QAA

Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

City of Bristol College

June 2010

SR 100/2009

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 City of Bristol College carried out in June 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 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:

- clear and comprehensive quality assurance processes, supported by useful matrices that set out mutual responsibilities, enable awarding bodies to have confidence in the higher education provision
- a carefully planned and effective structure for higher education ensures quality and standards and the dissemination of good practice through the Higher Education Unit and the Strand Manager role
- academic and support staff have a thorough understanding of the Academic Infrastructure, supported by dedicated staff development, which informs all aspects of the quality processes
- the open and constructive dialogue with the College is valued and commended by the awarding bodies
- employers are engaged effectively in the design, formative assessment and review of Foundation Degree programmes, offering impressive support to students through mentoring and placement supervision
- staff new to teaching in higher education and part-time staff are provided with well-planned induction, mentorship and continuing staff development, which is supportive and informative
- the increased consistency of implementation across all programmes, supported by the dedicated e-learning training team, is leading to clarity of the programme materials on the virtual learning environment
- staff carry out a range of professional updating, research and scholarly activity with commitment and enthusiasm and the support of the College
- initial publicity, pre-programme contact, student handbooks and module guides provide coherent and useful information about programmes and the additional support available.

Recommendations

The team has also identified a recommendation for the enhancement of the higher education provision:

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

- continue to develop a peer observation scheme to support its higher education staff.

A   Introduction and context

1   This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at City of Bristol 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 Bath Spa University, Kingston University, the University of Bath, the University of Bristol, the University of Plymouth and the University of the West of England. The review was carried out by Mr Glenn Barr, Mr David Charlton, Dr Elaine Crosthwaite (reviewers) and Ms Penny Blackie (coordinator).

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

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

4   City of Bristol College was initially established in 1996 and developed following a number of mergers within the city. It is one of the largest further education establishments in England and Wales, with over 1,000 full and part-time programmes and short courses delivering education, training and skills development to over 30,000 students on seven sites. The College was awarded Beacon College status in 2004 and offers a range of higher-level qualifications with varying modes of attendance and accreditation. A comprehensive higher education strategy sets out the aims and objectives for the higher education provision. The strategy was revised in December 2009 to take account of changes related to the economic climate and HEFCE limits on growth. The College was inspected by Ofsted in January 2010 and graded good for its overall effectiveness. It was found to provide a curriculum well mapped to important business and local needs and to satisfying employer needs. This emphasis is also reflected in the higher education portfolio.

5   The College has five main campuses; higher education provision is being consolidated at Ashley Down, in the recently developed University Centre. There are currently 1,235 students (561 full-time and 674 part-time*)* studying on higher education programmes, amounting to 960 full-time equivalents. The programmes are offered in partnership with Bath Spa University, Kingston University and the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Plymouth and the University of the West of England. All of the HEFCE-funded higher education provision is indirectly funded. 205 members of staff teach higher education, 31 full-time and 122 part-time, with 52 also teaching on further education programmes

6   The higher education awards funded by HEFCE are listed below, beneath their awarding bodies and with full-time equivalent numbers of students for 2009-10.

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University of Bath
FdA Youth Work (21)

Bath Spa University
FdA Early Years (61)

University of Bristol
FdA Counselling (73)

Kingston University
FdSc Aircraft Engineering (75)

University of the West of England
Foundation Year Computing (24)
Foundation Year Health Professions (34)
FdSc Health and Social Care Practice (25)
FdSc Aerospace Engineering Manufacturing (12)
FdSc Substance Misuse (2)
Postgraduate Certificate/Certificate in Education (66)

University of Plymouth
FdA Administration and Business Technology (29)
FdA Automotive Business: Management and Technology (7.4)
FdA Business (43.5)
FdSc Communication and Computer Networks (26)
FdSc Complementary Health Therapies (21.7)
FdA/FdSc Computer Aided Design (Visualisation/Design Technology) (6.3) (no year one)
FdSc Computing and Information Technology (19.9)
FdSc Construction (with embedded HNC) (20.5)
FdA Contact Centre Management (3.3) (no year one)
FdA Creative Arts Therapy Studies (16.5)
FdA Dance Theatre Performance (27)
FdSc Digital Media Production (28.5)
FdA Early Childhood Studies (22.5)
HNC Electrical Building Services (10.5)
FdSc Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) (with embedded HNC) (22.5)
FdSc Engineering (Mechanical) (with embedded HNC) (32.3)
FdSc Engineering (Mechatronics) (with embedded HNC) (11.5)
FdA Food and Beverage Management (5)
FdA Graphic Design with Interactive Multimedia (25.4)
FdA Housing (with embedded HNC) (4)
FdA Interactive Multimedia with Graphic Design (18.4)
FdSc Internet Technologies (19.5)
FdA Management of Security Services (no year one) (3.4)
FdA Playwork (no year one) (4)
FdA Professional Photography (51.8)
FdA Spatial Design (no year one) (4.3)
FdA Theatre Media Performance (18)
Postgraduate Certificate/Certificate in Education (no year one) (25.5)
Institute of Motor Industry (IMI) Diploma for Automotive Master Technicians (15)
Institute of Motor Industry (IMI) Certificate of Management (4)
Professional Diploma in Management Studies Level 5 (9)
Professional Diploma in Management Studies Level 7 (10.8)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   City of Bristol College has formal partnership agreements for its higher education provision with six awarding bodies. The arrangements, including the responsibilities of the College, vary between partnerships but are clear to College staff. To promote consistency across the wide spread of higher education provision, the College has produced matrices of responsibilities for each of its awarding bodies. These list all the key operations involved with the provision and identify where the responsibilities lie: with the College, the University or in a joint arrangement. The greatest number of higher education programmes is delivered in partnership with the University of Plymouth, which delegates significant responsibility to the College as a member of its large partnership. The University of the West of England shares responsibility for many aspects but retains the lead on others, for example admissions, external examining and, depending on the faculty, assessment approval. Bath Spa and Kingston Universities and the Universities of Bath and Bristol award a single programme each and share responsibility for elements of quality assurance with the College.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   The University Centre was established in 2008 as a dedicated space for study at level 4 and above, and students find it enhances their experience. The College has enthusiastically embraced the opportunities provided by Foundation Degrees and responded to the needs of local employers over the last five years, engaging with a wide range of sectors. In particular, it has developed and expanded part-time modes of attendance. The Senior Leadership Team has reviewed the financial viability of a number of programmes, as it became apparent that there were difficulties sustaining employer commitment in, for example, Contact Centre Management and Management of Security. In other areas, such as Computing and Business, rationalisation has brought some economies of scale. The College has decided to consolidate the provision on a narrower range of faculties. By mutual arrangement, the single Foundation Degrees validated by Kingston University and the University of Bath and in their last year will come to an end in 2010.

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. Two student representatives coordinated the distribution and analysis of a questionnaire completed by the student representatives in consultation with their peers from 23 programmes, representing all faculties and departments. Full-time and part-time students and those from different years were included. The University of Plymouth Students' Union assisted with the drafting of the questionnaire. The team found the evidence in the student written submission valuable, as was the meeting with students held during the review.

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 College has a carefully planned and effective structure for the management and quality assurance of higher education. The Deputy Principal for Students and Curriculum has executive responsibility for higher education. Each faculty has a Strand Manager for a group

of higher education programmes reporting to the Head of Faculty, who line manages programme coordinators, acts as a cross-college link for higher education matters, and monitors the quality of programmes. The role includes ensuring that assignment tasks are internally verified, and that student work is marked and standardised. A Strand Forum meets regularly and is successful in raising awareness of higher education within the College and in disseminating good practice, including standardisation of documentation across programmes The team considers that this structure ensures quality and standards and the dissemination of good practice.

11   The Higher Education Unit is led by the Head of Higher Education, a senior manager, and staff include the Higher Education Quality Manager, who provides valuable support to programme coordinators. The Unit is evidence of the College's commitment to higher education and fosters an appropriate environment. The centralising of the administration team supports higher education staff and enables consistency. The Unit has promoted the development and use of assessment templates, data monitoring, module feedback and report forms. Through attendance at programme monitoring meetings and award boards, the Unit collates good practice and areas of concern, which are reported to the Higher Education Quality Board.

12   The Higher Education Quality Board was created as a subcommittee of the Quality Standards Board from October 2008, to enable separate and more detailed discussion of the differentiated issues for higher education. The Quality Standards Board reports to the Governors' Curriculum and Quality Board. The Higher Education Quality Board meets once per term, chaired by the Deputy Principal, and its membership includes a student representative. It effectively monitors and evaluates quality standards and quality improvement, including validation, actions arising from external review, and any programmes giving cause for concern. The College's arrangements for managing quality are outlined in the Further Education Quality Assurance Handbook, which has a discrete section on higher education.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

13   The Academic Infrastructure is embedded within the quality assurance procedures that the College applies to meet the requirements of its awarding bodies. Templates prepared for validation incorporate programme specifications with reference to subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ, which ensures appropriate levels for the award. The Academic Infrastructure has provided a sound base for the structure of the recently introduced Higher Education Self-Assessment Report and the preparation of sets of guidelines, for example for Assessment and for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

14   The guidelines have been used by the Higher Education Quality Manager to provide induction for new staff. The programme of staff development conferences, together with support from awarding bodies, has enabled a thorough understanding of the Academic Infrastructure among academic and support staff, for example in work-based learning and assessment. The team considers that this understanding, which informs all aspects of the quality processes, is good practice.

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

15   The College's responsibilities for the standards of provision are specified in partnership agreements and memoranda of cooperation with validating partners. A comprehensive set of matrices indicates the different arrangements and responsibilities established with each university so that faculty managers, programme coordinators and administrators are clear about procedures within the relevant higher education framework. The matrices cover such matters as annual programme monitoring, assessment and external

examining, and procedures for obtaining student feedback. The Developmental engagement noted that the matrices supported the College in meeting the assessment requirements of its multiple awarding bodies.

16   A range of quality assurance processes and structures assures the College that it discharges its responsibilities for a diverse range of provision effectively. These include meetings with awarding bodies' representatives at the relevant university or in the College, external examiners and examination boards and annual and periodic review processes. Self-assessment reports and an annual lesson observation schedule of teaching staff enhance the processes. The College has a robust policy which requires curriculum proposals to be subject to an internal validation prior to development.

17   The principal means for ensuring the standards of provision is the annual monitoring and review process. The Developmental engagement identified robust annual monitoring reviews followed up by centrally monitored action plans. Effective quality monitoring processes are in evidence in College documentation, including Quality Board and Strand Forum minutes and the Higher Education Self-Assessment Report. Information to support annual monitoring is obtained from all stakeholders, including students, employers and university link tutors, and monitoring includes a review of retention, progression and achievement data. The external examiners' reports are positive and indicate many examples of good practice. Following a recommendation in the Developmental engagement, the College has arranged with two awarding bodies for their external examiner reports to be disaggregated to enable programme teams to review their processes. Responses to external examiner reports are provided in action plans in the annual programme monitoring reports.

18   The recent institutional review by the University of Plymouth and the annual review by Bath Spa University indicate that the College has appropriate arrangements for managing its provision. Representatives of all the awarding bodies confirmed that the College has appropriate arrangements to give them confidence in its higher education provision. They value the open and constructive dialogue with staff and commended the College's approach to collaboration. The team finds that this example of partnership working represents good practice. In a meeting with the team, employers said that they are consulted on the content of programmes in order to address their changing needs. For example, the Ministry of Defence is working with the College to develop the Foundation Degree in Mechatronics and will base a training officer in the College. Employers also indicated that the College responds promptly when any issues are raised.

19   Considerable progress has been made since the Developmental engagement in developing standardised processes to ensure that assessment practice is consistent across awarding bodies, and that formative assessment is recorded. All modules have module guides, and templates for assessment feedback have been introduced.

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

20   The College's arrangements for staff development are set out in the Staff Development Policy. Learning and development needs are identified through the business planning process, staff appraisals and a reflective continuing professional development process. All lecturing staff are required to achieve qualified teacher status within five years of employment, with support from the College. The College has a regular programme of higher education staff conferences addressing topics such as work-based learning, assessment and feedback, and the role of external examiners. Awarding bodies also provide opportunities for staff to attend seminars, and one offers a useful module called 'Supervising undergraduate research'.

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?

21   The arrangements for managing and reporting on the quality of learning opportunities are those described for academic standards in paragraphs 10-12. They are comprehensive, clearly defined and are understood and implemented effectively by academic and administrative staff. Annual programme reviews provide effective instruments for reflection on the provision and for identifying potential enhancements to learning opportunities.

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

22   Student representation is well managed across a range of formal meetings, notably programme committees and the Higher Education Student Council meeting. Many students are part-time and in employment and so occasionally find it difficult to attend meetings. However, students confirmed that the College considers their views carefully and staff provide timely and supportive responses to issues raised. For example, student comment led to an extension of the library opening hours, more flexible assessments suited to the workplace and the provision of fans and water coolers.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

23   The College utilises the Academic Infrastructure effectively in its documentation and procedures to inform the quality of learning opportunities. Both teaching and support staff have a sound knowledge of its main features. The *Code of practice* is well used, for example, to inform the admission of students and the support provided for students with disabilities.

24   As noted in the Developmental engagement, workplace learning is well developed in the College and employers and mentors support the achievement of work-based learning outcomes effectively. Assessments enable students to demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. There is employer involvement in the setting and review of assessments in accordance with the Foundation Degree qualification benchmark. An engineering employer contributes to the resources available on the virtual learning environment, providing a valuable tripartite link between students, the College and the employer in support of work-related learning. Employers are involved in contributing to, and informing, assessment decisions in the workplace through projects and commenting on student presentations of work. The team considers it to be good practice that employers engage effectively in the design, formative assessment and review of Foundation Degree programmes, offering impressive support to students through mentoring and placement supervision.

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

25   Lesson observation procedures are college-wide and designed to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. There is a limited number of observations of

part-time staff, many of whom are industry practitioners. Future observations are to be more closely aligned to the Academic Infrastructure and the College is in the process of developing a peer observation scheme for higher education programmes as part of a project with another college. The team considers that it would be desirable for the College to continue developing a peer observation scheme to support its higher education staff.

26   In the student written submission, respondents from many programmes reported a flexible approach to teaching and learning that is responsive to their needs. They value the practical nature of their teaching and the links between theory and practice. Students report that feedback on assessed work for most programmes is timely, accurate and supportive, which is an improvement since the Developmental engagement. The format of feedback templates varies across the provision to accommodate differences in the requirements of awarding bodies. For example, for work-based learning on the FdA Early Years, students submit work for two of four assessment tasks and receive feedback in tutorials prior to submitting for summative assessment. In some cases, formative feedback is provided by email, and tutorial record forms completed by the tutor, student, or industrial mentor are also used. The College has implemented enhanced systems for recording formative assessment following the higher education conference held after the Developmental engagement in July 2009.

27   Another outcome of the Developmental engagement is the increased use of the virtual learning environment as a resource in support of teaching and learning. Blogs, discussion boards and online portfolios supplement online lecture notes, handouts and presentation materials. Online videos of performances and interviews have supported the learning of a dyslexic student. A podcast was used to explain how a mathematics test could have been approached.

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

28   Students value the academic and pastoral support system, welcome the staff open-door policy, and confirm the quality of the support provided. Applicants have a diagnostic assessment at interview to identify specific needs, highlight skills and inform the setting of personal goals. Support for additional needs and dyslexia is strong. Prior to entry, students are able to access a short course to prepare them for higher-level study, which has proved particularly useful for mature and health and care students. From the application stage, the 'My College' project to engage students is followed up with pre-induction seminars and opportunities to meet fellow prospective students. Tutorials are regular, well planned and supportive. Students regard the small class sizes, approachable lecturers and the support provided as reasons for enrolling at the College.

29   As identified in the Developmental engagement, the College has an interactive e-study skills package. Students can access materials on referencing, plagiarism, academic writing, examination skills, presentations and reflective journals. This is particularly useful for those who attend college on a part-time basis or are returning to learn. The package has been made available to all University of Plymouth partnership colleges. Some of this material is intended specifically to assist student progression from level 4 to level 5. A range of support materials and links to e-books and an electronic library are available on the virtual learning environment and also promoted on posters in public spaces in the College. Students confirm that the virtual learning environment provides a useful means of communication and source of learning materials.

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

30   The arrangements for staff development are described in paragraph 20. Staff development sessions include training for the virtual learning environment designed to address a recommendation from the Developmental engagement. The team recognises as

good practice that staff new to teaching in higher education and part-time staff are provided with well-planned induction, mentorship and continuing staff development, which is supportive and informative. Staff are encouraged to improve their qualifications; the College has supported 13 staff taking master's qualifications and two taking doctorates in the last three years.

31   Teaching and support staff are involved in a wide range of scholarly activity, which is disseminated through a College publication and an annual College research conference. The College has benefited from several research and project opportunities funded by the Higher Education Learning Partnership Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of Plymouth. The Higher Education Academy held a national workshop in partnership with the College in the summer of 2010 to encourage and support scholarly activity. The impact of research and scholarship on the student experience is evident in the publications and staff comment. The team considers it good practice that the staff carry out a range of professional updating, research and scholarly activity with commitment and enthusiasm and the support of the College.

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 has taken considerable steps to create a higher education environment which students appreciate greatly. The Higher Education Unit, as described in paragraph 11, is situated within the dedicated University Centre at the Ashley Down campus. The Centre has wireless facilities and laptops available, which support higher education student learning. General teaching facilities are of a high standard, with electronic whiteboards in all classrooms and computing rooms. The College Green campus is the base for digital and creative arts programmes and the Parkway campus is the base for aircraft and motor engineering programmes. Performing arts students have facilities at the Bristol Dance Centre and at the Tobacco Factory; the latter provides specialist theatre, dance and rehearsal spaces. Using the Tobacco Factory is a particularly successful initiative which places learning fully in the workplace environment to the benefit of students, the College and employers.

33   Awarding bodies consider the availability and appropriateness of general learning resources and specialist equipment as part of the validation process. This includes scrutinising the qualifications of teaching staff. Annual review identifies any developments requiring additional resources, and programme teams report on this during self-assessment and programme review. The College addresses the resulting action plans. College provision includes niche programmes to meet the needs of particular employers, for example in aircraft and aerospace engineering. Some students and staff would like equipment to be more up to date, but the awarding bodies confirm the suitability of the resources, their fitness for purpose and consider that resources meet regulatory body requirements. The College allocates significant resources to maintaining appropriate equipment and recently purchased a wind tunnel to support engineering programmes.

34   Most higher education resources are to be found at the Ashley Down campus. Following part-time student requests, the library now opens earlier and on Saturdays. Some students reported a shortage of texts in both the College Green library and the main Ashley Down library. Although the College does not have an extensive book stock, steps have been taken to more closely reconcile the book stock with the programme reading lists. E-books and online resources are increasingly used to support part-time students effectively. Arrangements with awarding bodies include parity of access to library and learning resources for college-based students and are used online. Visits to higher education institutions take place more when locally, for example in Bath or the University of the West of England in Bristol. There is a generous inter-library loan agreement with the University of Plymouth.

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?

35   Agreements with all but one awarding body state that the College is responsible for the production of all publicity material, with approval from the relevant university. Kingston University retains control of marketing for all programmes and all marketing material must be submitted on an annual basis for approval prior to publication.

36   All programmes have a student handbook which includes all essential information for the programme. Awarding bodies see the production of student handbooks as the College's responsibility, although some provide part of the detail. The University of Plymouth provides a template as the basis for staff to write the student handbooks for their programmes. A small number of students expressed some doubt in the student written submission about the clarity and timeliness of the information received, but this related to only a few programmes. Generally, the students the team met receive and appreciate their handbooks.

37   More detailed information is available in the module guides. Module guides are placed on the virtual learning environment, as are internally verified assessment materials. The number of programmes making material available to students on the virtual learning environment has increased since the Developmental engagement; the staff are supported by a college-wide e-learning training team. The College has now made it compulsory for key information for all programmes to be on the virtual learning environment. For example, templates for assessment feedback have been introduced as a result of the Developmental engagement. The team considers it good practice that the increased consistency of implementation across all programmes, supported by the dedicated e-learning training team, is leading to clarity of the programme materials on the virtual learning environment.

38   Much of the information published about the College's higher education provision is on the College website, which is maintained by the Marketing Department. There is a clear link on the home page to the University-level prospectus, and the website contains a range of useful initial information for students about applications, study support and College policies and procedures. This section of the website also includes a video about university-level study. The team considers that the coherent initial publicity, pre-programme contact, student handbooks and module guides that provide clear information about programmes and the additional support available are good practice.

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

39   The University-level prospectus is a major source of information for prospective students and is reviewed annually, involving the Marketing Department, the Higher Education Unit, the faculties within the College, and the higher education partners. There are clearly established protocols for the confirmation of information to be published before final sign off by the Head of Higher Education. A range of mechanisms exists for the quality assurance of programme documentation. When updating is required, it is checked for accuracy as part of the annual review with the awarding body. Liaison between programme leaders and the College admissions team provides a mechanism to ensure the accuracy and completeness

of advice to students at the application and interview stage. Students commented favourably on coherent initial publicity, pre-programme contact, student handbooks and module guides that provide coherent information about programmes and the additional support available. The team agrees that this is good practice.

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

40   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in June 2009 and covered all the higher education provision. Three lines of enquiry were agreed with the College and ensured that all IQER core themes could be addressed: the extent to which assessment tasks effectively measure student achievement of the intended learning outcomes; the extent to which timely formative assessment and feedback contribute to student learning; and the effectiveness of student additional support opportunities for enhancing student learning and assessment and how this information is made available to students.

41   The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. The effective partnerships with multiple awarding bodies are supported by a comprehensive set of matrices of mutual responsibilities. Programme teams design assessment tasks that successfully avoid plagiarism by their specificity. There are staff development opportunities at regular higher education conferences and seminars, including the standardisation of formative and summative feedback. Annual monitoring reviews are robust and address assessment issues, followed up with centrally monitored action plans. The range of assessment methods, many related to the workplace, enable Foundation Degree students to carry out work-based projects. Formative feedback enhances student performance. There is a comprehensive range of additional support for individuals and groups, particularly part-time students. Initial publicity and information for students provide clear information about assessment and the additional support available.

42   The team also made a number of recommendations. It considered that the College should continue to develop standardised processes to ensure that assessment practice is as consistent as is congruent with working with seven awarding bodies. It should initiate further discussions with those awarding bodies where external examiner reports do not assist the programme teams to review their processes. The College should clarify and formalise the recording of formative assessment and formative feedback on summative assessment to demonstrate its effectiveness and share practice across the College. It should extend the use of the virtual learning environment to support all students, but particularly part-time students in employment, across the higher education provision.

D Foundation Degrees

43   The College has enthusiastically embraced the opportunities provided by Foundation Degrees and responded to the needs of local employers over the last five years, engaging with a wide range of sectors. However, the Senior Leadership Team has reviewed the financial viability of a number of programmes, as it became apparent that there were difficulties sustaining employer commitment in, for example, Contact Centre Management. In other areas, such as Computing and Business, rationalisation has brought some economies of scale. Such consolidation has been achieved with little disruption to students. The Foundation Degree provision is changing for a number of reasons. In the case of the FdSc Substance Misuse, a change to part-time provision has been driven by insufficient local demand, but for the FdA Automotive Business, Management and Technology interest is from

geographically disparate employers and it is delivered in blocks fully supported by e-learning. By mutual arrangement, the FdEng Aircraft Engineering with Kingston University will end, given changes in the industry since its commencement in 2001. As a result of the withdrawal of approval for the current model of Foundation Degree plus BSc top-up in Youth Work by the National Youth Work Association, the University of Bath will no longer be able to validate the Foundation Degree from 2011-2012.

44   Of the 1,235 students enrolled on higher education programmes at the College, 929 are studying on 33 Foundation Degree programmes, 530 full-time and 399 part-time. Foundation Degrees validated by the University of Plymouth form a significant majority. The College fulfils the precepts of the Foundation Degree qualification benchmark by involving employers in the design, assessment and review of Foundation Degrees. Students who are not in employment receive the opportunity to undertake work-based learning in realistic workplace settings. All the conclusions listed in paragraphs 45-48 apply equally to Foundation Degrees.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

45   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in City of Bristol 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, Bath Spa University, Kingston University, the University of Bath, the University of Bristol, the University of Plymouth and the University of the West of England.

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

- clear and comprehensive quality assurance processes, supported by useful matrices that set out mutual responsibilities, enable awarding bodies to have confidence in the higher provision (paragraphs 7, 18)
- a carefully planned and effective structure for higher education ensures quality and standards and the dissemination of good practice through the Higher Education Unit and the Strand Manager role (paragraphs 10, 11)
- academic and support staff have a thorough understanding of the Academic Infrastructure, supported by dedicated staff development, which informs all aspects of the quality processes (paragraph 14)
- the open and constructive dialogue with the College is valued and commended by the awarding bodies (paragraph 18)
- employers are engaged effectively in the design, formative assessment and review of Foundation Degree programmes, offering impressive support to students through mentoring and placement supervision (paragraph 24)
- staff new to teaching in higher education and part-time staff are provided with well-planned induction, mentorship and continuing staff development which is supportive and informative (paragraph 30)
- staff carry out a range of professional updating, research and scholarly activity with commitment and enthusiasm and the support of the College (paragraph 31)
- the increased consistency of implementation across all programmes, supported by the dedicated e-learning training team, is leading to clarity of the programme materials on the virtual learning environment (paragraph 37)
- initial publicity, pre-programme contact, student handbooks and module guides provide coherent and useful information about programmes and the additional support available (paragraph 38).

47   The team also makes a recommendation for consideration by the College and its awarding bodies.

Integrated quality and enhancement review

48   The team agreed the following area where it would be **desirable** for the College to take action:

•   continue to develop a peer observation scheme to support its higher education staff (paragraph 25).

49   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.

50   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.

51   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/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

City of Bristol College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2010						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
In the course of the Summative review the ream identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• clear and comprehensive quality assurance processes, supported by useful matrices that set out mutual responsibilities, enable awarding bodies to have confidence in the higher education provision (paragraphs 7, 18)	Maintain currency of matrices. For AY 2010-11	January 2011	Head of Higher Education (HE) HE Quality Manager	Responsibilities for academic standards and learning opportunities are met by City of Bristol College (CoBC) and all higher education institution (HEI) partners	Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB)	External examiner reports confirm standards are met No concerns recorded by HEI partners
• a carefully planned and effective structure for higher education ensures quality and standards and the dissemination of	All higher education programmes to have a HE Strand Manager or equivalent HE Unit to formalise and support a regular Programme	November 2010 November 2010	Head of HE Head of HE HE Quality Manager	All programmes represented at the HE Strand Management meetings All programme leaders attending PC Forum	HEQB HEQB	HE Strand Forum Minutes HE PC Forum notes

good practice through the Higher Education Unit and the Strand Manager role (paragraphs 10, 11)	Coordinator (PC) Forum					
• academic and support staff have a thorough understanding of the Academic Infrastructure, supported by dedicated staff development, which informs all aspects of the quality processes (paragraph 14)	Staff training and HE resources are used to: 1 Inform staff about Academic Infrastructure	November 2010	HE Quality Manager HE Coordinator	New HE PCs are made aware of Academic Infrastructure and how they are used to inform CoBC policies and guidelines	HEQB	Staff training reported in HE Self-Assessment Report (SAR) HE staff use of HE Forum on the VLE PC forum notes evidence staff training needs HEQB minutes
	2 Maintain the currency of the use of the Academic Infrastructure	July 2011	HE Quality Manager	Policies and guidelines are updated as required and made available on the virtual learning environment (VLE) HE Forum	HEQB	
	3 Monitor staff needs for training	July 2011	HE Quality Manager	Staff training needs monitored at PC Forum and as part of Faculty HE SAR	HEQB	

• the open and constructive dialogue with the College is valued and commended by the awarding bodies (paragraph 18)	Maintain effective communication with existing partners	Throughout year	HE Unit	Efficient and effective lines of communication maintained with all HEI partners; quality standards maintained accordingly	HEQB	External examiner (EE) reports, HEI reports/reviews
	Establish constructive dialogue with new HEI partners	As required	Head of HE HE Quality manager	Quality processes established for all new courses		
• employers are engaged effectively in the design, formative assessment and review of Foundation Degree programmes, offering impressive support to students through mentoring and placement supervision (paragraph 24)	Maintain established employer links Review employer engagement across provision and encourage development of engagement where needed		PCs HE Strand Managers HE Unit	All programmes have at least 2 areas of good practice relating to employer engagement	Annual Programme Monitoring (APM) meeting	APM meeting minutes and action planning
• staff new to teaching in higher education and part-time staff are provided with well-planned induction,	All new PCs to: 1 Attend HE PC induction 2 Have a mentor	January 2011 November 2010	HE Strand Manager HE Coordinator	HE teaching staff are familiar with all relevant procedures and modules and	Annual program reviews	Student feedback about module organisation improves

mentorship and continuing staff development which is supportive and informative (paragraph 30)	Part time staff to: 1 Be given time to attend HE Conference 2 To be given a mentor from their programme team	January 2011 November 2010	Head of HE HE Strand Manager	programmes run smoothly	HEQB	Module reports by module leaders are positive
• staff carry out a range of professional updating, research and scholarly activity with commitment and enthusiasm and the support of the College (paragraph 31)	To develop staff research activity and scholarly activity in College in absence of University of Plymouth Colleges Higher Education Learning Partner Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning awards scheme	December 2010	Head of HE Head of Quality Improvement Unit (QIU) HE Quality Manager		HEQB	Faculty HE SARs evidence staff continue to be involved in relevant activities
• the increased consistency of implementation across all programmes, supported by the dedicated e-learning training team, is leading to clarity of the programme materials on the virtual learning environment (paragraph 37)	Continue to monitor use of e-learning on all programmes Provide direction and support to ensure high quality provision of e-learning on all programmes	November 2010 December 2010	HE Unit HE Unit E-learning and innovation team	All programmes minimum requirement for e learning provision on the VLE Increase in the number of programmes identifiable as meeting good practice in e-learning support for students	HEQB	College monthly performance report shows improvement in use of e-learning on HE programmes Audit shows increase in range of use of VLE to support learning
• initial publicity, pre-programme	HE Unit to monitor the content of programme	November 2010	HE Unit	Positive student feedback about a	HEQB	Module and programme

	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
contact, student handbooks and module guides provide coherent and useful information about programmes and the additional support available (paragraph 38).	information produced by all programmes to support students	(semester 1 literature) February 2011 (semester 2 literature)		range of information		feedback concerning range information National Student Survey and Student Perception Questionnaire feedback about information is positive No student complaints about programme content misrepresentation

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						
• continue to develop a peer observation scheme to support its higher education staff (paragraph 25).	Establish the outcomes required from peer review by the QIU	October 2010	Head of HE Head of QIU HE Quality Manager	Performance indicators for peer review established	HEQB	Peer review indicators reported by QIU in HEQB minutes
	Develop a peer review system with involvement of HE teaching staff	December 2010	HE Quality Manager QIU Teaching and Learning Coordinator	Procedure and resources for peer review produced and available to staff the VLE	HEQB	HEQB minutes
	Implement peer review	January 2011	HE Quality Manager	All HE PCs trained to use peer review	HEQB & HE Strand Managers	Peer review indicators

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
			QIU Teaching and Learning Coordinator	Peer review used by FT HE teaching staff to replace one observation		reported in HE Faculty SAR
	Evaluate and review peer review procedures	July 2010	HE Quality Manager QIU Teaching and Learning Coordinator	Staff engaged in review of peer review	HEQB & HE Strand Managers	Staff evaluation of peer review in HEQB minutes. Procedure and resources modified for use AY 2011-12