QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Telford College of Arts and Technology

March 2012

SR 052/12

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 bodies 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 Telford College of Arts and Technology carried out in March 2012

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 well thought out and close working relationships with partner universities, particularly at course level
- the strategic approach to engaging employers in the development and delivery of higher education provision together with the long-established and effective working relationships with local employers
- the College's strategic vision in providing effective and successful seamless learning, teaching and progression opportunities from level 3 to higher education
- the College's commitment to maintaining multiple virtual learning platforms which meet the needs of higher education students studying courses validated by three awarding bodies
- the FdA Early Years Services course leader working in partnership with colleagues from the University of Wolverhampton and City of Wolverhampton College to undertake research with Foundation Degree students regarding the importance of using real-time interactive media and presenting the findings at an international conference.

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 and enhance the existing process for receiving external examiner reports to ensure that this enables the College to monitor the effectiveness of the external examining process
- continue to ensure that all staff involved in higher education curriculum development and delivery are fully familiar with the purpose and content of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

- monitor the management of its higher education provision with a view to streamlining and clearly defining individual and committee roles and remits
- monitor the reporting arrangements in place for its higher education provision with a view to ensuring that there is no unnecessary repetition
- develop a moderation and verification procedure and implement this consistently
- continue to review the implementation of its higher education staff development policy to ensure that this reflects emerging sector trends and developments, and to ensure that development and training activities undertaken by higher education staff are formally and systematically recorded
- continue to develop and implement a mechanism for differentiating the responses to surveys of its higher education students
- consult with its awarding bodies, to continue to explore the introduction of a higher education peer observation process and that this fully integrates with its staff development and annual appraisal processes
- continue to work toward the introduction of a comprehensive tutorial system for all higher education students that includes regular formally recorded meetings which contribute toward students' personal development planning
- review the mechanisms in place to ensure that the information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education provision is accurate, complete and consistently presented.

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 Telford College of Arts and Technology (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 Wolverhampton, the University of Worcester and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Ms Jenny Anderson, Mr Maldwyn Buckland, Mr Jonathan Doney (reviewers), and Mr Grant Horsburgh (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 a wide range and variety of documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers, former students and partner institutions, and reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagements in assessment and student support. A summary of findings from both Developmental engagements 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 help 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   Telford College of Arts and Technology is a medium-sized general further education college based on a single 23-acre campus in the market town of Wellington. The scope of the provision at the College ranges from courses for secondary school age students, through a range of pre-vocational, non-vocational and vocational courses in a wide range of disciplines, and professional Foundation Degree programmes. The College annually recruits in excess of 30,000 students, of whom approximately 2,000 are full-time. The College employs over 700 full-time and part-time staff, and engages an additional 300 on an agency basis. The College's character and strategic priorities are determined by its Corporation, a group of 20 individuals drawn from diverse parts of the local community.

5   The College's higher education strategy aims to provide higher education to meet the needs of local people and employers with a view to offering lifelong learning opportunities, increasing participation in higher education, and bridging the gap between training and the academic curriculum. Changing and emerging government policy has led to a reduction in the College's higher education provision. At the time of the review the College's key priorities are to continue and expand the partnership with the University of Wolverhampton; explore partnerships with other higher education institutions; continue to develop Foundation Degree and higher national programmes with local business partners and higher education providers; and continue to offer current higher education programmes where government policy and higher education partner priorities permit.

6   At the time of the visit 210 students (178 full-time equivalent students) were enrolled on seven higher education programmes, approximately one per cent of the College student population. The provision is available in a variety of modes of study including full and part-time and day release.

Higher education provision at the College

7   The College's HEFCE-funded higher education provision in 2011-12 is shown below with the awarding bodies and full-time equivalent student enrolments in brackets.

University of Wolverhampton

- FdA Art Design and Media, full-time (25)
- FdA Early Years, part-time (11)
- FdA Health and Social Care, full and part-time (25.5)
- FdSc Computing, full and part-time (50.5)
- FdSc Engineering, full-time (18)

Edexcel

- HND Computing, full-time (14)

University of Worcester

- HND Sport Coaching, full-time (34)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

8   The College has partnership agreements with the University of Wolverhampton, the University of Worcester and Edexcel. The partnership agreements have been developed by the awarding bodies to take account of the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*. The College has worked in conjunction with the University of Wolverhampton on the delivery of a range of higher education programmes since the early 1980s. In 2010 the College started a partnership with the University of Worcester. Partnership agreements with both universities set out clearly each partner's responsibilities for the management of the provision. The awarding bodies retain responsibility for the academic standard of their awards, including programme approval and monitoring, the appointment of external examiners, and the approval of teaching staff. The College has responsibility for day-to-day quality management, recruitment, programme organisation and timetabling, and student support (both academic and pastoral). The maintenance of academic standards is monitored and supported through existing awarding partner and college-wide quality systems.

9   The College delivers the HND Computing under the Edexcel Standard Note. There is no formal partnership agreement. The course is delivered and managed in accordance with the College's policies and procedures and is subject to external verification in accordance with established Edexcel protocols.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

10   Recognition that reporting and monitoring of higher education needs to be managed centrally rather than being captured in the standard College quality cycle, together with the opportunities presented by cross-college restructuring, led to the creation of three posts to support the Higher Education Strategy Manager. This revised higher education management structure has been in place since September 2011 but was not fully embedded at the time of the review visit. However, the structure has created a forum for wider discussions relating to the future strategic direction of the College's higher education provision and the overall movement towards celebrating the good practice that operates within the College.

A strategic review of higher education provision has resulted in renegotiation of the places on offer for 2012-13 and the introduction of more directly funded places on higher national award programmes. As a result, a wider range of courses will be available from September 2012 to reflect local employability opportunities, including the introduction of the following Edexcel programmes: HNC Business; HNC Engineering (to replace the FdSc Engineering); HND Mobile Games and Application Development; and HND Public Services.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

11   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. The submission took the form of a video-recorded focus group meeting involving nine students from higher education programmes. A transcript of the meeting and a copy of the video were made available to the team. The focus group was facilitated by the higher education lead for faculty two. The focus group discussed a wide range of matters relating to the student learning experience and provided the team with a useful insight into students' views on the College's higher education provision. In meeting a sample of students during the visit, the team found that the transcript from the focus group provided an accurate reflection of the views and opinions of the College's higher education students.

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?

12   Responsibility for higher education lies with the Strategy Manager for Higher Education. This appointment is held by an Assistant Principal and has been in place since September 2011. The remit includes developing and expanding the College's higher education portfolio and acts as a focal point for managing all aspects of higher education across the College, including review planning, development and organisation. The Strategy Manager for Higher Education is a member of Academic Board ensuring higher education is represented at a senior level within the College.

13   The Higher Education Strategy Group was formed in 2010 and meets four times a year. Topics covered at meetings include the Higher Education Strategy, higher education audit report, planning future numbers, Developmental engagement action plans, and planning for the Summative review. The group makes recommendations relating to the future development of higher education to the senior management team where decisions are made. However, there are no terms of reference for this group.

14   The newly created posts of higher education faculty leads act in an advisory role to support course leaders in their curriculum area and aim to provide consistency in the quality across their range of provision. The faculty leads are line-managed by their head of school but have a faculty-wide remit. Discussions with staff indicated that this reporting structure and the remit of the faculty leads more generally were unclear. For example, the faculty lead role descriptor emphasises their involvement in monitoring and reviewing courses but in practice they had little involvement in the production of annual course monitoring reports.

The College acknowledged that the role of faculty lead is still evolving and that their impact has yet to be assessed.

15   Course team leaders effectively manage higher education programmes on a day-to-day basis. Reporting to the Higher Education Strategy Group their responsibilities include formal termly programme evaluations, liaison with awarding bodies and university representatives, and monitoring all action plans. Course teams meet regularly to monitor student data and identify areas for action. Notes from these meetings are now sent to faculty higher education leads.

16   Although there is a general understanding of roles, structures and systems at the course level the team found that the management of higher education is overly complicated and fragmented. Management staff were uncertain about job titles, management roles and committee titles, and were initially unable to provide a clear picture of the overall management structure for higher education. In acknowledging that the new structures and processes had not had time to become fully embedded at the time of the review, it is desirable that the College monitor the management of its higher education provision with a view to streamlining and clearly defining individual and committee roles and remits.

17   Course teams produce a summary annual report as part of the College annual monitoring process. The report is approved by the head of school before being discussed formally by the course team. School and faculty summary annual reports combine data from further and higher education and feed into a College summary report. The College report is presented at the Quality and Standards Committee which is a subcommittee of Academic Board. Course teams also produce or contribute to an additional summary annual report for their awarding body leading to duplication in the reporting process. In 2011-12 an additional higher education summary annual report was produced for the first time. The Strategy Manager for Higher Education submitted the report to the Quality and Learning Improvement Manager. The report includes comment on the overall effectiveness of the leadership and management of higher education. It also comments on the quality of the provision and reports on progress with the Developmental engagement action plans. However, at the time of the review the report was described as being a work in progress and had not been approved through the committee system. It is desirable that the College monitors the reporting arrangements to ensure there is no unnecessary repetition.

18   An external audit of higher education provision was undertaken in May 2011 as part of the approved College internal audit periodic plan. This provided a further opportunity for the College to reflect on the Developmental engagement action plans and to inform other aspects relating to the development of higher education. The College intends to undertake a dedicated curriculum review of higher education in February 2013, which will take account of the Summative review findings.

19   External examiner reports are received by course leaders who discuss them at course team meetings. Action taken, to address the matters raised, is included in summary annual reports. External examiner reports are held at course level. The College is therefore unable to centrally monitor external examiner reports and is unaware of whether individual reports have been received. College representatives indicated that plans are in place to review the process for receiving and addressing matters raised in external examiner reports. To ensure that the College can monitor the effectiveness of the external examining process it is advisable that the College reviews and enhances the existing process for receiving external examiner reports.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

20   University partners require that courses validated by them engage with the FHEQ, relevant sections of the *Code of practice,* and the appropriate subject and qualification benchmark statements. This is achieved through the validation process. The curriculum and resulting modules are designed by the higher education institutions. Where strong collaborative links have been created, College staff have a high level of input in the redesign and revalidation of particular courses.

21   A small number of staff spoke knowledgeably about the Academic Infrastructure and how they use it to inform their practice. Other staff indicated that the university partners had responsibility for ensuring that appropriate engagement took place. Most staff have not engaged fully with the Academic Infrastructure and were unable to articulate the links between the Academic Infrastructure and the curriculum. As the College intends to develop new higher education provision in the near future, it is advisable that the College continues to ensure that all staff involved in higher education curriculum development and delivery are fully familiar with the purpose and content of the Academic Infrastructure.

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?

22   The College has a long-established and effective working relationship with the University of Wolverhampton. The Principal meets annually with the Vice-Chancellor. The Strategy Manager for Higher Education meets with senior representatives three times a year in Collaborative Quality Forums, and three times a year with the Collaborative Operations Group. Course team leaders work in close partnership with their awarding bodies and attend regular collaborative partnership and cluster meetings. Minutes from meetings are shared on the College intranet. At course level there are strong and valued one-to-one links between College teaching staff and their university colleagues. Awarding body representatives were extremely supportive of the College and the University of Worcester representative commended the HND Sport Coaching teaching team for their commitment to the partnership. The well thought out and close working relationships with partner universities, particularly at course level, is good practice.

23   The Higher Education Assessment Policy introduced following the first Developmental engagement, provides an overview of the College's assessment process. Course teams are in regular contact with the awarding bodies to ensure adherence to their marking requirements. Following internal marking of assignments, moderation meetings take place with partner colleges and university partners to discuss threshold levels and to ensure standards are maintained. Borderline assessments are sent to external examiners. Staff maintain their own tracking systems to monitor student performance data. These inform course team meeting discussions and comparative trend analysis.

24   The College's Internal Verification Policy and Procedure states that it is the responsibility of each department to identify appropriate internal verification procedures required by the awarding body for the awards being delivered. Staff acknowledged that there is no formal College system for moderating or verifying higher education assessments but in some subject areas there is an informal system in place. To ensure the standard of its higher education provision it is desirable that the College develops a moderation and verification procedure and implements this consistently across all courses.

25   Students confirmed that they are provided with an assessment calendar and that they are given sufficient notice if changes are made. Students understood assessment

criteria and stated that assessment feedback is useful. A 15-day turnaround period, for providing students with assessment feedback, is set by partner universities and students indicated that this was generally adhered to.

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

26   The coordination of staff development activities is managed by the Quality and Learning Improvement Manager. The College's Quality and Professional Development Unit produces annual staff training and development objectives by priority areas linked to the College's strategic plan. The College encourages staff to undertake both off and on-site training and runs cross-college staff development days. For example, a one-day seminar in July 2011 covered themes relevant to managing and delivering higher education. Course teams have also attended events at their partner university. All training and development is recorded by individual staff members on their continuing personal development log on the College intranet. All staff are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Institute for Learning. Currently, the College has no method of differentiating those staff who undertake higher education staff development and training but at the time of the review this was under review. It is desirable that the College continues to review the implementation of its higher education staff development policy to ensure that this reflects emerging sector trends and developments and to ensure that development and training activities undertaken by higher education staff are formally and systematically recorded.

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?

27   The responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards and the reporting arrangements in place as discussed in paragraphs 12 to 19 apply equally to the management and reporting of the quality of learning opportunities. Higher education courses have been developed to fulfil the needs of local students and employers. As the majority of students are employed within an appropriate area only a small number of students undertake work placements. Those that do are appropriately briefed as to their roles and responsibilities. An employers' handbook sets out expectations of employers for students undertaking work placements but the distribution of this handbook is limited. Employers confirmed that staff provide comprehensive briefings prior to and during student placement activity.

28   The FdA Early Years Services has been endorsed by the Children's Workforce Council and the FdSc Engineering has achieved Institute of Engineering accreditation. Employers indicated that higher education courses met their requirements and were complimentary regarding their relationship with the College and the level of student engagement. An engineering employer particularly valued the structure of the full-time course which was delivered on a single day. The strategic approach to engaging employers

in the development and delivery of higher education provision together with the long-established and effective working relationships with local employers is good practice.

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 College's mechanisms for assuring that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies are discussed in paragraphs 22 to 25. Students commented that they enjoyed the learning and teaching strategies used by staff. Discussions with students and employers indicated that most current and former students had been inspired to progress through increasingly higher levels of study as a result of the learning opportunities provided by the College. Students clearly articulated the progression opportunities available to them. The College's strategic vision in providing effective and successful seamless learning, teaching and progression opportunities from level 3 to higher education is good practice.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

30   The account taken of the Academic Infrastructure is discussed in paragraphs 20 and 21.

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

31   The College has several effective ways of managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities. Learner voice forums play a key role, as do college-wide student surveys, questionnaires and module evaluations. However, the College continues to work towards resolving its inability to differentiate the views of higher education students from those in further education as noted during the second Developmental engagement. It is desirable that the College continues to develop and implement a mechanism for differentiating the responses to surveys of its higher education students.

32   The Principal and Strategy Manager for Higher Education regularly invite higher education students to 'question time' focus groups. Outcomes from these are displayed on notice boards. Course team meetings, which students attend, record all matters relating to course delivery and a standard agenda item enables higher education students to raise matters of concern. Staff meet with groups of students formally three times per year with a member of staff from the awarding university present when possible. Comments raised at these meetings are presented at course team meetings and shared with the link tutor.

33   Where appropriate, all staff teaching on higher education programmes have been approved by the appropriate university. The College operates an effective teaching observation scheme and all staff are observed at least once annually. An analysis of lesson observation grades is discussed at Academic Board. However, as most staff teach on both further and higher education courses the observation method does not differentiate between them. As a result, it is not guaranteed that staff observation will take place during higher education course delivery. In consultation with its university partners, the College is working toward introducing peer observation of higher education delivery in 2012-13 which will be incorporated into its teaching observation scheme. It is desirable that the College, in consultation with its awarding bodies, continues to explore the introduction of a higher education peer observation process and that this fully integrates with its staff development and annual appraisal processes.

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

34   The College has a comprehensive range of support services available to all students. Students are assessed prior to the commencement of their programme and throughout to ensure appropriate support is in place. Those identified as requiring additional support are referred to the College's Learner Support Team. All students have access to the College's counselling service and to partner universities' student support units. Students confirmed that screening had taken place.

35   All students attend a Learning Resource Centre induction and follow-up sessions are available on topics such as academic referencing. The Centre is well stocked and students can access online e-book collections and journals. It also contains a quiet study room equipped with bookable computers. A higher education common room has also been provided and is well used. Students have full access to equipment and facilities at both partner universities and are encouraged to make use of these by teaching staff.

36   All students receive a Higher Education Welcome Pack prior to or during induction which contains essential and helpful information about the College. The pack, in the form of an A5 booklet, sets out students' entitlement to support and guidance. The pack contains information on academic and pastoral tutorials and standard academic conventions and guidance including plagiarism. Students confirmed that they know how to access appropriate support. Part-time students receive a good level of support from staff. This includes routine receipt of course information electronically and prompt responses to any concerns or questions. Overall, students are satisfied with the level of support they are receiving and praised the learner support team in particular.

37   The College recognises the importance of implementing an effective and consistently applied formal tutorial system as recommended in the second Developmental engagement. Cross-college training has been provided to address this recommendation and an initial review of the implementation of a formal tutorial system took place in February 2012. At the time of the review faculty higher education leads were monitoring the process to ensure it is being consistently applied in all subject areas. However, while all students receive individual academic and pastoral tutorial support, some tutorials are regular and recorded while others are not. Group tutorials are included on course timetables. Students confirmed that they can request one-to-one tutorials and that staff are approachable when asked to organise these. It is desirable that the College continue to work toward the introduction of a comprehensive tutorial system for all higher education students that includes regular formally recorded meetings which contribute toward students' personal development planning.

38   The College operates several virtual learning environment platforms to meet internal and awarding body requirements. The Developmental engagements recommended that the College consider reviewing the effectiveness of continuing to operate multiple virtual learning environment platforms. Discussions with staff confirmed that the operational approach to this had been reviewed and that this had confirmed that the existing virtual learning environment platforms provided an efficient and effective learning resource for higher education students. Students confirmed that the virtual learning environment offered in their area of study provides appropriate levels of information about their course and all relevant course documents were available. Students indicated that access to all virtual learning environment platforms in the College is good. However, access to the College designed platform was often difficult when working from home or in the workplace due to interruptions to the service. The College's commitment to maintaining multiple virtual learning platforms which meet the needs of higher education students studying courses validated by three awarding bodies is good practice.

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

39   The arrangements for staff development discussed in paragraph 26 apply equally to the enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities. Additional time to undertake research and scholarly activity is encouraged and staff can apply for this through Quality and Professional Development unit. An example of this and good practice on the FdA Early Years' Services is the course leader working in partnership with colleagues from the University of Wolverhampton and City of Wolverhampton College to undertake research with Foundation Degree students regarding the importance of using real-time interactive media. The research findings were presented at the European First Year Experience Conference at the University of Groningen, Netherlands.

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 maintains its learning resources via a devolved budget administered by the Learning Resource Centre Manager, and heads of schools bid for this funding. Staff confirmed that this process works well. Heads of schools hold budgets which can also be used to fund learning resources throughout the academic year. A member of the Learning Resource Centre supports each faculty and attends course team meetings at least once per semester where resources are discussed. They also undertake annual updating of reading lists provided by course teams.

> **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?

41   The College and awarding bodies have a clear understanding about their respective responsibilities in relation to public information. Course team leaders, in conjunction with faculty higher education leads, are responsible for information included on the virtual learning environment. All published materials are available in a variety of accessible formats and media.

42   The College publishes a full-time prospectus covering the entirety of its provision. Higher education course information, including course description, entry requirements, assessment, and further study opportunities is mostly accessible and helpful. However, key information relating to the admissions process, tuition fee levels and student support is absent from the Counselling and Support Area page of the prospectus. In addition, while course titles and study levels are included in the prospectus, there are inconsistencies in the presentation of this information between courses. The College also publishes a part-time prospectus which includes the FdSc Computing and FdSc Engineering. However, this does not contain additional course-specific or general higher education information. Discussions with staff indicated that a new, dedicated higher education prospectus is being developed for academic year 2013-14.

43   Higher education information is clearly identified on the College website. The homepage for higher education is easily accessible and leads to a listing of higher education courses. Each link leads to a comprehensive overview of the course. Students commented that they find the website easy to use and could find the course they were looking for before enrolment. However, key factual information relating to tuition fees was found to be inconsistently presented, with a number of courses indicating that fee levels were to be confirmed and some providing no fee information. Courses which staff confirmed will not be available in September 2012 are still included in the list of courses. It is desirable that the College reviews the mechanisms in place to ensure that the information for which it is responsible for publishing about its higher education provision is accurate, complete and consistently presented.

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?

44   The College works closely with its partner universities to ensure that published programme information is formally approved. Partner universities provide templates for course and module handbooks to ensure a standardised approach to information provided to students. Staff confirmed that they understood these arrangements.

45   Students confirmed that they are satisfied with the quality and accuracy of published information that they were supplied with before they enrolled, and subsequent to enrolment. Most students stated that they receive all the information they require to achieve the course intended learning outcomes at induction.

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 engagements

Developmental engagement in assessment

46   The lines of enquiry for the first Developmental engagement in assessment undertaken in January 2010 agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: In managing assessment, how effective is the College in maintaining consistent academic standards across the provision?

Line of enquiry 2: How does the College assure itself that its assessment strategy is understood and embraced by staff and applied consistently to enhance learning and enable progression?

Line of enquiry 3: How does the College ensure that clear and accurate information on assessment is communicated effectively to every student and to other parties who have a legitimate interest in receiving it?

47   In the course of the Developmental engagement, the team identified several areas of good practice relating to: the development of a coherent set of assessment policies and procedures; the use of the College Higher Education Development Fund; the development of comprehensive assessment strategies; the use of the virtual learning environment to encourage students to submit work online for assessment; and the comprehensive handbook provided by the FdA Early Years Practice programme team for workplace mentors.

48   The team also indicated that it was desirable for the College to take action on five points relating to: the role of the annual Higher Education Development Day; ensuring that all student programme packs contain an assessment strategy; ensuring that assessment feedback is legible and provided to students in a timely manner; providing potential students with alternative or additional ways of receiving comprehensive information on teaching, learning and assessment at an early stage; and developing and extending the virtual learning environment.

Developmental engagement in student support

49   The lines of enquiry for the second Developmental engagement in student support undertaken in January 2011 agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: What is the range of support services available to higher education students and how is this communicated to staff and students?

Line of enquiry 2: How does the tutorial system and documentation support students' success and achievement?

Line of enquiry 3: What central support resources are available for students to continue their learning experience outside formal taught sessions?

50   In the course of the Developmental engagement, the team identified good practice relating to: the wide range of induction activities made available to computing students; the use of the virtual learning environment to provide tutor and peer support during the preparation of coursework assignments; and the responsive and proactive way in which Learner Resource Centre staff provide support.

51   The team also indicated that it was advisable for the College to take action on three points relating to: reviewing the existing higher education strategy; considering how existing recognised good practice might inform a review of the College induction process; and developing and implementing an academic and pastoral tutorial system.

52   The team also indicated that it was desirable for the College to take action on four points relating to: exploring how the Student Services Unit might make more effective use of email and the virtual learning environment; developing and introducing clear tutorial system for higher education students; ensuring that actions taken in response to student concerns or feedback are completed successfully; and reviewing its strategy relating to the use of the virtual learning environment.

D   Foundation Degrees

53   As noted in paragraph 7, the College offers five Foundation Degrees in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton. Foundation Degrees have been designed to respond to the needs of local business. Students in engineering, early years and health and social

care are employed in their subject areas. Other full-time Foundation Degree students obtain work placements as part of their programme, and programme annual reports indicate that the majority move into work or continue to study using progression routes provided by the awarding partner. The findings set out in this report apply to all Foundation Degree programmes.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

54   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 bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies the University of Wolverhampton, the University of Worcester, and Edexcel.

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

- the well thought out and close working relationships with partner universities, particularly at course level (paragraph 22)
- the strategic approach to engaging employers in the development and delivery of higher education provision together with the long-established and effective working relationships with local employers (paragraph 28)
- the College's strategic vision in providing effective and successful seamless learning, teaching and progression opportunities from level 3 to higher education (paragraph 29)
- the College's commitment to maintaining multiple virtual learning platforms which meet the needs of higher education students studying courses validated by three awarding bodies (paragraph 38)
- the FdA Early Years Services course leader working in partnership with colleagues from the University of Wolverhampton and City of Wolverhampton College to undertake research with Foundation Degree students regarding the importance of using real-time interactive media and presenting the findings at an international conference (paragraph 39).

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 and enhance the existing process for receiving external examiner reports to ensure that this enables the College to monitor the effectiveness of the external examining process (paragraph 19)
- continue to ensure that all staff involved in higher education curriculum development and delivery are fully familiar with the purpose and content of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 21).

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

- monitor the management of its higher education provision with a view to streamlining and clearly defining individual and committee roles and remits (paragraph 16)
- monitor the reporting arrangements in place for its higher education provision with a view to ensuring that there is no unnecessary repetition (paragraph 17)

- develop a moderation and verification procedure and implement this consistently (paragraph 24)
- continue to review the implementation of its higher education staff development policy to ensure that this reflects emerging sector trends and developments, and to ensure that development and training activities undertaken by higher education staff are formally and systematically recorded (paragraph 26)
- continue to develop and implement a mechanism for differentiating the responses to surveys of its higher education students (paragraph 31)
- consult with its awarding bodies, to continue to explore the introduction of a higher education peer observation process and that this fully integrates with its staff development and annual appraisal processes (paragraph 33)
- continue to work toward the introduction of a comprehensive tutorial system for all higher education students that includes regular formally recorded meetings which contribute toward students' personal development planning (paragraph 37)
- review the mechanisms in place to ensure that the information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education provision is accurate, complete and consistently presented (paragraph 43).

59   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 bodies.

60   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.

61   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.

Telford College of Arts and Technology action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2012						
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 **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the well thought out and close working relationships with partner universities, particularly at course level (paragraph 22)	Ensure that representatives attend both the Strategic and Operational Review Boards at both Wolverhampton and Worcester	July 2013	Higher Education Manager/Careers Manager	Minutes /Actions of Meetings to be summarised at Corporate Development Group	Vice Principal - Corporate Development	Minutes/actions discussed at Higher Education Strategy Group meeting (termly)
• the strategic approach to engaging employers in the development and delivery of higher education provision together with the long-established and effective working relationships with local employers (paragraph 28)	Ensure that employers are invited to course team meetings and other forums as appropriate	July 2013	Higher Education Leads	Minutes /Actions of employer comments to be summarised at Corporate Development group and passed on to Senior Management Team as appropriate	Higher Education Manager	Minutes/Actions discussed at Higher Education Strategy Group meeting (termly) under agenda item

• the College's strategic vision in providing effective and successful seamless learning, teaching and progression opportunities from level 3 to higher education (paragraph 29)	The College will bid for additional numbers in 2012-13 in order to widen participation Curricular areas will try to include some level 4 modules across the level 3 Extended Diploma provision	December 2012 February 2013	Higher Education Leads/Course Team Leaders Higher Education Leads; Heads of School; Higher Education Subject Tutors	Analysis of Level 3 progression to be reported in Higher Education self-assessment report Learner voice and indicator of relevance to aid smooth transition (Level 3 and 4 learners)	Higher Education Manager Higher Education Manager	Analysis to be reported as part of Higher Education Curriculum Review in February 2013 Reported in Higher Education self-assessment report - July 2013
• the College's commitment to maintaining multiple virtual learning platforms which meet the needs of higher education students studying courses validated by three awarding bodies (paragraph 38)	Curricular teams to capture the learner voice effectively to assess the value of multiple learning platforms Agenda item to be generated at IT user group to ensure viability of virtual learning environments across college	February 2013 February 2013	IT Manager IT Manager	Analysis of student use of each platform/student questionnaire on value being added to programme As above	Higher Education Manager Higher Education Manager	Analysis to be reported as part of Higher Education Curriculum Review in February 2013 Reported in Higher Education self-assessment report - July 2013
• the FdA Early Years Services course leader working in partnership with colleagues from	Encourage staff to apply for research/scholarly activity where appropriate	July 2013	Higher Education Staff	Level of activity reported at Corporate Development Group	Quality & Professional Development Manager	Uptake reported at corporate development at end of year by Quality & Professional

the University of Wolverhampton and City of Wolverhampton College to undertake research with Foundation Degree students regarding the importance of using real-time interactive media and presenting the findings at an international conference (paragraph 39)						Development Manager and reported in end of year report
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• review and enhance the existing process for receiving external examiner reports to ensure that this enables the College to monitor the effectiveness of the external	External examiners' reports to be sent electronically to Quality & Professional Development Manager and uploaded onto the College intranet biannually after the assessment period Agenda for Course	February-July 2013 September	Higher Education Manager/Course Team Leaders/ Quality & Professional Development Manager Higher Education	Quality & Professional Development Manager to report at Higher Education Strategy group meetings of emerging trends/ actions required More focused	Vice Principal - Corporate Development Vice Principal - Corporate Development	Actions reported at Corporate Development Group Meetings Analysis of

examining process (paragraph 19)	Team Meetings to be amended to include reference to the external examiners' report. External examiners' reports to be filed in Course Team Files with brief summary of the centre's contribution. Files to be reviewed as part of Curriculum Review week	2012	Strategy Manager	analysis of quality issues and actions required to improve performance		externally verified reports to be reviewed as part of Higher Education Curriculum Review - February 2013
• continue to ensure that all staff involved in higher education curriculum development and delivery are fully familiar with the purpose and content of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 21)	Cross-college staff development days to continue biannually within the continuing professional development timetable. Sessions to include updated information about Academic Infrastructure with focus on the new UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)	July 2012 and ongoing	Higher Education Strategy Manager/ Quality & Professional Development Manager	Attendance on course and dissemination of information to Course Teams. Evidence to be included in Course Team Files to include reference to the Quality Code	Vice Principal - Corporate Development	Analysis of attendance at training - reported at Higher Education Curriculum Review - February 2013
	Liaise with awarding bodies to ascertain the level of engagements for each of the courses	July 2012	Higher Education Strategy Manager	Attachment to the Memorandum of Cooperation for each area	Vice Principal - Corporate Development	Report on level of engagement at collaborative forums with universities

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• monitor the management of its higher education provision with a view to streamlining and clearly defining individual and committee roles and remits (paragraph 16)	Cross-college restructure to include roles and responsibilities of key higher education staff Operational management of higher education to be reviewed	September 2012 September 2012	Executive Management Team Higher Education Strategy Manager	Adoption of new structure and reporting protocols Adoption of new reporting protocols	Vice Principal Corporate Development Vice Principal Corporate Develoment	Reported in Higher Education self-assessment report in July 2013 Reported in Higher Education self-assessment report in July 2013
• monitor the reporting arrangements in place for its higher education provision with a view to ensuring that there is no unnecessary repetition (paragraph 17)	All external verification and other reports to be channelled through the Quality & Professional Development Manger	September 2012	Higher Education Strategy Manager	Emerging trends to be reported at Higher Education Strategy group and Corporate Development Group	Vice Principal Corporate Development	Reported in Higher Education self-assessment report in July 2013
• develop a moderation and verification procedure and implement this consistently (paragraph 24)	Higher Education Leads to develop a system to ensure that internal verification is monitored and reported on at Higher Education Strategy	July 2013	Higher Education Leads	Agenda/Minutes of Higher Education Strategy Group to include report on internal verification activity	Higher Education Manager	Monitored at Higher Education Curriculum Review - February 2013 and reported in Higher Education self-assessment

	Group meetings			across the 3 faculties		report in July 2013
• continue to review the implementation of its higher education staff development policy to ensure that this reflects emerging sector trends and developments, and to ensure that development and training activities undertaken by higher education staff are formally and systematically recorded (paragraph 26)	Higher education leads to advise the Higher Education Manager of sector trends at higher education strategy meetings (agenda item)	July 2013	Higher Education Leads	Agenda/minutes of higher education strategy group	Vice Principal Corporate Development	Reported in higher education self-assessment report in July 2013
	Higher education leads to ensure staff record activity on Professional Developer	July 2013	Higher Education Leads	Review of Professional Developer and staff continuous professional development activity by Higher Education Leads	Assistant Principal 1 and 2	Reported in higher education self-assessment report in July 2013
• continue to develop and implement a mechanism for differentiating the responses to surveys of its higher education students (paragraph 31)	Mechanisms for ascertaining student views to be considered carefully to allow for collective views of higher education students to be elicited	July 2013	Assistant Principal - Student Services	Range of evidence produced in different formats to elicit views of higher education students	Higher Education Manager	Reported in Student Services End of Year Report - July 2013
	College to liaise with higher education awarding bodies to	July 2013	Careers Manager	As above	Higher Education Manager	As above

	ensure that students completing surveys at the awarding body can be gathered and recorded in College					
• consult with its awarding bodies, to continue to explore the introduction of a higher education peer observation process and that this fully integrates with its staff development and annual appraisal processes (paragraph 33)	Course Team Leaders to continue to work with link tutors from partner institutions to take part in peer observations and to engage in the College's internal developmental observation process	July 2013	Course Team Leaders	Range of formal/informal observations to be carried out as part of the Promoting Teaching and Learning Development	Quality & Professional Development Manager	Higher Education Observation analysis to be reported on at Corporate Development Meetings/ evaluated as part of Higher Education Curriculum Review - February 2013
• continue to work toward the introduction of a comprehensive tutorial system for all higher education students that includes regular formally recorded meetings which contribute toward students' personal	Course handbooks to be updated to include specific section about tutorial support. All students to have a minimum of three group tutorials a year regarding opportunities, feedback and progression. All students to have a minimum of two recorded individual	February 2013	Course Team Leaders	Evidence of Tutorial activity available in Course File	Higher Education Manager	To be reported in Higher Education Curriculum Review - February 2013 and in Higher Education self-assessment report - July 2013

development planning (paragraph 37)	tutorials for pastoral support in addition to academic support					
• review the mechanisms in place to ensure that the information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education provision is accurate, complete and consistently presented (paragraph 43)	Audit/Monitoring of current information to be undertaken. Liaison between staff in Learner Services, Course Teams and Heads of School to check the accuracy of current information	February 2013	Learner Services Manager; Course Team Leaders; Heads of School	Review of information on all sites	Higher Education Manager	To be reported in Higher Education self-assessment report - July 2013