



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**New College Stamford**

**March 2011**

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## **Preface**

The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to inform and encourage continual improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. As part of this mission, QAA undertakes reviews of higher education provision delivered in further education colleges. This process is known as Integrated quality and enhancement review (IQER).

## **Purpose of IQER**

Higher education programmes delivered by further education colleges (colleges) lead to awards made by higher education institutions or Edexcel. The awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their awards and assuring the quality of the students' learning opportunities. The purpose of IQER is, therefore, to safeguard the public interest in the academic standards and quality of higher education delivered in colleges. It achieves this by providing objective and independent information about the way in which colleges discharge their responsibilities within the context of their partnership agreements with awarding bodies. IQER focuses on three core themes: academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and public information.

## **The IQER process**

IQER is a peer review process. It is divided into two complementary stages: Developmental engagement and Summative review. In accordance with the published method, colleges with less than 100 full-time equivalent students funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may elect not to take part in Developmental engagements, but all HEFCE-funded colleges will take part in Summative review.

## **Developmental engagement**

Developmental engagements explore in an open and collegial way the challenges colleges face in specific areas of higher education provision. Each college's first, and often their only, Developmental engagement focuses on student assessment.

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

- a self-evaluation by the college
- an optional written submission by the student body
- a preparatory meeting between the college and the IQER coordinator several weeks before the Developmental engagement visit
- the Developmental engagement visit, which normally lasts two days
- the evaluation of the extent to which the college manages effectively its responsibilities for the delivery of academic standards and the quality of its higher education provision, plus the arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of public information it is responsible for publishing about its higher education
- the production of a written report of the team's findings.

To promote a collegial approach, Developmental engagement teams include up to two members of staff from the further education college under review. They are known as nominees for this process.

## Summative review

Summative review addresses all aspects of a college's HEFCE-funded higher education provision and provides judgements on the management and delivery of this provision against core themes one and two, and a conclusion against core theme three.

Summative review shares the main elements of Developmental engagement described above. Summative review teams however, are composed of the IQER coordinator and QAA reviewers. They do not include nominees.

## Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, IQER teams carry out a number of activities, including:

- reviewing the college's self-evaluation and its internal procedures and documents
- reviewing the optional written submission from students
- asking questions of relevant staff
- talking to students about their experiences.

IQER teams' expectations of colleges are guided by a nationally agreed set of reference points, known as the Academic Infrastructure. These are published by QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, 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 New College Stamford carried out in March 2011

As a result of its investigations, the Summative review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership 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:

- on the FdA Lens Based Photo Media students present their work at the same time as those from the University of Lincoln undertaking the same assessment, providing a valuable opportunity for comparing levels of achievement and getting comprehensive peer and staff feedback
- staff provide students with high quality written feedback that gives effective guidance for future learning.

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

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

- ensure that the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group develop their role to provide and document a coordinated and effective oversight of the provision
- enhance the student experience on the HNC Business Studies by ensuring that students have the necessary resources to support their learning, and, in particular for the Research Project, have the knowledge and skills needed to undertake the module prior to its commencement
- make planning procedures more proactive, ensuring student learning is always supported by suitable resources.

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

- enhance the procedures for checking programme handbooks to ensure all provide complete and accurate information and that the versions in hard copy and on the virtual learning environment are the same.

## 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 New College Stamford. 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 Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln, Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Lincoln and The University of Northampton. The review was carried out by Ms Clare Davison, Ms Patricia Millner and Professor Robert Moreton (reviewers) and Dr Peter Steer (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, separate meetings with staff including awarding body representatives, employers and students, the student written submission, QAA review reports and 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 New College Stamford is a medium-sized further education college situated in South Lincolnshire. It attracts students from about a 30-mile radius. The College's mission is 'to provide the means for its learners to achieve their full potential for progression and employability and to support the local and national economy for the future'. Currently there are about 1,900 full-time further education students undertaking a wide range of programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3 and below. There are approximately 2,000 students taking similar part-time programmes in Stamford and Spalding. The College has recently expanded its range of further education programmes to cover every vocational sector. Higher education is all delivered at the college site in Stamford.

5 The College has seven curriculum areas, all managed by a head of curriculum. Higher education programmes are offered in five of these areas: Academic Studies; Creative and Performing Arts; Early Years, Health and Social Care; Hair and Beauty, Business and IT; and Sports and Public Services. The provision is delivered alongside related further education provision. Student numbers are partly directly and partly indirectly funded. Enrolment was 193 full-time equivalents in 2009-10, consisting of 172 full-time and 42 part-time students. In 2010-11 there are 151 full-time and 58 part-time students, representing 180 full-time equivalent students. The higher education provision offered by the College is as follows (full-time equivalent student numbers are in brackets):

### **Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln**

- Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (20.5)
- FdA Children's Services (27)

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- FdA Learning Practitioners (14)

### **Edexcel**

- HNC Business Studies (3.5)

### **Leeds Metropolitan University**

- FdA Beauty and Spa Management (5)

### **University of Lincoln**

- BA Fine Art (8)
- BA Graphic Design (24)
- FdA Lens Based Photo Media (17)
- FdA Performing Arts (9)

### **The University of Northampton**

- FdA Illustration (16)
- FdA Leadership and Management (17)
- FdA Sports Development (19).

## **Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies**

6 All the partnership agreements provide clear guidance as to the responsibilities of the partners. Some of the provision is directly funded by HEFCE and, at present, some programmes are indirectly funded by the Universities of Lincoln and Northampton. The awarding bodies have various approaches to the oversight of provision. Both Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln and The University of Northampton provide assessments for Foundation Degrees, which are used and assessed by the College. The College produces its own assessments for the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector validated by Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln. Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Lincoln give the responsibility for the setting of assessments to the College. The details of moderation procedures also vary between awarding bodies. All the awarding bodies require the College to provide the resources to support learning, although students are entitled to use some resources provided by the universities.

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

7 With a cap on student numbers directly funded by HEFCE, and partner universities capping indirect numbers, there were no new programmes and a slight decrease in student numbers for 2010-11 compared with 2009-10. An increase had originally been planned within the College's strategy. The University of Lincoln is withdrawing indirect funding from September 2011. As a consequence, the BA Fine Art will be discontinued. The University of Northampton is withdrawing some indirect funding from September 2011. The FdA Beauty and Spa Management will not run in 2011-12.



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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team and did so in December 2010. The submission summarises the student feedback from end-of-year surveys conducted in April 2010 and from focus groups held during November 2010. The focus groups covered four programmes associated with three awarding bodies. Student representatives indicated that they were content with the final document produced by College staff. Students met the team during the review and also contributed to the preparatory meeting. The team found all the students' contributions useful.

## **B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education**

### **Core theme 1: Academic standards**

#### **How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?**

9 The College system for managing and delivering higher education is clearly based on its partnership agreements with the four partner universities and Edexcel. There are clear lines of reporting both within the College and to its awarding bodies. The College has adopted a college-wide approach to quality matters covering both further and higher education. For example, the Quality Improvement Group oversees the production and evaluation of feedback from all students. Heads of curriculum manage provision covering both further and higher education. Responsibility for day-to-day management of courses rests with programme leaders. For university-validated courses, each programme leader liaises directly with the link tutor. These procedures provide an effective basis for the maintenance of academic standards.

10 The Developmental engagement advised that there should be an enhanced oversight of external examiner reports and programme annual reports. The Higher Education Quality and Development Group, chaired by the Director of Curriculum (Higher Education) undertakes both tasks. Members of this committee also include the Director of Quality Improvement and the heads of curriculum with higher education responsibilities. The Director of Curriculum (Higher Education) and the programme leaders meet once a term as the Higher Education Working Group to review operational matters. In addition to giving an oversight of the operational and delivery aspects of the provision, the meetings provide an opportunity to share good practice, to organise events in common and for information to be shared across the College. The senior management team receives the minutes of the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group. The Director of Curriculum (Higher Education) reports to the Deputy Principal on a regular basis and prepares an annual report for the College governors. Minutes of the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group show that both are developing an important role, but full articulation of the nature of the discussions or the actions to be undertaken is not always present, which reduces effectiveness. The interrelationship between the committees is not always clear from the minutes and relies heavily on the role of the Director of Curriculum (Higher Education). The team considers it advisable to ensure that the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group develop their role to provide and document a coordinated and effective oversight of the provision.

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

11 The College has an appropriate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure on matters relevant to academic standards. When introducing new programmes not run at a partner university, for example the FdA Beauty and Spa Management, the components of the Academic Infrastructure are directly addressed. The College uses the Academic Infrastructure effectively in producing validation documents for new programmes and in the construction of programme and module specifications. Most programmes are also delivered in the partner universities and the College makes minor amendments to make them suitable for local requirements. The universities have already used the Academic Infrastructure when creating the original programmes.

12 The Academic Infrastructure is thus embedded in policies and procedures relevant to the provision through both College and awarding body procedures. Staff confirm that changes to the Academic Infrastructure are communicated to them through formal staff development sessions, email communication and working group meetings.

## **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?**

13 The College has clearly defined relationships with its awarding bodies. Each university confirms that it has no concerns about the College's ability to ensure the standards of its programmes. Awarding bodies have different means of liaising with the College to ensure the requisite standards are met. All the universities nominate link lecturers, some of whom visit the College, and all work with programme leaders at an operational level. The Director of Curriculum (Higher Education) attends regular meetings at most of the universities and feeds back to the relevant committees and programme leaders. There is an effective annual programme monitoring procedure.

14 Processes and procedures for ensuring the standards of assessment are effective. The Developmental engagement recommended that evidence of moderation be formally recorded on all sets of student work. This is now in place. There are transparent and effective systems of internal verification and moderation on all programmes. These ensure that all aspects of assessment are clearly linked to the intended learning outcomes. External examiners' reports confirm that student work is of an appropriate academic standard. The College considers external examiners' reports in detail and formulates appropriate action plans. College arrangements for examination boards are effective.

15 For several years, the practice on the HNC Business Studies is for common teaching of year 1 and year 2 students. Particularly for the Research Project module, this means that some year 1 students learn without the benefit of knowledge and skills from preparatory material. This puts these students at a disadvantage in fully understanding the intended learning outcomes and maximising their level of achievement. Also, students on the HNC Business Studies have a very limited option choice, even though a large number of options are indicated in the course handbook. Listing only those options with a substantial chance of running would help students to make informed choices.

16 Foundation Degrees involve appropriate levels of employer engagement and work-related learning. Some programmes, for example the FdA Learning Practitioners, involve significant placement learning. Others, for example the FdA Illustration, make extensive use of industry visits and live briefs. Staff maintain responsibility for summative assessment, although several courses provide opportunities for employers to contribute to formative assessments. The FdA Lens Based Photo Media programme includes a joint

assessment event with the University of Lincoln that is based on student presentations. Students from both institutions, having undertaken the same piece of work, are assessed together, providing a valuable opportunity for comparing levels of achievement and receiving comprehensive feedback from other students and both sets of staff. Students met by the team indicate that this is very helpful to their learning. The team considers this joint assessment event on the FdA Lens Based Photo Media to be good practice.

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

17 The College has a clear commitment to staff development, which provides effective support for the delivery of the provision. The College organises four dedicated continuous professional development days each academic year. Part of the time is used to ensure that teaching and assessment meets appropriate academic standards. An example is the training on how to support learners on academic writing. Staff attend forums or workshops at partner institutions, for example on producing annual monitoring reports and delivering particular modules. College staff also join with university colleagues in carrying out moderation and standardisation exercises on some programmes. The Developmental engagement recommended that all staff development should be formally recorded. This is now in place.

18 Staff development needs are identified as part of the staff appraisal process. The Director of Quality Improvement holds a budget to enable individuals to attend conferences and external events. Staff have also been supported on master's programmes. All College staff are required to undertake ten days per year of scholarly activity. Examples include staff from art and design pursuing their studio work and those from performing arts participating in public performances. All new members of staff are provided with mentors. The College requires staff new to teaching to undertake a recognised teacher training qualification. Students appreciate the professional practice demonstrated by staff.

**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?**

19 The College has clear agreements with its awarding bodies. It is responsible for the quality of teaching and learning, student support, student recruitment and induction, learning accommodation, resources and work-based learning placement. Some university partners, like The University of Northampton, provide extensive access to their resources.

20 Procedures for delegating and reporting the responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities include those described in paragraphs 9, 10, 13 and 14. They include evaluation of student withdrawal, induction and student attendance. College reporting procedures and staff appraisal outcomes inform the resource bids that heads of curriculum make to the senior management team. These bids cover both further and higher education.

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

21 The College's procedures for fulfilling its responsibilities to the awarding body for the quality of learning opportunities consist of those described in paragraphs 9, 10, 13, 14 and 20. The success of policies is evaluated through feedback from students and input from staff, including through the annual monitoring procedures, external examiners and university link tutors. Staff value the support they receive from the link tutors.

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

22 The College has mapped, and has been guided by, the sections of the Academic Infrastructure relevant to the quality of learning opportunities. This is in addition to any guidance provided by its university partners. Staff provided examples of how the *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students* and *Section 8: Career education, information, advice and guidance* have been used successfully to modify and update practice.

23 Both academic staff and staff providing central services use the guidance in the Academic Infrastructure. The College keeps them well informed about changes to the Academic Infrastructure. Some of the professional development provided by university partners to staff providing central services reflects the requirements of the *Code of practice*.

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

24 The College's teaching and learning strategy is embedded in a number of different documents. Staff are well informed about the latest teaching and learning practice. The College encourages them to undertake professional teaching and management qualifications by enrolling on its suite of programmes.

25 Procedures for monitoring and enhancing learning and teaching are effective. The teaching observation scheme is a primary mechanism for improving delivery. It is closely linked to the college staff appraisal system. A peer observation scheme is also in place. Staff value these schemes. The recruitment process ensures that staff are appropriately qualified to teach higher education programmes. The universities check the qualifications and professional development activity of staff to ensure that those delivering their programmes are appropriately qualified.

26 As recommended by the Developmental engagement, the College has developed the use of the virtual learning environment. It is a source of programme information and learning materials and is easily accessible off-campus. Students value this information. Overall, use of the virtual learning environment by staff and students is high, although it does vary significantly by module. The College is developing an e-learning policy.

27 Student feedback, including that on learning and teaching, is actively sought at both programme and college level. Feedback includes questionnaires and focus groups. Further focus groups are held to clarify points that students have raised when completing questionnaires. These provide valuable information on the student experience. The feedback received is analysed by the Quality Improvement Department. Heads of curriculum must respond by producing actions plans to remedy any concerns and also indicate to the students what action has been taken. Students can raise issues with their tutor at any time, which they value. Student representatives also take concerns raised by their peers to relevant committees, but often are unable to attend these meetings.

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

28 Responsibility for the recruitment of students rests with the College. Students come from a wide geographical area. Many students indicate that they value the opportunity to study locally as commitments mean it is the only option available to them. There is a considerable amount of progression from the further education provision within the College.

29 Staff support students effectively from their initial acceptance on the programme and throughout their studies. The induction process provides comprehensive and valuable information. There is an effective tutorial system which offers comprehensive academic support. This includes one-to-one tutorials that are a valued feature of the student experience. Tutors communicate effectively with students in a number of ways including email. Students value their ability to seek support from staff at short notice.

30 External examiners, for example in the 2009-10 report for the HNC Business, indicate that the written feedback given to students is of a high quality. Staff provide detailed feedback that is closely related to the learning outcomes. Students met by the team indicate that the feedback is valuable and effective in guiding their future learning. The team considers that the high quality written feedback given to students gives effective guidance for future learning and is good practice. Feedback is timely. Students also benefit from helpful verbal feedback.

31 The Developmental engagement recommended that the College should further develop the use of personal development planning. It recognised the good practice on the Diploma for Teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector. The College has met the Developmental engagement recommendation in full. Students met by the team confirm that they value this activity in helping them to reflect on practice.

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

32 Staff development procedures are described in paragraphs 17 and 18. Lecturers and support staff are able to attend staff development relevant to a number of areas, including student support, careers advice and admissions. For example, the 'Learning Landscapes' conference at the University of Lincoln and the support staff meetings for partners at The University of Northampton provide valuable staff development on student advice and guidance.

### **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?**

33 Resource planning is integrated with that for further education. Resourcing requirements are identified through Final Business Profiles produced by heads of curriculum each year. These are considered by the senior management team on an annual basis. A grading system is used to prioritise resource requirements across the College. The senior management team considers the resource requirements for new programmes before validation. The universities consider resources as part of the validation and approval process. The Edexcel programme approval process includes resource requirements, and there is monitoring on an annual basis by external examiners.

34 Students confirm that resourcing has recently improved in some cases, for example the improved access to the virtual learning environment. However, students met by the team

and internal college surveys indicate that resources do not always provide sufficient support for their learning. For example, there are concerns about the availability of suitable teaching rooms; the lack of access to the Higher Education Centre; the lack of storage facilities for student work on the FD Illustration; the noisy environment in the Higher Education Centre, due to it not being used exclusively for the provision of higher education; and the relatively slow way in which some equipment, books and software issues have been addressed. At a meeting with the team, staff on the HNC Business confirmed that there are still issues around the provision of adequate rooms and equipment for the programme. External examiners on the HNC Business, BA Graphic Design and BA Fine Art indicate problems with particular aspects of physical resources in their 2010 reports. The team considers it advisable to enhance the student experience on the HNC Business by ensuring that students have the necessary resources to support their learning, and, in particular for the Research Project, have the knowledge and skills needed to undertake the module prior to its commencement. Annual reports indicate examples of long-running issues with the provision of particular resources, for example a widely-used statistical software package. While some resourcing issues are being resolved, the team concludes that resource planning mechanisms are not sufficiently proactive to provide suitable resources at all times. The team considers it advisable to make planning procedures more proactive, ensuring student learning is always supported by suitable resources.

**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 The College is responsible for publishing advertising and marketing material about the provision. All material is approved by the awarding universities before publication as indicated in the partnership agreements. The main sources of information are the College's website and a separate higher education prospectus.

36 The prospectus is clear and provides useful information on additional support, money matters, personal and academic support, the application process and careers guidance. Each programme has a single-page entry and contains standard information. The prospectus is available in a larger text version upon request.

37 The pages on the website are taken from the prospectus. There are differences, however, between the programmes listed in the prospectus and those on the website, due to the removal of validation and student numbers by the University of Lincoln, necessitating modification of some programme titles, and the switch to Edexcel as the awarding body. The website contains the most up-to-date listing. The College is updating its information to reflect these changes. Staff are interviewing applicants and explaining the changes.

38 The College does not produce separate programme leaflets. Staff print off programme information from the website, which ensures only the most up-to-date advice is provided. There is little printed information about possibilities for accreditation of prior learning, except for a usefully detailed leaflet produced for the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

39 Students receive a programme handbook and module guides. The College publishes a list of the minimum requirements for the content of programme handbooks. In response to a recommendation of the Developmental engagement, programme handbooks now contain information on student appeals and complaints. Students receive programme specifications, usually as part of the programme handbook. The arrangement for the production of programme handbooks and module guides differs between the awarding universities. In the case of Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln and The University of Northampton, programme handbooks and module guides are provided, which can be adapted by programmes to meet the College's local requirements. For programmes validated by the University of Lincoln and Leeds Metropolitan University, the College staff produce the handbooks, which are approved by the partner university before being made available to students. Leeds Metropolitan University provides a template to aid this process.

**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?**

40 In response to the Developmental engagement recommendation, the College has procedures in place to ensure that the prospectus is accurate and complete. The Marketing Department collates information about the programmes to be offered in consultation with the staff in curriculum areas and the Director of Curriculum (Higher Education). The text is in a standard format. The draft is checked by programme leaders and university partners before going to print.

41 Focus groups and surveys provide feedback on published information. They indicate that students would like more detailed information about programmes in the prospectus and website. A lack of information about the progression opportunities from Foundation Degrees has also been highlighted. For example, students on the FdA Sports Development learnt recently that the degree in sports science was not available to them after they had been told by staff from The University of Northampton that this was possible. The College is aware of students' views and in response is working to develop the prospectus and website to include more information and case studies.

42 Programme handbooks are variable in quality and content. While all adhered to the College's minimum content requirements, some are clear and informative, for example that for the FdA for Learning Practitioners, while others are less so with much less detailed information. In the HNC Business handbook there is misleading information indicating a wide range of choice of specialist modules, when, in reality, the very small number of students on the programme does not allow a free selection. The handbook for the FdA Beauty and Spa Management on the virtual learning environment was from a lower-level programme in the same curriculum area. After this mistake was rectified during the review visit, the team found that this course handbook was incomplete, with some sections missing. The team considers it desirable to enhance the procedures for checking programme handbooks to ensure all provide complete and accurate information and that the versions in hard copy and on the virtual learning environment are the same.

**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**

43 The Developmental engagement in assessment took place in September 2009. It addressed the following lines of enquiry agreed with the College:

**Line of enquiry 1:** How is assessment used to test academic standards consistently across different curriculum areas, validating institutions, awarding bodies and lecturers?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How is the College assured that the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback, for both formative and summative assessment, facilitates learning and progression?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How does the College ensure that information on assessment is accurate and communicated effectively to all students and other relevant parties?

44 The areas of good practice identified during the Developmental engagement were the action planning that supports academic standards and development on the BA Fine Art, BA Graphic Design and FdA Lens Based Photo Media; the high quality feedback to students; the innovative use of a web-based blog on the BA Graphic Design, which supports effectively student assessment including by peers; the timely return of coursework which promotes learning and progression; the comprehensive electronic provision of information on the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector and BA Graphic Design; and the extensive and valuable information that staff give students at interview and induction.

45 The Developmental engagement indicated that it was advisable to enhance the College's oversight of its higher education provision; to make certain that all sources of information on assessment use the correct programme title; to ensure that all programme handbooks meet the minimum standards set by the College; and to ensure that all higher education students have proper access to the virtual learning environment. It also considered it desirable to consider making it compulsory for evidence of moderation to be formally recorded on all sets of student work; to ensure that staff development is formally recorded; and to develop the use of personal development planning.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

46 The College has eight Foundation Degrees. Four programmes, the FdA Beauty and Spa Management, FdA Illustration, FdA Learning Practitioners, and FdA Performing Arts, started in September 2009, representing a significant increase in the scope and size of the provision. This expansion was a significant element of the College's Strategic Plan. Total enrolment in 2009-10 was 124 full-time and no part-time students. For 2010-11, total enrolment is 119 full-time and 10 part-time students, giving a total of 124 full-time equivalents. Due to a reduction in funding, student numbers are likely to fall in 2011-12. The FdA Beauty and Spa Management will not run in 2011-12. For 2011-12 some curriculum areas, for example the FdA Lens Based Photo Media, are changing from Foundation Degrees to HNDs.

47 Overall, the Foundation Degree provision is managed effectively, although the team considers that there are areas where the College may wish to take action. The level of support for the provision from the awarding bodies varies considerably according to the individual contracts. The number of students on some programmes is quite low.

48 All the team's findings and conclusions, except for the second advisable recommendation referring to the HNC Business Studies, are relevant to Foundation Degrees.



## E Conclusions and summary of judgements

49 The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in New College Stamford'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 Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln, Edexcel, Leeds Metropolitan University, the University of Lincoln and The University of Northampton.

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

- on the FdA Lens Based Photo Media students present their work at the same time as those from the University of Lincoln undertaking the same assessment, providing a valuable opportunity for comparing levels of achievement and getting comprehensive peer and staff feedback (paragraph 16)
- staff provide students with high quality written feedback that gives effective guidance for future learning (paragraph 30).

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

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

- ensure that the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group develop their role to provide and document a coordinated and effective oversight of the provision (paragraph 10)
- enhance the student experience on the HNC Business Studies by ensuring that students have the necessary resources to support their learning, and, in particular for the Research Project, have the knowledge and skills needed to undertake the module prior to its commencement (paragraphs 15, 34)
- make planning procedures more proactive, ensuring student learning is always supported by suitable resources (paragraph 34).

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

- enhance the procedures for checking programme handbooks to ensure all provide complete and accurate information and that the versions in hard copy and on the virtual learning environment are the same (paragraph 42).

54 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.

55 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.

## Integrated quality and enhancement review

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

New College Stamford action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2011						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on the FdA Lens Based Photo Media students present their work at the same time as those from the University of Lincoln undertaking the same assessment, providing a valuable opportunity for comparing levels of achievement and getting comprehensive peer and staff feedback (paragraph 16)</li> </ul>	Where an equivalent programme of study is delivered at a partner university we will endeavour to undertake joint assessment to benefit from feedback from peers	April 2012	Programme leaders	Improved links with partner universities for the purposes of joint assessment	Higher Education Quality and Development Group and Higher Education Working Group	Annual Monitoring Reviews, student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staff provide students with high quality written feedback that</li> </ul>	Sharing good practice event to be held across higher education provision	November 2011	Director of Curriculum (Higher Education)	High quality feedback maintained and further enhanced	Higher Education Quality and Development Group	Student feedback, review of assessed work, feedback from

gives effective guidance for future learning (paragraph 30).	to enable higher education staff to share ideas and ensure good practice is maintained					external examiners
<b>Advisable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group develop their role to provide and document a coordinated and effective oversight of the provision (paragraph 10)</li> </ul>	Ensure all documentation from the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group is shared at each meeting (minutes to be detailed and shared across both groups)	October 2011	Director of Curriculum (Higher Education) and Director of Quality Improvement	Improved communications between the Higher Education Quality and Development Group and the Higher Education Working Group	Senior Management Team	Annual monitoring reviews, staff feedback, minutes from meetings
	Ensure all actions and follow-up from the meetings are appropriately recorded on the meeting minutes	October 2011	Director of Curriculum (Higher Education) and Director of Quality Improvement	More detailed minutes, showing actions and outcomes		
	Director of Quality Improvement to chair future Higher Education Quality and Development	April 2011	Director of Quality Improvement	Director of Quality Improvement will chair future meetings and agenda to be set	Senior Management Team	Minutes from meetings

	Group meetings			jointly with Director of Curriculum (Higher Education)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhance the student experience on the HNC Business Studies by ensuring that students have the necessary resources to support their learning, and, in particular, for the Research Project, have the knowledge and skills needed to undertake the module prior to its commencement (paragraphs 15, 34)</li> </ul>	<p>In-line with the new syllabus, review the scheme of work (planning of units) to ensure students have the necessary knowledge and skills required to undertake all modules</p>	June 2011	Programme leader	Improved programme plan	Head of Curriculum	Annual monitoring reviews and student feedback
	<p>Review accommodation and resources for students on HNC Business Studies to ensure rooming and resources is appropriate to support learning</p>	June 2011	Programme leader and Head of Curriculum	Improved accommodation and resources	Higher Education Quality and Development Group	Annual monitoring reviews and student feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make planning procedures more proactive, ensuring student learning is always supported by suitable resources (paragraph 34).</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure resource planning for higher education provision is more rigorous and is undertaken as part of the business planning cycle for 2011-12 to allow for</p>	May 2011	Heads of curriculum	Improved accommodation and resources	Higher Education Quality and Development Group	Annual monitoring reviews, external examiner reports, staff feedback and student feedback

	all higher education resource requests to be considered					
<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Success indicators</b>	<b>Reported to</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enhance the procedures for checking programme handbooks to ensure all provide complete and accurate information and that the versions in hard copy and on the virtual learning environment are the same (paragraph 42).</li> </ul>	Ensure all programme handbooks are checked for completeness and accuracy in hard-copy and on the virtual learning environment	August 2011	Heads of curriculum	All programme handbooks are accurate and complete in hard copy and on the virtual learning environment	Higher Education Quality and Development Group	Observation and checking by Director of Curriculum (Higher Education)

**RG 725 06/11**

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