



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Tor Bridge High

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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 Tor Bridge High carried out in November 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 award 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 programme it delivers.

Good practice

The team has identified the following good practice for dissemination:

- there is a coherent approach to assessment across all modules, consistently designed and applied to support the calibration of academic standards and student learning opportunities in an online environment that includes online assignment briefs, milestone assessments, marking schemes, grading criteria, online submission and timely online feedback
- the vocational nature of the course and industry-specific experience of the students, supported by the curriculum design, staff practitioner expertise and guest lectures, which is acknowledged by industry accreditation and effective in preparing students for employment within a fast-moving and competitive industry
- the effective learning and pastoral support provided for students by teaching and administrative staff that is commended by students
- the accessible virtual learning site that acts as a comprehensive electronic environment for student learning and for the tracking of student performance
- the College provides specialist equipment, software and studios of industry standard that are fully accessible to all students and are particularly effective in supporting group learning and independent project work.

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:

- ensure that external examiner reports are seen by students, in line with HEFCE requirements, to further enhance involvement in the management of their experience
- strengthen the College's role in monitoring the Foundation Degree provision as specified in the agreement with the awarding body and establish more formal reporting mechanisms within the College
- establish formal module evaluations in line with the awarding body quality assurance processes
- ensure that there is a formal record of risk assessment carried out as part of health and safety monitoring for work placements.

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

- consider a mechanism to better align teaching observation procedures to higher education pedagogy.

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 Tor Bridge High (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 the programme which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Plymouth. The review was carried out by Mr John Skinner and Mr Lawrie Walker (reviewers) and Dr Margaret Johnson (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 body, meetings with staff, students and the partner institution, and the report of the most recent inspection 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 Tor Bridge High is an ambitious 11 to 19 community college that has developed rapidly in recent years. It enrolls over 1,250 students, with a sixth form of 360. It has a small amount of higher education provision and, in the current year, there are 53 full-time equivalent (FTE) students on its Foundation Degree programme, funded directly by HEFCE. The College has a partnership arrangement with the University of Plymouth and it uses a privately-owned recording studio facility in the centre of Plymouth, Deep Blue Sound, where the Foundation Degree is taught.

5 The College has a history of providing adult and community learning and a range of progression routes for post-18 learners. It has an innovative delivery relationship with Deep Blue Sound that is nationally recognised for its recording facilities, music venues and live student events. The Foundation Degree in Music and Sound Technology was developed with Deep Blue Sound to answer the needs of the College's sound engineering students. Students aspired to progress to further learning opportunities in an environment that the College was not able to provide. The College is situated in a low-economy geographical area where 75 per cent of the students are from single-parent families and parents of the students have little experience of higher education. The Foundation Degree provides a vocational progression route that adds value to the existing provision and acknowledges the needs of learners from non-traditional educational backgrounds. The College's mission statement is 'to strive to excel' and 'achieve at the highest level'. The Deep Blue Sound mission statement is 'to provide an inspirational educational experience in a top class professional recording studio facility competing with the best in the country'.

6 The College offers the following higher education programme in conjunction with one local university:

University of Plymouth

- FdA Sound and Music Technology (53 FTEs).

Partnership agreement with the awarding body

7 The College has worked with the University of Plymouth since 2004 as an associate partner college. The partnership, in association with Deep Blue Sound, first developed the Foundation Degree in Sound and Music Technology to provide progression opportunities for the College's sound engineering students, but the course now attracts students from a wide geographic area.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 The College moved into new premises in September 2010, and at the same time changed its name from Estover Community College to Tor Bridge High. It provides one Foundation Degree that was validated by the University of Plymouth in 2004. There have been no significant changes to the provision since it was first offered, but during 2009-2010 the College was required by the University to reduce the credits awarded for the Foundation Degree. This resulted in the revision of two modules into a new single module in Personal Professional Development.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on the higher education programme at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A group of three students volunteered to present their views by video, with the support of the Student Union Officer, and these views were used to provide supporting evidence for the final report. The submission was helpful to the reviewers, who found that the conclusions reported were consistent with those expressed by current students in the student meeting during the visit. The students were very complimentary about their higher education experience at the College, and in particular about the support provided by both teaching and administrative staff to enable them to succeed.

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 management of academic standards is carried out by the Foundation Degree course team within the context of the University of Plymouth's regulations and protocols. The College is designated by the University as an associate college, and as such operates the University's quality assurance system and procedures, including participation in programme approval, annual monitoring and periodic/institutional review. The Foundation Degree was validated and has been provided since 2004, but has not yet been subject to

the University's requirements for periodic review. The University is currently reconsidering its approach to the type and level of curriculum changes that are permitted by an Associate College and the role of periodic review in partner colleges.

11 The Course Coordinator, employed by the College and based at Deep Blue Sound, is responsible for quality assurance to meet the University's requirements, including the provision of the student handbook and programme specification, the management of programme committee meetings, the evaluation of the course, and student representation. The Higher Education Coordinator is based at the College, is a member of the programme committee and is in regular contact with the Course Coordinator. Handbooks, general information and minutes of programme meetings are available on the College intranet. The working partnership between the Higher Education Coordinator and the Course Coordinator is the key mechanism for managing and monitoring quality and standards. This infrastructure is adequate for a single programme operating within a fixed set of University regulations and protocols. However, the team considers that the arrangements would be strengthened with a more formal mechanism of communication to the wider management structure of the College.

12 The partnership agreement states that the College, together with Deep Blue Sound, will, as a minimum, undertake an annual review of the course and the operation of the agreement. Deep Blue Sound is visited by both the University Academic Liaison Person and the Higher Education Coordinator, but specialist expertise outside the course team resides solely in the external examiner. There is no annual module or course report, but an annual programme committee meeting reviews the year's activities, using a set agenda designed by the University. An action plan to accompany the minutes of the meeting is completed and both are sent to the University, and are also recorded within pages of the College's virtual learning environment. The documentation is cursory and of limited use to a reader who is not present at the meeting. The team considers that the monitoring and reporting of practice to stakeholders, other than within the course team, is not sufficiently robust and that the introduction of more systematic monitoring processes at module and course level would strengthen the provision.

13 The College clearly adheres to the assessment and marking policies of the University and produces assignment briefs and detailed marking schemes that use grading descriptors that conform to FHEQ guidelines. These, and any changes, are submitted to the General Board of Studies at the University for approval. The College is responsible for the organisation and operation of assessment panels and boards under the University regulations. Minutes from the most recent Subject and Award Assessment Boards indicate that they are well attended and managed.

14 The College nominates the external examiner, and the University then formally appoints and carries out induction sessions for each examiner appointed. The external examiner reports for 2004-10 are consistently positive, although the most recent reports include little commentary to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The external examiner reports are considered by the course team but are not seen by the students. The team considers it advisable for the College to share the external examiner report with student representatives to improve transparency of the course and to further enhance involvement in the management of their experience. The College is required to respond formally to the external examiner, and the team is satisfied that responses are prompt and sufficiently detailed.

15 There is regular communication between the University, the Higher Education Coordinator and the course team. The Higher Education Coordinator meets informally with the Principal, delivers formal reports to governors and has regular communication with the course leaders. However, there is no evidence of regular systematic reports being

considered by the College. The team considers it advisable for the College to strengthen its role in monitoring the Foundation Degree provision by considering the implementation of a formal reporting mechanism within the College.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

16 The awarding body designates the Foundation Degree as a validated programme, designed and offered by a partner organisation, and approved and recognised by the University as leading to one of its awards. The programme rationale for the validation of the Foundation Degree includes relevant references to the Academic Infrastructure, including the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. The staff site of the College intranet system contains the relevant sections of the *Code of practice* and guidelines for programme specifications

17 The College and Deep Blue Sound have not formally audited their higher education provision against the different sections of the *Code of practice*, although it is clear that the *Code of practice* does inform practice, for example in relation to work placements. Programme and module specifications have been carefully designed in relation to the FHEQ, the South East Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer, and relevant subject benchmark statements. Where the University allows a greater level of local flexibility, such as in designing assessments, there is clear evidence that the assessment processes are informed by the *Code of practice*, and that marking schemes are informed by the FHEQ and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*.

18 There has been little substantive change to the curriculum design since its original approval, other than recently in response to the University's requirement for a reduction in course credits for the academic year 2010-11. This led to the revision of two modules into a new single module in Personal Professional Development, relevant to the subject benchmark statement and properly referenced to the FHEQ. This is a recent example of the College's operation of the course in line with University quality assurance processes and the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme design, approval, monitoring and review*. The proposed change was discussed with the external examiner and industry externals before being forwarded for approval to the University. This is in accordance with University protocols and lead to a revised programme specification in line with the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

19 The University provides a detailed framework for quality assurance within which the College operates. Most arrangements for ensuring standards are regulated and managed by the University in cooperation with the College, including the design of the curriculum in line with the Academic Infrastructure, the appointment and use of external examiners, and the conduct of assessment boards. The College has a degree of individual discretion in decision making about assessment of students, although this is still operated within the University guidelines. The team can confirm that the College ensures that the standards of its provision meet the requirements of the awarding body.

20 The College has acted on the recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. In particular, marking schemes that utilise elements of the Academic Infrastructure are now used for all modules, to assist tutors in designing assignment briefs and in calibrating standards of marking. Assignment briefs are designed by College tutors and then vetted by the Course Coordinator. If a significant change is proposed for an assessment, the Course Leader seeks advice from the external examiner in accordance with

University protocols. Formal monitoring of assessment practice is by internal moderation, external examiner reporting and at subject and award assessment boards. The University monitors the assessment practices of the College through the external examiner, the Award Board and by attending the Subject Board, which is managed by the College.

21 The team asked for clarification of the College's regulations for extensions of time for students to hand in work to determine the level of discretion allowed. Students are required to complete the extenuating circumstances procedure of the University of Plymouth. The decision to grant an extension is made by the programme team and not an individual member of staff. Student appeals against an assessment decision are considered initially by the College, and if not satisfactorily settled are forwarded to the University to be considered further.

22 Students who took part in the video interview for the student submission and who met the reviewers spoke positively of the course team's management of the assessment regime, commenting that assessments are effectively spread out in time and that they support their academic and technical development. The team commends the consistent assessment strategy for all modules, including online assignment briefs, milestone assessments, mark schemes, grade criteria, online submission and online feedback.

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

23 The Foundation Degree is the only higher education provision offered by the College, and staff development for the course team is identified initially by discussion with the Course Coordinator and subsequently in further discussions with the Higher Education Coordinator. Most staff are part-time industry practitioners and much of their professional activity is generated through work-based learning. The University supports staff development in relation to the management of academic standards in preparation for validation and the use of the assessment policy and guidelines. In addition, every member of staff has received a training session from the Course Coordinator on the use of mark schemes. The course team is small and the Course Coordinator clearly plays an essential role in advising, mentoring, monitoring and otherwise supporting the individual team members. The team confirms that staff development activities undertaken by course team members, including updating of academic qualifications, indicate a high level of professional practice among individual staff that helps to maintain academic standards and the professional practice standards of the Foundation Degree.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

24 The ultimate responsibility for managing the quality of learning opportunities for the Foundation Degree rests with the Executive Principal of the College. He delegates financial and strategic responsibility to the Business Manager and Higher Education Coordinator, who are both based at the College. The management of learning opportunities is predominantly the responsibility of the Course Coordinator, who is employed by the College and based at

Deep Blue Sound. He has a devolved budget from the College and is assisted by the Workplace Supervisor and the Course Administrator. The Higher Education Coordinator liaises between Deep Blue Sound, the University and the College. The arrangements are effective for managing the quality of learning opportunities.

25 The formal reporting procedures are described in the partnership agreement between the College and the University. The agreement specifies that the University receives annual written module evaluations. The University is currently prepared to accept some deviation from the formal requirement for evaluation of teaching and learning at module level to accommodate the paperless nature of the course. The University Academic Liaison Person attends the Annual Programme Meeting and has full access to the College virtual learning environment staff pages and to the online minutes of team meetings. This ensures that the Academic Liaison Person can monitor the evaluation of modules undertaken by both staff and students. Other general issues relating to teaching and learning at module level are raised in programme team meetings and are also scrutinised and monitored by the University's Academic Liaison Person. It would be in the interests of students and the College to consider a more formal system to collect and record the quality of teaching and learning opportunities at module level to recognise the high level of praise that students express for the teaching and learning provided on the course.

26 The three key managers at Deep Blue Sound have regular teaching commitments within the Foundation Degree, which ensures close involvement and immediate knowledge of how students respond to the learning opportunities offered. The Course Coordinator reports to the College through the Higher Education Coordinator, who then feeds back informally to the Principal in weekly meetings concerning the general progress of the Foundation Degree. These meetings are without minutes, although from time to time the Higher Education Coordinator makes more formal reports to the Governors of the College.

27 The informal reporting processes that take place within the College are not currently jeopardising the quality of the learning opportunities provided for students studying on the Foundation Degree. This is supported by positive external examiner reports, student success rates and the highly complimentary views of the learning opportunities expressed by the students. However, the team considers that without more formal monitoring and communication at senior level any future expansion of the provision may be at risk.

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

28 The College has a longstanding and well-established relationship with Deep Blue Sound, and both establishments employ staff to teach on the Foundation Degree. Particularly important to the effective collaboration is the Course Coordinator, who maintains regular contact with the College through the Higher Education Coordinator. She, in turn, liaises effectively with the University to ensure that students are provided with a wide variety of appropriate learning opportunities that conform to the University's regulatory standards and are consistent with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*.

29 In addition to directly collaborating with and fulfilling the requirements of the University, the College ensures the appropriate nature of the learning opportunities it gives to students through gaining the accreditation of the Joint Audio Media Education Services, which is the educational arm of the Association of Professional Recording Studios and the Music Producers Guild, and in addition is an industry-standard benchmark.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

30 There is clear evidence of the recognition of the requirements of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students* and the use of the precepts of the relevant section of the *Code of practice* in assessment design and practice. The College sets levels of expectation and agendas for creative practice which align with the complementary agenda of technical achievement drawn more directly from industry contacts. Consistent with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*, the course provides suitable progression routes to full degree programmes. The students are fully aware of the progression routes available to them, but expressed their disappointment that the progression routes are unable to permit them to continue to use the excellent resources provided by the Deep Blue Sound studio.

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

31 The quality of the teaching on the course is monitored and checked by the Course Coordinator, who undertakes teaching observation of all staff delivering the Foundation Degree. The process is not one of peer observation and not necessarily focused on the participant's delivery of higher education. Staff teach both further and higher education and are able to choose the setting which is most helpful and relevant to their ongoing continuing professional development. The team acknowledges the developmental nature of this observation, but considers it advisable for the College to consider a mechanism to better align observation practice to higher education pedagogy.

32 The College utilises a Continuing Professional Development tool which is linked to the Higher Education Strategy. Staff development is integrated into teaching observation and identifies all staff that need further training or updating. Support is provided by the College for staff to study for higher qualifications and newly appointed staff are mentored closely by the Course Coordinator. The teaching team is well qualified and experienced within the industry. The University of Plymouth provides additional support for staff from partner colleges to attend staff development activities held at the University, allowing them to enhance their practice in learning and teaching.

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

33 There is a comprehensive and effective system of support prior to enrolment and at induction. In addition to the initial induction, the Course Administrator meets regularly with the students in teaching and tutorial sessions and reinforces the messages of induction throughout the first weeks of the course.

34 The College identifies all students who may have learning difficulties and ensures that they are supported in their studies and assessments through the available funding and services of the University's learning support facility, Disability Assist. Students undergo a diagnostic assessment and then appropriate support is provided. This can include the supply of laptops and scribes and the provision of extra time for assessments where needed. In addition to ensuring that students are fully aware of the support available to them through the University services, the College has also made special provision at Deep Blue Sound. For example, the College has made available specialist software for blind and partially sighted students, giving them access to the same learning opportunities as other students.

35 Students are helped by clearly expressed learning outcomes, which can be assessed in a variety of ways. This enables students to choose from a set of flexible assignments and assessment methods that best meet their creative skills. Students are supported in the assessment process through a system of milestones that provide formative assessment at stages within each module. The team considers and the students confirm that

these milestones are a significant factor in the successful achievement of learning outcomes. The external examiner has commended the introduction of online submission and the assessment milestones. They are perceived by both staff and students as important preparatory steps towards the formal assessment and a useful feedback mechanism for identifying progress and problems. The team were impressed with the way in which students engaged with and benefited from this assessment practice, which is seen as good practice.

36 The effective use of assessment milestones requires the provision of timely feedback by staff. The Developmental engagement in assessment recommended that the College consider implementing a mechanism to ensure that student work is marked and available within a prescribed timescale. The College has implemented a policy that requires students to receive feedback within a deadline of three weeks after work is submitted. Students reported that the online feedback for the formative milestones is now both quick and relevant and provides them with good advice and guidance with which to undertake the summative assessments that follow. Feedback for both formative and summative assessment is always provided within the deadline and often much sooner due to the effective use of the virtual learning environment. The team acknowledges the developments that have taken place to ensure timely feedback. This now supports the assessment strategy and, together with the use of milestone assessments, marking schemes, grading criteria and online submission, provides a comprehensive and industry-relevant assessment package that is seen as good practice.

37 To maintain the vocational nature of the course, the College ensures that Deep Blue Sound arranges an annual series of lectures delivered by professionals from within the music industry. Guest lectures from several music producers and manufacturers of industry-related equipment are captured on video and held within the video library. The most recent series of lectures was expanded to include more local practitioners and opportunities to meet with industry professionals and freelance consultants. They provided input for record distribution, audio production and mastering engineering, and delivered practical workshops for drumming and music production. The students find this support invaluable in introducing them to the nature of the industry in which they seek to find careers, and the team considers that the provision of this experience and the preparation for employment is good practice. The team acknowledges the dedication of the course team in arranging and providing students with these learning opportunities.

38 Students comment favourably on the availability of staff to support them in their studies. Students particularly mentioned the regular support provided to update them on the opportunities to undertake projects, consultancy and other immediately relevant employment opportunities within industry. They confirmed that staff are always up to date and often pre-empt the student's interest in developing technology and make it available to them. The praise was not restricted to teaching staff, but students are keen to point to the high level of support that they receive from technical and administrative staff in Deep Blue Sound. This provision of the course at Deep Blue Sound means that the students are exceptionally placed to benefit from the support of current practitioners both during and outside formal teaching. The team considers that this level of job-relevant support is good practice.

39 The College produces an employer pack to support the learning opportunities of students in the work placement element of the programme. It contains an overview of the relationships between the College, Deep Blue Sound and the University. Employers are provided with a list of skills and courses that students have completed prior to the placement. The pack ensures that employers have a sound understanding of module learning outcomes, together with the individualised aims of the students. This helps employers to support students and provide them with new experiences to challenge and embed new skills that they have been taught. Students also benefit from feedback from

employers to aid their success in future employment. The team can confirm that employers and students find the information useful, and although it has not yet been fully embedded it has the potential to further strengthen the provision.

40 The students are well informed and supported in the work placement element of the Foundation Degree. The Work Placement Supervisor provides regular communications about the placements and advises on consultative opportunities. However, the College was unable to provide any documentation to support the risk assessment visits that the Work Placement Supervisor is required to make to all prospective employers. The team considers it advisable that formal records of all visits and risk assessments are completed to ensure that full support is provided for students undertaking placements and entering into consultative work-based arrangements with clients to ensure that all health and safety issues have been fully considered.

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

41 The Course Coordinator is responsible for identifying and monitoring the staff development relevant to the programme. This is done using the College Continuing Professional Development tool, rather than an appraisal system. The part-time teaching team is small and individual needs are identified through personal contact with the Course Coordinator and from teaching observations. All staff are required to hold a qualification higher than the course they are teaching, and support is provided to ensure that staff undertake relevant higher academic qualifications. Staff development records demonstrate a good mix of attendance and engagement with development opportunities of an academic, industrial and creative nature. The Course Coordinator and Course Administrator attend the annual University of Plymouth Colleges conference, as well as attending a variety of relevant training events throughout the year. Most recently, a personal planning software package was introduced, which required extensive training and is being cascaded to other staff. Staff professional development records maintain current and relevant contacts within the music industry and/or attending seminars, workshops or courses to enhance their technical knowledge of the latest industry-standard software and equipment.

How does the College ensure the sufficiency and accessibility of the learning resources the students need to achieve the intended learning outcomes for their programme?

42 The College ensures that there are sufficient and accessible learning resources for the Foundation Degree by using the specialist recording studio, Deep Blue Sound, to deliver the programme. The technical facilities are plentiful, accessible to students and of a very high order that enables effective group learning and independent project work. The team considers this to be good practice. Geographically, the location is close to the University so that students can easily avail themselves of the services on offer. Students confirm this view and, as described in paragraph 30, have only one concern relating to progression and the use of specialist resources

43 There is effective liaison between staff and the Course Coordinator to ensure that, when necessary, additional resources are made available. Deep Blue Sound's wider industry involvement means that it is constantly updating and improving its technical facilities, and the Foundation Degree students benefit both directly and indirectly from this environment.

The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities as required by the awarding body to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Core theme 3: Public information

What information is the College responsible for publishing about its HEFCE-funded higher education?

44 The College is responsible for producing marketing and publicity information related to the Foundation Degree, the Student Handbook and associated student guides. Responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of public information, publicity material and the correct application of the University's marketing policy rests with the Higher Education Coordinator, who also ensures that students receive a student handbook and the programme specification, which conforms to the requirements of the awarding body.

45 Public information, including the prospectus, is initially validated by the Course Coordinator on behalf of the College and is monitored by the Higher Education Coordinator. This is subsequently confirmed by the University. Marketing is carried out through the websites of both Deep Blue Sound and the College, using templates and guidelines from the awarding body, with final responsibility and sign-off undertaken by the University. The University of Plymouth Colleges faculty checks regularly the UCAS, College, Deep Blue Sound and University websites.

46 The College endeavours to operate in a paperless environment and, with the exception of one marketing flyer, approved by University of Plymouth Colleges, and the Employer Pack detailing requirements for work placements, the information for the programme is in electronic format. Version control of information for students such as the Student Handbook and student information guides is assured through the online system as only the current year's information is available. Students in the video submission, prior to the visit, and in a meeting with the team confirm that the accuracy of pre-arrival information relating to course content and technical resources exceeded their expectations. The accessibility of information provided on the College virtual learning site to enhance student learning and track student performance is identified as good practice.

47 The College uses the Deep Blue Sound website, as well as its own, to market the course and to provide comprehensive information to students on the course. The Foundation Degree pages on the Deep Blue Sound website are designed by the College team and are maintained by the Course Coordinator, who is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the pages. The College recognises the need to provide information in differing formats for students with a variety of learning difficulties, and students with visual disabilities are able to access information by using software clip-ons and screen colourings. The team commends the usefulness and accessibility of the pages relating to the Foundation Degree in providing relevant data, information and guidance to both students and tutors. The Student Handbook, student information guides and virtual learning site provide detailed information on a range of information relevant to students, including the programme specification, academic regulations, timetables and staff availability, marking practice and grading, return and retention of coursework, and tutorials and guidance materials such as 'Maximising your Mark', and this is identified as good practice. The online Student Handbook also provides a link to the University portal for further support materials and study guidance.

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?

48 There are adequate arrangements to check information for the single higher education programme in the College. The responsibility for assuring the accuracy and

completeness of information provided about the course rests with the Course Coordinator, who checks the website's contents regularly to ensure its accuracy and liaises with the University to ensure that their website also contains the correct information. The University's Academic Liaison Person is provided with access to the content of the College and Deep Blue Sound websites to ensure the validity of the information and that it is compliant with the requirements of the University. The College relies primarily on scrutiny of the information by the University to assure the effectiveness of the monitoring carried out by the Course Coordinator. However, the process is further supported by the Higher Education Coordinator at the College, who checks that the arrangements are operating effectively.

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 programme it delivers.

C Summary of findings from the Developmental engagement in assessment

49 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in October 2009. There were three lines of enquiry as follows:

Line of enquiry 1: How are marking schemes used in assessment practice by tutors to ensure accurate and consistent marking in line with national standards and awarding body requirements?

Line of enquiry 2: How are forms of assessment and evaluation developed and monitored to ensure that they are appropriate to the range of work-placed activities available?

Line of enquiry 3: To what extent does the College set assessment tasks that are aligned with industry requirements for creative practice?

50 The Developmental engagement team identified as good practice: the marking schemes applied during the assessment of creative practice, enabling staff to take full account of the understanding and mastering of technical skills learned by the students; the transparency of assessment information and student work on the virtual learning environment, including online submission and marking of interim formative work called 'milestones'; the opportunity for students to peer and self-assess, and by giving students the chance to compare themselves to benchmark levels. The team also found an appropriately wide and balanced range of assessment types that are clearly related to the learning outcomes and appropriate to the industry. The employers clearly recognised that students have a sound knowledge of the industry, together with strong and varied skills, and that the College has a commendable link with Joint Audio Media Education Services, which is a national forum for advising on industry requirements and teaching.

51 There were several advisable recommendations made following the Developmental engagement in assessment: to ensure that student work is marked and returned within the prescribed timescale; to increase the level of sampling of student work and to review internal moderation arrangements to ensure that final marks are secure. The College was also advised to develop a more formal process for approving and tracking changes to assessment tasks, to ensure they remain valid in terms of the programme specification. It was also recommended that the College consider ways of providing employers with contextual and transparent information for the Foundation Degree, including learning outcomes and protocols, to enable them to support their placement students and the placement module. In addition, the team reported that it would be desirable for the College to consider further ways in which it can increase opportunities for students to interact with

professional practitioners and to consider the means by which students at risk of non-completion of the workplace assignment can be further supported safely to completion.

D Foundation Degrees

52 There is one Foundation Degree programme in Sound and Music Technology. The College has a long history of involvement in music and percussion, but found it was unable to maintain relevant industry standards within the confines of a secondary school. The programme was developed in 2004, combining a partnership with the University of Plymouth and a private recording studio in the centre of Plymouth to provide widening participation opportunities for the school's students. It has given many young people the chance to progress to higher education that would otherwise not have done so.

53 The areas of good practice and recommendations listed below apply solely to the Foundation Degree offered by the College.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- there is a coherent approach to assessment across all modules, consistently designed and applied to support the calibration of academic standards and student learning opportunities in an online environment that includes online assignment briefs, milestone assessments, marking schemes, grading criteria, online submission and timely online feedback (paragraphs 13, 20, 22, 35, 36)
- the vocational nature of the course and industry-specific experience of the students, supported by the curriculum design, staff practitioner expertise and guest lectures, which is acknowledged by industry accreditation and effective in preparing students for employment within a fast-moving and competitive industry (paragraphs 23, 29, 37)
- the effective learning and pastoral support provided for students by teaching and administrative staff that is commended by students (paragraphs 34, 38)
- the accessible virtual learning site that acts as a comprehensive electronic environment for student learning and for the tracking of student performance (paragraphs 36, 46, 47)
- the College provides specialist equipment, software and studios of industry standard that are fully accessible to all students and are particularly effective in supporting group learning and independent project work (paragraph 42).

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

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

- ensure that external examiner reports are seen by students, in line with HEFCE requirements, to further enhance involvement in the management of their experience (paragraph 14)

Integrated quality and enhancement review

- strengthen the College's role in monitoring the Foundation Degree provision as specified in the agreement with the awarding body and establish more formal reporting mechanisms within the College (paragraph 15)
- establish formal module evaluations in line with the awarding body quality assurance processes (paragraph 25)
- ensure that there is a formal record of risk assessment carried out as part of health and safety monitoring for work placements (paragraph 40).

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

- consider a mechanism to better align teaching observation procedures to higher education pedagogy (paragraph 31).

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

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

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

Tor Bridge High action plan relating to the Summative review: November 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"> there is a coherent approach to assessment across all modules, consistently designed and applied to support the calibration of academic standards and student learning opportunities in an online environment that includes online assignment briefs, milestone assessments, marking schemes, grading criteria, online submission and timely online feedback (paragraphs 13, 20, 22, 35, 36) 	Annual monitoring of assignment briefs, milestones, marking schemes and timely marking and feedback (given by staff)	Autumn 2011	Course Leader	<p>Student assignments marked according to marking and feedback policy as stated by the University of Plymouth Colleges and implemented by Tor Bridge High</p> <p>Students report positively on effectiveness and transparency of assignment briefs, marking schemes and feedback given</p>	Higher Education Coordinator	<p>Positive staff feedback</p> <p>Marking completed in set timeframes</p> <p>Positive student feedback through student representatives, student surveys</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the vocational nature of the course and industry-specific experience of the students, supported by the curriculum design, staff practitioner expertise and guest lecturers, which is acknowledged by industry accreditation and effective in preparing students for employment within a fast-moving and competitive industry (paragraphs 23, 29, 37) 	<p>Further links created by work placements being available on the Tor Bridge High campus</p> <p>Guest lecture series to include more local practitioners, and wider range of expertise</p> <p>Continued relationship with industry accreditation</p>	Autumn 2011	Course Leader and Advanced Skills Teaching staff from Music in Tor Bridge High	<p>Two students carry out work placements with Tor Bridge High in summer term 2010</p> <p>Guest lecture series achieves high level of participation by both Foundation Degree students and local school leavers</p> <p>Continued industry accreditation</p>	Higher Education Coordinator	<p>Higher completion rate of widening participation students</p> <p>High attendance on guest lectures series</p> <p>Continued positive comments received from student surveys</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effective learning and pastoral support provided for students by teaching and administrative staff that is commended by students (paragraphs 34, 38) 	Staff continue to support students effectively, aided by their own continuing professional development	Autumn 2011	Course Leader	<p>High level of staff attendance on training provided both in-house and by the University of Plymouth Colleges</p> <p>Students know how to access wide range of support through electronic platform</p>	Higher Education Coordinator	<p>Student surveys continue to show high rates of satisfaction with course and staff</p> <p>Student representatives report high level of satisfaction with pastoral support in termly meetings</p>

				links and from staff		and electronic blogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the accessible virtual learning site that acts as a comprehensive electronic environment for student learning and for the tracking of student performance (paragraphs 36, 46, 47) 	Continued monitoring and updating of the virtual learning environment, both for Deep Blue Sound and the College	Autumn 2011	Course Leader	Students on track to complete all modules within deadlines set	Higher Education Coordinator	<p>High level of module completion shown in panel and board meetings</p> <p>Student surveys and feedback show understanding and continued use of the virtual learning environment</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College provides specialist equipment, software and studios of industry standard that are fully accessible to all students and are particularly effective in supporting group learning and independent project work (paragraph 42). 	<p>Continued maintenance of equipment and effective access to facilities and software to enable students to complete assignments</p> <p>Staff to continue professional development to train on all equipment, including new additions</p>	Autumn 2011	Course Leader	<p>Industry accreditation continues</p> <p>Students complete assignment briefs to good standards</p>	Higher Education Coordinator	Student representatives report no problems with equipment

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be advised to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that external examiner reports are seen by students, in line with HEFCE requirements, to further enhance involvement in the management of their experience (paragraph 14) 	<p>External examiner reports available on the virtual learning environment</p> <p>Study Skills Module Leader shows students how to access reports and benefits of doing so</p>	Spring 2011	Module Leader	Students gain further understanding of assessments and HEFCE requirements	Course Leader	Students able to access reports from the electronic learning platform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen the College's role in monitoring the Foundation Degree provision as specified in the agreement with the awarding body and establish more formal reporting mechanisms within the College (paragraph 15) 	<p>Termly report to Tor Bridge High Advisory Board of Governors in oral and written format</p> <p>Oral and written termly report to Senior Leaders Team</p>	Spring 2011	Higher Education Coordinator	Deeper understanding of Foundation Degree in wider school setting	Senior Leadership Team and Advisory Board of Governors	Minutes of meetings show governors and senior leaders have been made aware of changes to higher education relating to the Foundation Degree as well as any monitoring issues and successes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish formal module evaluations in line with the 	Questionnaires to be designed, enabling students to comment	Implemented summer 2011	Study Skills Module Leader	Students complete questionnaires for	Course Leader	Completed forms available in IQER section of the

awarding body quality assurance processes (paragraph 25)	on each module Delivered in Study Skills module as further tool to engage students with their own learning			each module, commenting on successes, and issues if present		virtual learning environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that there is a formal record of risk assessment carried out as part of health and safety monitoring for work placement (paragraph 40). 	Work Placement Module Leader to carry out training on risk assessment, and completion of formal reports	Spring 2010	Work Placement Module Leader	All work placements are assessed for risks to students	Higher Education Coordinator	Risk assessments available on the virtual learning environment show placements have been assessed prior to student activity
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed the following area where it would be desired to take action:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider a mechanism to better align teaching observation procedures to higher education pedagogy (paragraph 31). 	Higher Education Coordinator to undertake training provided by the University of Plymouth Colleges to be able to carry out lesson observations of staff teaching on the Foundation degree	Summer 2011	Higher Education Coordinator	Lesson observations and performance management cycle completed by end of summer term 2011	Senior Leadership Team	Lessons observed show match to higher education benchmarks

	Higher Education Coordinator to carry out performance management to align aspects of teaching with target setting					
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