



QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

March 2010

South Worcestershire College

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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*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- *Guidelines for preparing programme specifications*, which are descriptions of 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 South Worcestershire College carried out in March 2010

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 detailed annotation on student assignments in Learning Support reinforces the aim of assessments to encourage student learning
- the management of work-based learning, including relationships with employers, is thorough and provides students with learning experiences appropriate for Foundation Degree programmes
- the flexible approach to the delivery of learning is highly appropriate for students with domestic and employment commitments
- the clearly written documentation provided for students is highly supportive of their learning.

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:

- establish a formal reporting route from programme level to senior management, through which external examiners' reports and annual monitoring reports are evaluated and action plans produced and monitored
- ensure that all teaching staff are involved in moderation and double-marking and that there is less reliance on one person doing this.

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

- familiarise staff with the Academic Infrastructure, including any revisions
- build on the comprehensive and highly committed approach to gathering student evaluations by demonstrating how these have been used to enhance the provision
- establish a system whereby good practice can be shared across the higher education provision
- make progression routes clearer for students.

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 South Worcestershire College (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 Worcestershire. The review was carried out by Ms Maxina Butler-Holmes, Mr Mark Cooper (reviewers) and Mr Philip Markey (coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (the handbook), published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. The College elected not to have a Development engagement. This Summative review was conducted by a desk-based study. The team also scrutinised samples of student work. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (Code of practice), subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4 In 1995, Evesham College started a process of amalgamation with Malvern Hills College and in 2000 the two colleges merged to form the FE Corporation Evesham and Malvern Hills College. In 2009, the merged colleges adopted the title of South Worcestershire College. The College is organised into six academies: Business; Care, Animal Relations and Education (CARE); Community; Lifestyle; Technology and the School of Arts. There are two campuses, one at Evesham and the other at Malvern. The College has three mission aims:

- to provide high-quality education and training opportunities in the most cost-efficient and effective manner
- to promote equal opportunities by developing the College as a community where all feel safe and are treated as of equal worth
- to support each student to develop his or her potential and to aim for the highest personal achievement.

5 There are 10 full-time and 3.5 full-time equivalent part-time students on the FdA Early Years and 10 full-time and seven full-time equivalent part-time students on the FdA Learning Support. There is a total of 30.5 full-time equivalent students. All of the higher education students are based at the Evesham Campus. The two programmes are indirectly funded by HEFCE. They are delivered through the Academy of CARE, which consists of an array of full and part-time programmes across the disciplines of childcare, animal care, access to higher education and teacher and teaching assistant training.

6 The College offers the following programmes with full-time equivalent student numbers:

Validated by the University of Worcester

- FdA Early Years (13.5)
- FdA Learning Support (17).

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

7 The College has a partnership with the University of Worcester and has developed three Foundation Degrees in Early Years, Learning Support, and Health and Social Care (although this latter programme has not recruited to date). Other colleges also offer these programmes through a partnership arrangement. The FdA in Early Years was revalidated in 2009-10 in response to changes in the sector.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 Further Foundation Degrees are being developed for 2010-11 in Administration, Art and Design, Care Management, E-Media, Professional Practice and Salon Management. These developments form part of the College's recently produced HE Strategy. However, the College is in the process of revising the strategy because the awarding body has withdrawn the full-time student numbers for the programmes.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. Student representatives and other students from both programmes produced a submission that commented on the curriculum, support, assessments, learning and teaching and learning resources. Students met with the review coordinator at the preparatory meeting and confirmed that the submission represented their views.

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?

10 The self-evaluation states that 'the College does not have any specific committee for the management of higher education due to the size of the provision, and the provision does not always fit in with the College's other quality assurance procedures'. Recently, the College started a restructuring of its quality systems, which included the Assistant Principal being responsible for liaising with the awarding body and the Vice-Principal overseeing the higher education provision. However, there is still no specific committee for the management of higher education and the self-evaluation recognises that the College relies on the Head of the Academy to ensure quality. It also recognises the need for governors to review the higher education provision. The course annual evaluation report includes references to higher education, but the content is largely descriptive rather than evaluative

of strengths or areas for development. There is very little analysis of academic standards and achievement, and no references to external examiner comments. The programme teams meet to discuss the management of quality, but the meetings are not minuted.

11 Senior management receives the College's annual self-assessment reports, but these are mainly for further education, with few references to higher education. Moreover, there is little in the way of evaluation and analysis in these reports. With only two Foundation Degrees located within the same Academy, the reporting lines for the management of the provision are relatively simple. The higher education provision is picked up briefly in the self-assessment report produced under Ofsted requirements. The self-evaluation acknowledges that there is a need to review the lack of specific committees relating to the management of higher education. Currently, responsibility for the delivery of the HE Strategy resides with the academies, but there is a need to ensure that the quality process makes a more explicit connection with senior management. Each programme team produces a course annual evaluation report. This includes priority action plans covering areas such as employer engagement, handbooks, a review of module evaluation forms and assessment, but there is no discussion of external examiners' reports.

12 The College noted in its self-evaluation that it is reviewing the feedback loop to external examiners. External examiners' reports are submitted to the University. Currently, the only opportunity for College staff to engage with the reports is through the Programme Manager attending Strategic Partnership Planning Group meetings at the University. However, the College's quality processes do not consider external examiner reports and identify actions arising from them. It is recommended as advisable that the College establishes a formal reporting route from programme level to senior management, through which external examiners' reports and annual monitoring reports are evaluated and action plans produced and monitored.

What account is taken of the Academic infrastructure?

13 The self-evaluation makes no reference to the Academic Infrastructure and it is largely left to the awarding body to ensure that this is taken into account through validations and the writing of programme specifications and handbooks. All the documents from the awarding body demonstrate that full consideration was given to the Academic Infrastructure in, for example, validations, but teaching staff at the College need to show more familiarity with it. It is recommended as desirable that the College familiarises staff with the Academic Infrastructure, including any revisions (see also paragraph 20).

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?

14 The University is ultimately responsible for the quality assurance of any programmes leading to its awards and credits. There is a written and signed Partnership Agreement in place, the most recent being dated September 2009. A Strategic Partnership Planning Group meets annually at the University to review the development of the partnership. The Agreement forms the basis of the partnership at the programme level and clearly defines the responsibilities for validation, assessment and annual monitoring. Section 11 of the agreement identifies the College Programme Manager and University Link Tutor as holding operational responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards and delivery of the programmes. The agreements define the roles and academic arrangements that

aim to ensure that academic standards are met. There are productive relationships at programme level with the awarding body and module leader responsibilities are shared across the two institutions.

15 As part of the quality process the College is required to collect student evaluations. The summary of students' module evaluations is noted, but, is not underpinned by any analysis and it was not possible to identify how student feedback has promoted changes or enhancement. Students are required to produce three online surveys as part of the college processes. The College operates a system of student representatives, who attend the Partnership Steering Group meetings. The College has also introduced meetings where all students are able to speak openly about their experiences at the College. The Head of Academy arranges student focus groups, where the students are asked their opinion on specific issues. All actions arising from these feedback mechanisms are made known to students, but these were not evident to the team. The College recently reviewed the effectiveness of the feedback process for all students. In consequence, the College has decided to seek feedback through the use of posters. Students commented that they are listened to and that any actions are followed up as appropriate. The University is currently reviewing student representation and feedback, which includes the extent of College's use of standard module feedback questionnaires. It is recommended as desirable that the College should build on the comprehensive and highly committed approach to gathering student evaluations by demonstrating how these have been used to enhance the provision.

16 The College is required to follow the awarding body's assessment regulations. These regulations are required to be clearly set out in students' handbooks. The programme teams have developed handbooks with the awarding body and these clearly express the assessment regulations for students, including the appeal procedure. The College is expected to have a system of internally moderating draft assignments and to provide the external examiner with samples of assessments. External examiners say that they do receive such samples. Staff are expected to internally verify student work by double-marking before an examination board to check the consistency of marking. From their scrutiny of student work, the team is able to confirm that these processes are in place, although it is the Programme Manager who does the moderating. Other programme team members, who are all part-time, are not involved and therefore are not developing their assessment experiences. All staff should be involved as it would mitigate the potential risk of dependency on one individual. External examiners comment on the sound approaches towards first and second-marking and moderation, led by the University staff. The external examiner for the FdA Learning Support noted a need to clarify, and invited all parties to reflect on, the marking processes. It is recommended as advisable that all teaching staff are involved in moderation and double-marking and that there should be less reliance on one person doing this.

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

17 The HE Strategy contains a section that articulates the College's ambitions regarding appropriate staff development. The self-evaluation noted this as an area for improvement. There are opportunities for staff to attend events at the University and some limited in-house sessions have taken place, facilitated by the Course Manager. A staff development session on assessment was held recently, which staff regarded as useful. The College is encouraged to consider how practices may be shared more effectively across the higher education provision, especially regarding assessment feedback to students, second-marking and annual reporting and review. One possible development is the formation of a group

such as an HE Forum. It is recommended as desirable that the College establish a system whereby good practice can be shared across the higher education provision.

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 the responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities for higher education programmes delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

18 Paragraphs 11 and 12 summarise the College's reporting arrangements. The Vice-Principal has responsibility for the management of learning opportunities. The Assistant Principal has responsibility for liaising with the awarding body at a strategic level and attends Strategic Partnership Planning Group meetings. The Assistant Principal works with the heads of academy to help them develop any higher education provision and supports them through the validation process with the awarding body. A Programme Manager oversees the delivery of the two Foundation Degrees and the pastoral care for both groups of students.

19 A University Link Tutor and the College's Programme Manager are responsible to their respective institutions for ensuring the maintenance of the standards and delivery of the programme, in accordance with the University's regulatory framework and the requirements approved at validation. Programme managers at each institution work very closely together to assure quality. They are responsible for effective liaison with the key administrators in each institution and for the annual exchange of documents. The University and the College are responsible for ensuring that the Link Tutor and Programme Manager are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to this collaborative programme.

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

20 The University is responsible for the overall quality of the programmes. The College is responsible for learning and teaching, resources and student support and day-to-day operation and management. The College's quality reporting system includes a self-assessment report, which reports at the academy level, and a review of further and higher education programmes. Feeding into this document is the course annual evaluation report, which includes checks on the previous year's action plan, a summary of students' evaluations and a new action plan. The reports include proposed actions on learning opportunities, such as developing flexible provision and the development of online learning. This is a useful document because it shows how action plans are monitored and implemented for enhancing learning opportunities.

21 The University Link Tutor makes regular visits to the College during the academic year and compiles an annual report for the University to evaluate the provision in relation to the partnership agreement. The report considers notable areas of good practice, programme management, the student voice and how the quality assurance processes in relation to learning opportunities are being maintained. The reports comment positively on the College's process for the management of learning opportunities. At the end of each module, the module tutor is required to use an end-of-module feedback form with the students to gain feedback on their learning experiences. Students receive feedback on their

evaluations to ensure that they are aware of actions being taken. The Strategic Partnership Steering Group also scrutinises student feedback on learning opportunities (see also paragraph 15).

22 The College's HE Strategy sets out a vision for the College being a leader in widening learning opportunities for young people, adults and employers in South Worcestershire. In this respect, the Foundation Degrees have been designed for people working in specific industries, with progression routes being offered through the partner university. Students commented that progression routes were not always clear and that they would like further information and guidance in this respect. It is recommended as desirable for the College to make progression routes clearer for students (see also paragraph 35).

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

23 The Academic Infrastructure is referenced throughout the approval process for both programmes by the University of Worcester, which has clear procedures for ensuring programmes are aligned with the Academic Infrastructure. With reference to the management of learning opportunities, particular consideration was given to the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning* and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* (see also paragraph 13).

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

24 The College does not have a specific teaching and learning strategy for higher education. Two other strategies cover teaching and learning. The Excellence in Learning Strategy and the Academy Strategy are college-wide strategies that cover both higher and further education. The College carries out its own lesson observations following the College's procedure 'Lesson Observation Guidelines'. Lesson observations completed by the Head of Academy feed in to the appraisal process where staff development is identified, as required. Staff from the awarding body also observe teaching sessions.

25 Both programmes have devised assessments that promote student learning by carefully requiring students to relate theory to practice and apply their knowledge to real-life situations in early learning and learning support settings. Student work is returned in a timely fashion so that students can learn from the assessment before completing a subsequent one. Written feedback to students is generally constructive, with many pointers for improvement. In Learning Support especially, the feedback includes highly specific, detailed annotation on the student assignment. This clearly promotes student learning through encouraging students to reflect on their work. The detailed annotation on student assignments in Learning Support reinforces the aim of assessments to encourage student learning.

26 The management of learning experiences on both Foundation Degrees, particularly for work-based learning, is thorough. This enables students to benefit from the mode of learning characteristic of Foundation Degrees. The roles of mentor and critical friends are clearly defined and explained in the student handbooks. The external examiners note that assessments are effective in promoting the knowledge and skills required in Foundation Degrees. The Learning Support programme supplies a highly informative document, 'Information for Employers', which clearly identifies the specific learning outcomes for employers. The programme teams have established effective working relations with employers to ensure students' learning opportunities are in place and enhanced. This

demonstrates that the programmes are engaging effectively with the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. The management of work-based learning, including relationships with employers, is thorough, provides students with learning experiences appropriate for Foundation Degree programmes and is good practice.

27 Both programmes have developed flexible learning strategies highly appropriate for students with domestic and employment commitments. Students are provided with detailed module guides. These include a scheme of work, which enables students to plan their learning. The College has developed its virtual learning environment, including a Virtual School module in Learning Support, to enhance flexibility and independent learning. The flexible approach to the delivery of learning is highly appropriate for students with domestic and employment commitments and is good practice.

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

28 Students are provided with a useful Handbook of Student Support. The College also provides students with a range of informative documentation to support their learning. Handbooks are approved by the University and contain details of programme structures, module outlines, tutorial and learning support, assessment and marking procedures, and library and physical resources. Students are familiar with programme specifications and associated intended learning outcomes. This ensures that the learner has the scheme of work, appropriate handouts, relevant articles, assessment criteria and guidance on the assessment details. The findings from the student evaluations are collected and collated, along with the end-of-year student evaluation, to inform the College's feedback in the course annual evaluation reports. The clearly written documentation provided for students is highly supportive of their learning and is good practice.

29 Students attend a carefully prepared induction at the College that explains the structure of the programmes, regulations regarding handing in assignments, ethics, school visits and the importance of the mentor and critical friend in work-based learning. As part of the induction process students also visit the University. During this visit they are able to join the University's library and become familiar with the Students' Union. As a result of this process the students have found visits to the University greatly support their learning. This is supported by activity days at the University, when students take part in additional study skills activities.

30 Tutorial provision is well organised and appreciated by students and is clearly explained in student handbooks. Students are offered group tutorials of up to one hour per teaching week. Every student, part or full-time, will normally be entitled to 45 minutes personal tutor time per semester. Tutorial support is offered in many ways through module, academic and personal tutors. For work-based learning, practice mentors and professional critical friends work well together to support students. Students confirmed that there are appropriate support systems in place and that staff are readily accessible.

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

31 The HE Strategy makes reference to providing staff development opportunities in order to help staff gain the appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence to undertake their roles. It refers to a future development programme that will include external speakers coming into the College to talk about best practice, in-house training events, and dedicated sessions focused on particular aspects of specialist jobs. The formal agreements between

the College and the University stipulate that College lecturers are formally recognised as registered lecturers of the University, and as such are entitled to access development opportunities and scholarly activity. The College's Course Manager prepares a training need analysis for higher education staff based on an internal moderation of the feedback from appraisals. Staff are responsible for logging and evaluating their own development activities, which is reviewed at appraisal stage by the Head of Academy, who ensures that staff development needs identified in their previous appraisal have been followed up. Continuing Professional Development sessions have been offered on feedback on assessment, and the use of appropriate language and referencing. College staff have attended University and partner college training events on assessment practice, research-related teaching, and retention and achievement (see also paragraph 17).

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?

32 The College and its awarding body have effective arrangements to ensure learning resources are in place. Course evaluation reports and their student evaluations are used to identify resource needs. Prior to this, the University's validation process requires the College to ensure that resources are considered before approval is given. The College's Learning Resources Manager attends the Strategic Partnership Steering Group and follows up on any requests for resources.

33 Students have access to the College library and resource centre, which is stocked with relevant textbooks and journals, including electronic copies. The College has a specific area in the library for higher education students. Students report that learning resource staff are very helpful in helping searches for references and in study skills. During induction students are made aware that they can access University learning resources. In the student written submission, and in the meeting with the coordinator, students stated that there were insufficient copies of key texts available in the library to support their studies. This matter has been noted by staff and is being addressed. Students expressed satisfaction with their access to information technology. The College is also considering student requests for a higher education area on the campus.

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?

34 Programme managers, the Head of Academy, relevant administrators and the Principalship check final proofs of documents. The College has responsibility for its prospectus (full and part-time), its website and mission statement, handbooks and programme specifications. Where there is information on the University's awards, there is shared responsibility. The Partnership Agreement identifies the awarding body and College's responsibilities for information for the higher education provision. Responsibilities are shared for all public information, but the University reserves the right to require changes to any material produced by the College related to its awards. The University informs the College of changes in regulations and policies through the Strategic Partnership Planning Group meeting, thereby ensuring information is current and accurate.

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?

35 Programme managers initiate the writing of documents and check the proofs. For example, programme teams produce the higher education information. A programme leader and the Head of the Academy check the proofs. The relevant administrators and the Principalship approve the documents. Due to the small number of higher education programmes, the College does not regard it as feasible to produce a separate higher education prospectus. The University Link Tutor signs off the entry. The information presented in the prospectus and online about the Foundation Degrees in Early Years and Learning Support provides a basic level of detail about content and entry requirements, but very little advice regarding fees and financial support available to higher education students. There is little information on articulation and progression opportunities from these programmes other than that successful candidates may progress onto a related honours degree programme, but the specific awards are not named (see also paragraph 22).

36 A programme specification master template is accessible on the University's website. The completed programme specifications are located on the University's website, but not on the College's. The College uses the University's virtual learning environment for the programmes, with a dedicated section that has useful information contained within it, including module details, assignment guidelines and access to suggested external websites.

37 The University provides guidelines for student handbooks and is required to approve these. The handbooks provide students with a clear indication of aims, intended learning outcomes and assessment arrangements. They are written in a user-friendly style and are welcomed by both student and external examiners. The information is accurate and complete.

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

38 As the total full-time equivalent students funded by HEFCE at the College is less than 100, in accordance with the published review method, the College elected not to take part in a Developmental engagement.

D Foundation Degrees

39 The College has a partnership with the University of Worcester and has developed three Foundation Degrees in Early Years, Learning Support and Health and Social Care (although this latter programme has not recruited to date). Other colleges also offer these programmes through a partnership arrangement. The FdA in Early Years was revalidated in 2009-10 in response to changes in the sector. Further Foundation Degrees are being developed for 2010-11 in Administration, Art and Design, Care Management, E-Media, Professional Practice and Salon Management. These developments form part of the College's recently produced HE Strategy. However, the College is in the process of revising

the strategy because the awarding body has withdrawn the full-time student numbers for the programmes. The good practice and recommendations outlined below apply in full to both the Foundation Degrees currently running.

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

- the detailed annotation on student assignments in Learning Support reinforces the aim of assessments to encourage student learning (paragraph 25)
- the management of work-based learning, including relationships with employers, is thorough and provides students with learning experiences appropriate for Foundation Degree programmes (paragraph 26)
- the flexible approach to the delivery of learning is highly appropriate for students with domestic and employment commitments (paragraph 27)
- the clearly written documentation provided for students is highly supportive of their learning (paragraph 28).

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

The team also agreed a number of areas where the College is **advised** to take action:

- establish a formal reporting route from programme level to senior management, through which external examiners' reports and annual monitoring reports are evaluated and action plans produced and monitored (paragraph 12)
- ensure that all teaching staff are involved in moderation and double-marking and that there is less reliance on one person doing this (paragraph 16).

42 The team also agreed the following areas where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

- familiarise staff with the Academic Infrastructure, including any revisions (paragraph 13)
- build on the comprehensive and highly committed approach to gathering student evaluations by demonstrating how these have been used to enhance the provision (paragraph 15)
- establish a system whereby good practice can be shared across the higher education provision (paragraph 17)
- make progression routes clearer for students (paragraph 22).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

43 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in South Worcestershire 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 body, the University of Worcester.

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- establish a system whereby good practice can be shared across the higher education provision (paragraph 17)
- make progression routes clearer for students (paragraph 22).

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

47 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

48 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, in the context of this Summative review, reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the detailed annotation on student assignments in Learning Support reinforces the aim of assessments to encourage student learning (paragraph 25) 	<p>Disseminate the practice of detailed annotation to the Early Years Foundation Degree</p> <p>Disseminate the practice of detailed annotation to other Foundation Degree course teams when/if approved</p>	<p>31 July 2010</p> <p>July 2012</p>	Course Manager	All HE programmes are providing their learners with the same level of support	<p>Head of Academy Care, Animal Relations and Education (CARE)</p> <p>Vice Principal Learning and Performance</p>	Students' feedback on the end of module questionnaire

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the management of work-based learning, including relationships with employers, is thorough and provides students with learning experiences appropriate for Foundation Degree programmes (paragraph 26) 	Disseminate the liaison and strong working relationships with employers to all other qualifications at level 6 and above	31 July 2010	Course Manager Course Team	All appropriate courses develop the same management process	Vice Principal Learning and Performance	Employer and student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the flexible approach to the delivery of learning is highly appropriate for students with domestic and employment commitments (paragraph 27) 	The flexible approach will be included in the College's 'Sharing of Good Practice' process, initially within the CARE Academy and then College-wide	July 2011	Course Manager Course Team	Other programmes within the College develop the flexible approach as appropriate	Head of Academy CARE	Student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the clearly written documentation provided for students is highly supportive of their learning (paragraph 28). 	The development process of the documentation to be disseminated across College during College staff development sessions	July 2011	Course Manager Course Team		Vice Principal Learning and Performance	Course team feedback from other areas

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● establish a formal reporting route from programme level to senior management, through which external examiners' reports and annual monitoring reports are evaluated and action plans produced and monitored (paragraph 12) 	<p>A formal reporting system to be implemented in the College for all areas</p> <p>The formal quality systems to be implemented, to include the review of the external examiners' reports at course review level and at Academy level in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report to be validated against the external examiner's report</p>	<p>Dec 2010</p>	<p>Principalship Senior Management Team</p>	<p>All appropriate managers in the College are aware of the quality of the Foundation Degrees</p>	<p>Governors</p>	<p>College self-assessment report mentions the quality of HE as appropriate</p>

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that all teaching staff are involved in moderation and double-marking and that there is less reliance on one person doing this (paragraph 16). 	<p>Train all relevant staff in the moderation and double-marking of work</p> <p>Implement a moderation timetable for all modules for all staff</p>	<p>31 May 2010</p> <p>31 Oct 2010</p>	<p>Head of Academy CARE with support from appropriate personnel at the University of Worcester</p>	<p>All staff are capable of moderating and have a timetable of activity for 2010/11</p>	<p>Head of Academy CARE</p>	<p>College's Health Checks</p>

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following areas where it would be desired to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> familiarise staff with the Academic Infrastructure, including any revisions (paragraph 13) 	<p>The University of Worcester to be requested to provide training on the specific requirements of the Academic Infrastructure. All relevant staff to attend the training</p>	March 2011	Vice Principal Learning and Performance	All relevant staff, including heads of academy, have an appreciation of the Academic Infrastructure	Principal	IQR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> build on the comprehensive and highly committed approach to gathering student evaluations by demonstrating how these have been used to enhance the provision (paragraph 15) 	<p>Implement a feedback loop to students on the feedback they provide at the end of modules</p> <p>Ensure all feedback from students is considered at</p>	<p>30 Sept 2010</p> <p>31 July 2010</p>	<p>Course Manager</p> <p>Head of Academy CARE</p>	<p>Improvements are made to the modules and course following feedback</p>	<p>Head of Academy CARE</p> <p>Vice Principal Learning and Performance</p>	<p>College Learning and Performance Cycle</p>

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	the Steering Group, in the course review and in the Academy self-assessment report					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● make progression routes clearer for students (paragraph 22). 	Request support from the University of Worcester for specific progression advice to learners at the end of the first year, including UCAS	7 June 2010	Course Manager	Students feel informed on the progression opportunities and apply to their preferred destination before Christmas	Head of Academy CARE	UCAS application review process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to establish a system whereby good practice can be shared across the higher education provision (paragraph 17) 	As part of the introduction of the formal reporting structure (item 1 in Advisable), a formal reporting system to be	July 2011	Head of Academy	All staff share at least 1 item of good practice at each event	Vice Principal Learning and Performance	Lesson observations

South Worcestershire College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2010						
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
	<p>implemented in the College for all areas</p> <p>As part of the formal quality system it is expected that good practice observed will be shared across the College. To enable this process to happen the College has already introduced 'Sharing Good Practice' days into its continuing professional development calendar.</p>					

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