolidate the relationship with the University of Brighton during the transition to direct-funding model	July 2013	All Higher Education Teaching and Management staff	<p>Annual Academic Health monitoring</p> <p>External examiner reports</p> <p>Periodic review outcomes</p>	Higher Education Board and Senior Leadership Team	<p>Staff feedback</p> <p>Student feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the support provided through</li> </ul>	Continue to provide support for research	December 2012 and	Head of Higher Education and all	Staff feedback and the development of	Higher Education Board	Staff feedback Higher Education

<p>teaching remission for staff to undertake scholarly activity and subject updating ensures currency of provision (paragraph 22)</p>	<p>and scholarly activity through remission and the research project scheme</p> <p>Publish staff development strategy to formalise arrangement and provide a framework for enhancement</p> <p>Run annual forum to share good practice and research project outcomes</p>	<p>annually</p> <p>September 2012</p> <p>Summer 2012 and annually</p>	<p>Higher Education teaching staff</p> <p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Head of Higher Education and all Higher Education teaching staff</p>	<p>measures to assess impact of scholarly activity on teaching and learning</p> <p>Increase in the number of quality continuous professional development activities</p> <p>Increased levels of attendance and contribution to annual forum</p>		<p>Board discussion</p> <p>Staff feedback from continuous professional development events and publication of evaluation report to Higher Education Board</p> <p>Participant feedback from forum</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the highly effective learning and teaching strategy develops students' employability skills (paragraph 27)</li> </ul>	<p>Establish a further industrial board to enhance employer links at course level</p> <p>Expand local links with industry for Digital Media Design</p> <p>Develop employability skills for second-year Music, Photography and Fine Art students</p>	<p>June 2013</p> <p>June 2013</p> <p>September 2013</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education Course Leaders</p> <p>Team Leader Arts and Course Leaders for Digital Media Design</p> <p>Head of Higher Education and Course Leaders</p>	<p>Well attended meetings of Industrial Board</p> <p>Employers attending meetings and/or inputting into assignments/projects</p> <p>New modules/assignments being delivered</p>	<p>Higher Education Board</p> <p>Course boards</p>	<p>Employer feedback</p> <p>Periodic review outcomes</p> <p>Student feedback</p> <p>Integrated quality and enhancement review outcomes</p> <p>Course board minutes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the College's proactive encouragement and support for</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to provide support for research and scholarly activity through the research</p>	<p>December 2012 and annually</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education and all Higher Education teaching staff</p>	<p>Staff feedback and the development of measures to assess impact of scholarly</p>	<p>Higher Education Board</p>	<p>Staff feedback; Higher Education Board discussion</p>



<p>staff to undertake small research projects enhances learning and teaching practice (paragraph 38)</p>	<p>project scheme</p> <p>Publish staff development strategy to formalise arrangement and provide a framework for enhancement</p> <p>Run annual forum to share good practice and research project outcomes</p>	<p>September 2012</p> <p>Summer 2012 and annually</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Head of Higher Education and all Higher Education teaching staff</p>	<p>activity on teaching and learning</p> <p>Increase in the number of quality of continuous professional development activities</p> <p>Increased levels of attendance and contribution to annual forum</p>		<p>Staff feedback from continuous professional development events and publication of evaluation report to Higher Education Board</p> <p>Participant feedback from forum</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students and staff have access through the virtual learning environment to an extensive range of internal and external monitoring reports, course materials and policy documents, which provide them with full information (paragraph 48).</li> </ul>	<p>Widely publicise, expand and enhance the Higher Education Hub</p>	<p>Between June 2012 and June 2013</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education Course Leaders</p>	<p>Staff feedback; student feedback</p>	<p>Higher Education Board</p>	<p>Staff feedback; Higher Education Board discussion</p>
<p><b>Advisable</b></p>	<p><b>Action to be taken</b></p>	<p><b>Target date</b></p>	<p><b>Action by</b></p>	<p><b>Success indicators</b></p>	<p><b>Reported to</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>
<p>The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b></p>						

for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop clear policies and procedures for the management of course boards, ensuring that they are consistently held and that outcomes are recorded and reviewed by the Higher Education Board (paragraph 12)</li> </ul>	Revised policy and procedure for the management of course boards to be published	July 2012	Head of Higher Education and management team	Publication of course board policy and procedure	Higher Education Board	Compliance with published policy and procedure evidenced through minutes
	Publish a schedule of dates for the Higher Education Board to receive all course board minutes across its three annual meetings	March 2012	Secretary and Chair of Higher Education Board	Publication of course board schedule		Monitoring of course board reports received at Higher Education Board
	Higher Education Board to have a regular standing item to receive and review minutes and actions from course boards	March 2012	Secretary and Chair of Higher Education Board	All minutes received at Higher Education Board		Feedback from course leaders as chairs of course boards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>update student handbooks to ensure that they provide current, complete and accurate information and, where appropriate, further guidance for students on work placements (paragraph 46).</li> </ul>	Devise a checklist of core items of information, against which student handbooks can be checked annually. To include: module leader, delivery location, assessment dates etc.	September 2012	Head of Higher Education Higher Education Officer	Publication of complete and accurate set of student handbooks	Higher Education Board Higher Education Board	Feedback from annual handbook moderation panel
	Annual student handbook moderation panel to include Head	September 2012	Team Leaders Course Leaders	Actions identified by panel implemented		Feedback from staff and students; staff feedback

	of Higher Education and team leaders  Develop a common placement handbook, building on good practice in some areas. Placement handbook to include: statement of student and staff responsibilities, support and leads for finding placements, and a specification for the role of the placement tutor	September 2012	Head of Higher Education  Higher Education Officer  Team Leaders  Course Leaders	Student feedback on the quality and usefulness of student and placement handbooks		Feedback from placement providers
<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>develop a process for responding to external examiners' reports which is in line with the expectations of the <i>Code of practice, Section 4: External examining</i> (paragraph 17)</li> </ul>	Publish a policy in consultation with the University and with reference to the Quality Code	October 2012	Head of Higher Education  Course Leaders	All external examiners receive responses to their reports within 30 working days of receipt  Examiners report that their previous concerns have been met	Higher Education Board	Annual reporting in the institutional report

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilitate a means for allowing greater interaction between higher education students to encourage cross-curricula discourse, and provide a cross-college forum for providing student feedback (paragraph 36)</li> </ul>	<p>Facilitate regular activities that aim to bring students from different courses together</p> <p>Higher Education Student Council meeting</p>	<p>November 2012; February 2013; April/May 2013 and annual pattern</p> <p>May 2012</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education and Team Leaders</p> <p>Head of Higher Education; Course Leaders; higher education students</p>	<p>Participation by students from at least four different courses</p> <p>Participation and attendance at council meeting</p>	<p>Higher Education Management Team</p> <p>Higher Education Board and Senior Leadership Team</p>	<p>Student feedback</p> <p>Student feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a formal strategy for staff development to ensure that existing good practice is further enhanced and more securely embedded, and that the impact of the development activities is measured (paragraph 39).</li> </ul>	<p>Develop a Higher Education staff development strategy in consultation with teaching staff to include a statement on the arrangements for staff development, the setting of priorities and how the impact on teaching and learning will be evaluated</p>	<p>September 2012</p>	<p>Head of Higher Education</p> <p>Higher Education teaching staff; Head of Professional Development</p>	<p>Staff feedback</p> <p>Student feedback</p>	<p>Higher Education Board</p>	<p>Annual reporting in the institution report</p>

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