Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

Birmingham Metropolitan College

May 2011

SR 60/2010

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 Birmingham Metropolitan College carried out in May 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:

- the systematic and ongoing mapping of College policies provides staff with a sound understanding of the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure
- the College's commitment to, and facilitation of, staff development and scholarly activity through the MetHigher initiative has established a vibrant community of higher education practitioners
- the College's effective management of its complex partnership arrangements with a large number of awarding bodies provides good opportunities for communication and interaction
- the lesson observation process includes a development plan for staff, and the recently introduced peer review practice provides a sound basis for the improvement of teaching quality
- the use of the virtual learning environment on the DTLLS /Certificate in Education programme provides a dynamic and interactive learning tool
- the support and induction process for new staff, including the opportunity for interactive peer dialogue and discussion, ensures that they are well prepared to teach at higher education level.

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 Programme Management Committee meetings are consistently held, undertake regular analysis of student retention, progression and achievement, and that the discussion and outcomes are recorded in detail with a clear action plan
- develop explicit terms of reference for the Academic Standards Committee to further enhance its role as the senior higher education standards committee, and ensure that the annual monitoring process robustly analyses student data and provides a full critical evaluation
- review the Assessment Policy to ensure that examination boards for higher national programmes have clear terms of reference, constitution and membership
- further develop the policy for undertaking thematic audits to ensure that there is

- greater rigour to the process and that timely actions are undertaken
- establish a systematic policy for gathering anonymous student feedback at module level to provide additional information on the quality of teaching and learning
- ensure that the procedure for checking and confirming the accuracy and completeness of student handbooks aligns with the clear policy the College adopts for the signing off of marketing and promotional material
- take immediate remedial action to ensure that student handbooks contain full, accurate and current information
- produce, and make readily available to students, programme specifications for all programmes including higher nationals.

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

- clarify for staff and students the dual role of academic and pastoral tutorials, for full and part-time students, and ensure that the policy is embedded and monitored
- introduce as a key priority a clear strategy for supporting and developing a more consistent use of the virtual learning environment as part of the College's teaching and learning strategy.

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 Birmingham Metropolitan College. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Aston University, Birmingham City University, De Montfort University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Staffordshire University, the University of Wolverhampton, the University of Worcester, and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mr Mark Cooper, Professor David Eastwood, Mrs Patricia Millner (reviewers), and Mr Simon Ives (coordinator).

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

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

4   Birmingham Metropolitan College was established on 01 August 2009 as a result of the merger between Matthew Boulton College of Further and Higher Education, and Sutton Coldfield College. The College has three main campuses: Matthew Boulton in central Birmingham, James Watt in Great Barr, and Sutton Coldfield. The College strategic vision is to be 'An Inspirational organisation that delivers excellence'. The College mission statement is 'To provide the highest quality education and training that is inclusive, matches and supports the needs of our diverse learners and the local and regional economy'. Birmingham Metropolitan College attracts students from all over the West Midlands, nationally, and overseas. It is a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Integrated Manufacturing Technology and a partner in the Centre of Vocational Excellence in Management and Professional Services. The College offers a comprehensive choice of courses for 16-19 year olds, adult learners and companies, ranging from GCSEs, NVQs, A Levels, higher education and professional qualifications.

5   The College enrols higher education students on 30 programmes of study, and currently has eight higher education partners. Higher education programmes are delivered in six of the College's vocational directorates with a range of qualifications at levels 4 and 5 on the FHEQ. In 2010-11 the College recruited 1,146 higher education students. Sixty-two per cent of students are enrolled on part-time programmes and 38 per cent on full-time programmes, amounting to a total of 560 full-time equivalents. The recruitment trend is of an increase in full-time student enrolments and a decrease in part-time students. Of current enrolments, approximately 38 per cent of students study at Matthew Boulton Campus; 51 per cent attend Sutton Coldfield Campus; and 7 per cent of students attend James Watt

Campus. Two new programmes were offered in 2009-10: HND Creative Media Production (Computer Games Animation) and FdSc Logistics.

6   The higher education awards at the College funded by HEFCE are listed below under their awarding bodies followed by the number of full-time equivalent students.

Aston University

- FdSc Counselling Studies (14)
- FdEng Electronic and Control Engineering (31)
- FdA HE and FE Management and Administration (8)
- FdSc Health and Social Care (3)
- FdEng Manufacturing Engineering (26)
- FdSc Logistics

Birmingham City University

- FdSc ICT (31)
- HNC Business and Management (11)
- HND 3D Design Crafts (2)
- HND Business and Management (45)
- HND Fine Art (13)
- HND Graphic Design (1)
- HND Legal Studies (54)
- HND Media and Communication (18)

Edexcel

- HNC Building Services (6)
- HNC Business (6)
- HND Business (56)
- HND Graphic Design (43)
- HND Creative Media Production (Computer Games Animation) (14)
- HND Performing Arts (Performance) (10)

De Montfort University

- FdSc Dental Technology (13)

Staffordshire University

- FdA Education (Teaching Assistants) (16)

Manchester Metropolitan University

- FdSc Dental Technology (5)

University of Wolverhampton

- Certificate in Education/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (45)
- FdSc Pharmaceutical Technology (2)
- FdSc Sport and Exercise Science (37)

- HND Forensic Science (20)
- Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (11)

University of Worcester

- FdA Early Childhood (Sector Endorsed) (4)
- FdA Early Years (15)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7   The College has strategic partnerships with three local universities, Aston University, Birmingham City University and the University of Wolverhampton, and further partnership agreements with the University of Worcester, Manchester Metropolitan University, De Montfort University and Staffordshire University. Some programmes delivered by the College are franchised to a range of further education colleges, others are delivered in a consortium with the universities' partners and others are validated for delivery only at the College. The College offers a range of higher national programmes in partnership with Edexcel.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8   In 2008 a Developmental engagement in assessment was undertaken at Matthew Boulton College. No Developmental engagement has taken place at Sutton Coldfield College prior to the Summative review. In August 2009 a merger between Matthew Boulton College and Sutton Coldfield College precipitated a strategic review of the management of higher education for both colleges. The colleges began working in strategic partnership in 2006, prior to the Developmental engagement at Matthew Boulton College, with a shared strategic plan under one management structure. A major review of higher education provision took place in 2007 which highlighted areas of duplication, potential growth and rationalisation. Since then the higher education provision has been driven by a joint strategy through a distinct higher education management team and has been underpinned by shared higher education policies and procedures.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9   Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. Their written submission was based on a questionnaire distributed to student representatives across all programmes and feedback was gathered through a student coordinator. Responses were received from 40 student cohorts and 21 programmes across the delivery sites. During the review, the team held a productive meeting with students from a wide range of programmes.

B   Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

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

10   The College has established a clear higher education management structure to support and maintain the standards of its provision. A distinct cross-college team provides a coherent infrastructure to help ensure a consistency of approach, and to manage higher education policies and procedures. Senior management responsibility for higher education rests with the Executive Director for Academic Affairs and Quality Improvement, a member of the College's senior executive. The Associate Director for Higher Education Partnership, Contracts and Quality oversees quality assurance arrangements and coordinates activities at an operational level, supported by a dedicated administration team including a business support coordinator and four administrators on different campuses. Strategic matters relating to academic standards are reported to the Senior Management Team and College governors through the Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee, some of whose members have experience in the higher education sector.

11   All higher education programmes are managed within six vocational directorates led by assistant principals. The Directorate Management Team is ultimately responsible for operational delivery within the curriculum areas. Directorates with large numbers of higher education students have a specific manager responsible for quality. The Associate Director of Higher Education works closely with staff at directorate level, as well as with course teams. Every course has a designated programme leader. There are strong links between the cross-college quality improvement directorate, the Higher Education Assistant Director, the vocational directorates, staff and programme teams.

12   The College has developed its own overarching higher education quality assurance system. A number of specific policies underpin the quality enhancement process. These relate to academic standards, admissions, assessment, academic misconduct, ethical approval and peer review.

13   The Academic Standards Policy describes the requirements of annual monitoring and review. At course level ongoing monitoring of academic standards and quality enhancement is provided by programme teams. The policy requires course teams to hold a minimum of three Programme Management Committee meetings each year. Terms of reference, membership, and responsibilities are well defined and there is clear guidance on the standing items to be considered at meetings. Membership of the committees includes the programme leader, teaching staff, student representatives, an employer, the link tutor from the relevant university and the Assistant Director of Higher Education. Minutes are forwarded for consideration and action to directorate management and to the Associate Director for Higher Education, and inform the development of the annual monitoring report. However, the team found that while the model for the Programme Management Committees is sound, meetings are not always consistently held. Attendance is irregular and minutes do not always provide a full record of discussions, nor do they identify clear and timely actions. There is little evidence of thorough consideration of student retention, progression and achievement. The team considers it is advisable for the College to ensure that the Programme Management Committee meetings are consistently held, undertake regular

analysis of student retention, progression and achievement, and that the discussion and outcomes are recorded in detail with a clear action plan.

14   Programme annual monitoring reports are prepared by course teams in the final part of the academic year. There is a College report template which has been accepted by the majority of the awarding bodies, who also have oversight of the annual monitoring process. Reports, however, provide little evidence of effective use of data to analyse academic standards and student achievement, and not all reports give sufficient consideration to the comments provided by external examiners. Some of the finalised reports were incomplete and provide little critical and evaluative commentary. Action plans are not always clear and sometimes lack clear timeframes. The team agrees with the College's acknowledgement in its self-evaluation for the need to provide staff training to increase the evaluative and critical content of the annual monitoring reports. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that programme annual monitoring reports provide a robust basis for the review and enhancement of programmes.

15   The College has an Academic Standards Committee, although it has no explicit terms of reference, and no clear role in taking an oversight of all higher education provision. The main purpose of the committee is to undertake a review of annual programme monitoring, and assure itself that standards are met and that quality improvement takes place. This is undertaken through a meeting with individual or cognate groups of course teams. The review panel consists of a member of the higher education management team and two other co-opted managers. The primary purpose of the process is to consider the annual monitoring report for each programme, identify good practice and make recommendations for improvement to the report prior to submission to the awarding body. While the Academic Standards Committee has the potential to be part of a sound quality framework, and provide an effective oversight of higher education, it needs to be much clearer about its purpose and more robust in its actions. The team considers it advisable for the College to develop explicit terms of reference for the Academic Standards Committee to further enhance its role as the senior higher education standards committee, and ensure that the annual monitoring process robustly analyses student data and provides a full critical evaluation.

16   The Associate Director for Higher Education uses the programme annual monitoring reports to produce an overarching College annual monitoring report and action plan. This report is detailed, and has some analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, to evaluate academic standards and the quality of provision. The report is validated by the Senior Management Team and considered at a subcommittee of the Corporation, the Academic Standards and Quality Development Committee and by the Executive Director of Academic Affairs and Quality Improvement. The report identifies programmes which require focused monitoring owing to poor achievement or poor student retention, though it is not clear how this process occurs.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

17   In developing its own quality assurance processes, the College has endeavoured to embed various elements of the Academic Infrastructure into its higher education policies and procedures. College higher education policies have been based on the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*. There is a clear mapping document which identifies the alignment of the College's provision with many of the precepts, and the College proposes to further develop policies on public information, employer engagement and external examining.

18   Staff new to higher education are introduced to the Academic Infrastructure as part of their induction. College staff who are involved in programme development with partner

universities become aware of the expectations of the FHEQ, subject benchmark statements and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* through the programme validation process and annual monitoring and review. The MetHigher network of College staff who deliver higher education provides an effective way of building awareness and knowledge of the Academic Infrastructure. Staff are clear about the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure and spoke knowledgeably about how they used this to assure standards. The systematic and ongoing mapping of College policies, and the staff's sound understanding of the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure is good practice.

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

19   The responsibility for approval and maintenance of academic standards rests with the awarding bodies. The College has formal agreements with seven universities who currently confer awards, and with Edexcel for higher national qualifications. External examiners appointed by the awarding bodies confirm that programmes achieve the appropriate academic standards. Reports indicate that College staff are aware of the required level of assessment on the FHEQ, and students achieve the expected learning outcomes of the programmes. Programme teams generally respond appropriately to comments and suggestions of the external examiners as part of the annual monitoring process. Curriculum staff from the College are active participants in various committees, established by the awarding bodies, which address academic standards. Link tutors provide an effective additional contribution to the review process.

20   Examination boards are held for all programmes, and where they are university validated, are properly constituted and chaired by an appropriate senior manager who provides an impartial oversight. Students confirmed that they understand the academic regulations for their programme, and felt the process to be fair. The College is responsible for convening examination boards for directly funded higher national programmes. While these have been properly convened with an independent chair, they lack a public set of regulations as required by Edexcel. The team considers it advisable for the College to review the Assessment Policy to ensure that examination boards for higher national programmes have clear terms of reference, constitution and membership.

21   Newly introduced thematic audits are designed to reinforce the adherence to, and support of, the academic standards and quality assurance policies. The College has so far undertaken an audit of student handbooks, and a review of the process of module evaluations is in progress. The team considers that these reviews, while appropriate and useful, have not sufficiently or rapidly addressed the shortcomings identified. Thematic audits have the potential to enhance quality and provide an effective mechanism for monitoring provision against requirements of awarding bodies. However, the team considers it is advisable for the College to further develop the policy for undertaking thematic audits to ensure that there is greater rigour to the process and that timely actions are undertaken.

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

22   The College is committed to the ongoing training and development of staff. Staff development is managed in the directorates with individual development requirements being identified through an annual negotiated review process. The College provides a wide range of internal staff development and supports staff to attend external events and training. The annual monitoring process identifies additional training needs. Information on development needs is collated and informs the College staff development programme and the

professional development plan for individual staff. Staff are encouraged to attend staff development events with partner universities and find this to be valuable.

23   The College recognises the need for staff who are involved in higher education to engage in scholarship. There is a well defined policy on scholarly activity, which provides clarity for staff. A strong commitment to supporting scholarship is shown in a number of clear statements of intent. College staff confirmed that a range of activities is undertaken by staff for professional development both within the College and with partner universities. The MetHigher staff network produces a calendar of well-attended development events, which brings together staff from different campuses to share good practice. Staff are also supported in undertaking higher degrees and external academic engagement, including acting as external examiners. There is an annual scholarly activity conference where staff showcase the outcomes of their scholarly activity and students can also present their work. The College's commitment to, and facilitation of, staff development and scholarly activity through the MetHigher initiative has established a vibrant community of higher education practitioners and is good practice.

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?

24   The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities, and the associated quality assurance and enhancement processes, reflect those for managing academic standards. These are described in paragraphs 10 to 16. At the operational level, management of learning opportunities is cascaded down to a vocational directorate management team which, in liaison with the Assistant Director of Higher Education, has responsibility for promoting high quality learning. Course level responsibility rests with programme leaders.

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

25   The processes by which the College assures itself that it is fulfilling its obligations to its awarding bodies are described in paragraphs 10 to 16. Partnerships with the various universities are effectively managed through a number of different collaborative arrangements overseen by the Assistant Director for Higher Education. Partner universities spoke highly of the relationships they have with the College. College staff spoke confidently about their partnerships with awarding bodies, the effective role of the link tutors, the staff development activities and the standardisation meetings. On the FdA Early Years and FdA Education (Teaching Assistants), cross-moderation and standardisation events allow staff to share good practice in teaching. Partnership agreements are accessible to staff in the College, and the annual monitoring process allows staff to comment on the effectiveness of their collaborative links.

26   The Associate Director for Higher Education has responsibility for monitoring partnership agreements for currency and compliance, and regular planned meetings take place to review the memoranda of cooperation. Senior staff from partner universities confirmed that the merger of the two colleges has been well managed and has captured good practice from both institutions. College staff benefit from attending regular meetings with colleagues from other partner colleges and the universities. The College's effective management of its complex partnership arrangements with a large number of awarding bodies provides good opportunities for communication and interaction and is good practice.

27   Students attest to the high quality of the teaching and accessibility of teaching staff. Students in the written submission commented that staff are extremely supportive, and have appropriate expertise in their field. Students like the small group sizes and the variety of teaching methods used. External examiners generally comment favourably on the motivation and commitment of teaching staff and the high quality of the student learning experience.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

28   Engagement with the academic infrastructure is outlined in paragraphs 17 and 18. Programmes are aligned with the Academic Infrastructure at the time of validation and institutional approval. External examiners' reports confirm that the quality of learning opportunities is informed by an understanding by teams of the expectations of the requirements of the Academic Infrastructure. Appropriate consideration of the FHEQ, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant sections of the *Code of practice* support the quality of learning opportunities but there is scope for this to be articulated more clearly in relevant sections of the programme handbooks.

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

29   The College has an overarching Teaching and Learning Policy which includes higher education. The Assessment Policy, developed following a recommendation from the Developmental engagement, gives detailed guidance, draws together the requirements of the various awarding bodies, and provides a standardised approach to ensure an equivalence of student experience.

30   Students' views about teaching and learning are sought, monitored and evaluated in a number of ways, both formally and informally, through student surveys, student forums, end of module evaluations and representation on programme management committees. Students commented positively during the review visit and confirmed that changes had arisen from their representations. The National Student Survey results for 2008-09 show overall College student satisfaction rates above the sector average at more than 80 per cent. There is, however, inconsistent use of end-of-module evaluations which are required by the College. This variable practice was confirmed in a recent College thematic audit. Some students commented that they were unaware of the opportunity to provide feedback on individual modules, and staff confirmed a variability in approach. The team considers it advisable for the College to establish a systematic policy for gathering anonymous student feedback at module level to provide additional information on the quality of teaching and learning.

31   Programme teams adhere to partner university regulations for the moderation of assessments. Reports from external examiners and the awarding bodies provide generally positive comments about the College's management of assessment practices. Regular formal meetings with the awarding bodies provide an additional source of standardisation

and moderation, and the effectiveness of these meetings is confirmed by both College staff and awarding bodies' representatives.

32   A robust cross-college Lesson Observation Policy feeds back into individual development plans. Staff are observed at least once every two years by a team of trained observers. Outcomes are monitored annually at course level, vocational directorate, and by senior staff. Following observation, staff are encouraged to undertake a self-reflection before being given a grade. Staff confirmed the process is both effective in practice and valuable at an individual level. The College has also endorsed a voluntary higher education peer review model, which aims to share good practice in teaching and learning and encourage individual reflection and pedagogic development. Good practice in the lesson observation process includes the development plan for staff, and the recently introduced peer review practice provides a sound basis for the improvement of teaching quality.

33   Work-based learning features in many of the programmes under review, and reflects the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 9: Work-based and placement learning*. A meeting with selected employers revealed high levels of satisfaction with the way students' learning is shaped and enhanced through the work-based elements. The College engages well with employers to enhance the students' learning, and to provide opportunities for applied learning in the workplace. Employer mentors play an important role in work-based employment and placement, and are invited to the College for training. Former students and employers spoke highly of the value of work placements, and one commented on the high quality mentoring handbook the College produces.

34   Quality assurance of work-based learning operates through audit visits by designated work-based tutors and employer representatives on programme management committees. However, there is currently no common standard for the management of work-based learning across the College, although a new Higher Education Work-Based Learning Policy is currently due for implementation.

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

35   The College operates comprehensive student support services which have received Matrix accreditation. Support provided covers areas such as counselling, careers, health and lifestyle issues. All students are required to have a timetabled induction designed to ensure they are aware of the support services. Students also receive appropriate induction to the resources available to them at the validating universities. However, students commented that there are inconsistencies in the application of this induction process.

36   Personal tutors employ an unlimited 'open door' policy and student feedback consistently praises this approach and the quality of student support. All programmes are required to have both a timetabled group tutorial and an individual tutorial. However, students at the meeting with the review team noted variable practice between tutors in the application of this policy, especially for part-time students. Staff confirmed that students were sometimes unclear about the dual teaching and pastoral role of personal tutors and that this could be further clarified. It is desirable for the College to clarify for staff and students the dual role of academic and pastoral tutorials, for full and part-time students, and ensure that the policy is embedded and monitored.

37   The management of learning opportunities is integrated into programme annual monitoring and in the College annual report on higher education. This summarises the outcomes of teaching observations and student feedback and in 2009-10 identifies targeted action to improve the quality of assessment feedback, develop students' academic writing skills and shows actions to improve student retention and progression.

38   Students' use of the College virtual learning environment varies from programme to programme and according to validating partner. Students studying on validated programmes also use the associated university virtual learning environment, although there have been some problems with receiving logins and accessibility. The College's own virtual learning environment provides a good information source, but its use as an interactive teaching resource is inconsistently developed. At present there are no minimum requirements for each programme, although there are pockets of good practice. The College's Information Learning Technology Strategy identifies the development of their virtual learning environment as a key priority. The team considers it would be desirable for the College to introduce, as a key priority, a clear strategy for supporting and developing a more consistent use of the virtual learning environment as part of the College's teaching and learning strategy.

39   There is good practice in the use of the virtual learning environment on the DTLLS/Certificate in Education programme as a dynamic and interactive learning tool. Students have access to online courses, and some students create their own web pages, uploading video clips and keeping blogs as part of their programme. Students on some courses also submit work electronically for assessment.

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

40   The College's arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance quality of learning opportunities are outlined in paragraphs 22 and 23. The College has an effective college-wide Staff Development Policy and a staff review system for identifying individual staff development needs. The College has plans to introduce a performance management system during the course of the current year to include more detailed analysis of individual staff training and development needs. Significant funding at both central and directorate levels underpins staff development activities. The College has recently agreed the proposal to increase timetabled staff development to six hours every week by careful planning of teaching timetables.

41   Arrangements for the appointment of staff to teach on the programmes are rigorous. They are in line with the awarding bodies' requirements for approval of appointments. There is a well planned induction cycle prior to staff being confirmed to teach. Individual records of staff teaching on programmes indicate that their qualifications and expertise are appropriate for the teaching at FHEQ levels 4 to 6. New staff are observed teaching soon after their appointment, and are mentored by another member of staff with whom they are encouraged to have interactive dialogue and discussion. Experience of assessment practice is given through verification of assignments and cross-moderation of marking. The team considers the new staff induction process to be good practice.

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?

42   An annual business planning process identifies and allocates resources based on the requirements of each vocational directorate. Additional resourcing needs are identified in the curriculum planning and programme validation process, and through annual monitoring. Most of the resources within the College are of a high standard, and are shared between further and higher education students. Much of the College is zoned into curriculum-specific areas, and staff confirmed that they encouraged the interaction between different levels of students, and this has assisted progression. The two main College campuses, Matthew

Boulton and Sutton Coldfield, have both been refurbished to a high standard, and the College plans to establish higher education centres on all key sites.

43   The learning resource centres are generally of high quality, although the College has identified the need for further additional library resources in some curriculum areas. This was confirmed at the meeting with students. Investment in digital resources, for example e-journals, has been expansive and students have access to additional virtual learning environment resources through their respective awarding bodies.

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?

44   The College is responsible for publishing a wide range of information to inform prospective and current students and other relevant stakeholders. These include a higher education prospectus; Higher Education Strategy; course, programme and module handbooks plus a range of policies and procedures. The majority of published information is either hard copy or in electronic format. The information in the prospectus is mirrored and expanded upon on the college website, allowing details to be accessed by a wider audience, and enabling further research for those in receipt of a hard copy prospectus.

45   The College's well-written and evaluative Higher Education Strategy confirms its commitment to delivering higher education, and its desire to meet local employment demands seeks to develop a higher education ethos for staff and students, and foster the development of higher level learning and skills. The College recognises that to achieve this, it needs to differentiate more between its further and higher education provision through, for example, distinct branding and higher education centres on key sites. The recent launch of the MetHigher brand and the higher education centre on the Matthew Boulton campus are the first stages in this development.

46   The higher education prospectus is an attractive and informative document that details the range of programmes on offer. It includes detailed information on each course, including entry criteria, UCAS application information, finance and fees, and College support services. The prospectus also clearly labels the validating body for each programme of study. There is useful summary information on each validating university to guide students. Progression details for each programme indicate opportunities for further study. The language used in the prospectus is clear and user-friendly.

47   The College has a dedicated section on the website detailing its higher education provision. The higher education section has various sub-sections providing detail of courses, finance and fees and details on each partner university. Students can also download an electronic version of the higher education prospectus. The website also contains very useful and informative sections including frequently asked questions and HE Explained. Three student profiles give an indication of the higher education experience and the success to which a student may aspire. Students commented that the prospectus and website are both informative, but they would welcome even more detail on course content.

48   The College virtual learning environment has electronic copies of many of the student handbooks along with relevant module information and is updated annually. Staff confirmed that not all information is given to students in hard copy, and students are increasingly directed towards the virtual learning environment. The College operates two virtual learning environment platforms to support students with their studies. One is used very much as a repository for information and useful documents including course information, and the other is used as a tool to support student learning.

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?

49   The partnership agreements with each of the validating higher education institutions explicitly specify the process for signing off marketing and promotional material. The College process for validation of public information is clearly presented for staff in a useful flow diagram, which staff understand. Programme information is submitted electronically by the relevant programme manager to an electronic repository. This is then forwarded to the validating institution to check and agree. For directly-funded Edexcel higher national programmes documentation is submitted to the relevant curriculum assistant principal for approval. Amendments are signed off either by the relevant assistant principal, or the validating university. All published material is reviewed annually by the Academic Standards Committee to ensure accuracy and updating. Students commented that marketing and promotional information provided to them is accurate and for the most part comprehensive.

50   The College produces student handbooks in conjunction with their partner institutions and internally for directly-funded Edexcel higher national programmes. Content templates are provided by partner universities for the College to complete. However, at the meeting with students, they expressed variable satisfaction with the quality of handbooks and the information they contained. Some felt they received full and helpful information, while others stated that information was out of date or inaccurate. This variability was confirmed in the student written submission. The College's own thematic audit of student handbooks commencing in Autumn 2010 identified serious concerns about the inaccuracy and lack of information in a number of handbooks, and evidence that course teams were not always using the required templates. Incomplete information included that related to appeals and assessment strategies. There is no clear process for the quality assurance of student handbooks, and responsibility for signing these off as fit-for-purpose is unclear. The team considers it advisable that immediate remedial action is taken to ensure that student handbooks contain full, accurate and current information. It also concludes that it is advisable for the College to ensure that the procedure for checking and confirming the accuracy and completeness of student handbooks aligns with the clear policy the College adopts for the signing off of marketing and promotional material.

51   Module handbooks for university programmes are developed through the programme validation process and quality assured by the partner university. For College Edexcel programmes students are referred to the programme specifications on the Edexcel website. Staff teams for Edexcel programmes are responsible for writing their own assignment briefs, and external examiners confirmed their suitability.

52   Programme specifications for university-validated programmes are readily available for students. These are available either in hard copy or online, sometimes as part of the student handbook. However, for Edexcel directly-funded higher national programmes the College confirmed that they had been advised that they were not required to produce programme specifications, and referred students to the available programme information on the Edexcel website. Higher national student handbooks do provide some information,

for example on assessment, progression and employability, which enables students to understand their programmes. Some higher national students have no access to a summary document contextualising the delivery at the College or providing them with full information on the units of study. It is advisable for the College to produce, and make readily available to students, programme specifications for all programmes including higher nationals.

> **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

53   The Developmental engagement in assessment took place at Matthew Boulton College in May 2008 prior to the merger with Sutton Coldfield College, which did not have a Developmental engagement. There were three lines of enquiry:

Line of enquiry 1: quality of student feedback

Line of enquiry 2: implementation of internal mechanisms for monitoring assessment

Line of enquiry 3: use of learning resources to prepare for assessment

54   The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice. These included the introduction of students to higher level skills standards; clear assessment advice and guidance, including clear criteria and requirements for academic conduct; the monitoring system for verification of assignment briefs; mentoring of new staff; assessment standardisation meetings; high quality handbooks and module briefs; the role of employers' in monitoring Foundation Degree programmes; and the use of live projects and electronic technologies on some programmes.

55   The team also made a number of recommendations. It considered that it would be advisable for the College to draw up a policy on students' submission of draft assessments with a view to later submitting work that will gain higher marks. The team also felt it would be desirable for the College to consider developing a cross-college standard for giving assessment feedback; consider making standard the twice-yearly staff student liaison meetings; and introduce an explicit student entitlement to one-to-one tutorials.

D   Foundation Degrees

56   The College offers 14 Foundation Degrees in a wide range of curriculum areas, validated by a range of university partners. It strongly believes that they form a valuable progression route for students wishing to progress from further to higher education study in vocational areas within the College. The College is considering the development of additional Foundation Degrees to meet the needs of employers within specific subject areas.

57   Foundation Degree provision comes within the overarching quality assurance and enhancement framework the College has in place for all its higher education programmes. The team confirmed that the College has well established links with employers who inform curriculum developments and are part of the validation process, which ensures that programmes are aligned with the expectations of the *Foundation Degree qualification*

benchmark. All areas of good practice and recommendations, apart from the two advisable recommendations which relate specifically to higher national programmes, apply equally to Foundation Degree provision.

E   Conclusions and summary of judgements

58   The Summative review team has identified a number of features of good practice in Birmingham Metropolitan College's management of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies. This was based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the College and its awarding bodies: Aston University; Birmingham City University; De Montfort University; Manchester University; Staffordshire University; the University of Wolverhampton; the University of Worcester; and Edexcel.

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

- the systematic and ongoing mapping of College policies provides staff with a sound understanding of the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 18)
- the College's commitment to, and facilitation of, staff development and scholarly activity through the MetHigher initiative has established a vibrant community of higher education practitioners (paragraph 23)
- the College's effective management of its complex partnership arrangements with a large number of awarding bodies provides good opportunities for communication and interaction (paragraph 26)
- the lesson observation process includes a development plan for staff, and the recently introduced peer review practice provides a sound basis for the improvement of teaching quality (paragraph 32)
- the use of the virtual learning environment on the DTLLS/Certificate in Education programme provides a dynamic and interactive learning tool (paragraph 39)
- the support and induction process for new staff, including the opportunity for interactive peer dialogue and discussion, ensures that they are well prepared to teach at higher education level (paragraph 41).

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

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

- ensure that the Programme Management Committee meetings are consistently held, undertake regular analysis of student retention, progression and achievement, and that the discussion and outcomes are recorded in detail with a clear action plan (paragraph 13)
- develop explicit terms of reference for the Academic Standards Committee to further enhance its role as the senior higher education standards committee, and ensure that the annual monitoring process robustly analyses student data and provides a full critical evaluation (paragraph 15)
- review the Assessment Policy to ensure that examination boards for higher national programmes have clear terms of reference, constitution and membership (paragraph 20)
- further develop the policy for undertaking thematic audits to ensure that there is greater rigour to the process and that timely actions are undertaken (paragraph 21)

- establish a systematic policy for gathering anonymous student feedback at module level to provide additional information on the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 30)
- ensure that the procedure for checking and confirming the accuracy and completeness of student handbooks aligns with the clear policy the College adopts for the signing off of marketing and promotional material (paragraph 50)
- take immediate remedial action to ensure that student handbooks contain full, accurate and current information (paragraph 50)
- produce, and make readily available to students, programme specifications for all programmes including higher nationals (paragraph 52).

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

- clarify for staff and students the dual role of academic and pastoral tutorials, for full and part-time students, and ensure that the policy is embedded and monitored (paragraph 36)
- introduce as a key priority a clear strategy for supporting and developing a more consistent use of the virtual learning environment as part of the College's teaching and learning strategy (paragraph 38).

63   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.

64   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.

65   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.

Birmingham Metropolitan College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 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 **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
• the systematic and ongoing mapping of College policies provides staff with a sound understanding of the expectations of the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 18)	Produce policies to cover the relevant elements of Academic Infrastructure identified by the mapping process as unrepresented	Oct 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	All relevant elements of Academic Infrastructure covered by the College policies have passed internal policy boards and been distributed to relevant parties	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Audit policies in May 2012
• the College's commitment to, and facilitation of, staff development and scholarly activity through the MetHigher initiative has established a vibrant community of higher education	Schedule MetHigher Meetings to run twice-termly throughout the year during the cross-college CPD allocated time on Wednesday afternoons, thus allowing all staff delivering and managing higher education an opportunity to attend	Sept 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Increased attendance at MetHigher meetings and ensure the content of meetings is relevant and stimulating	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Monitor attendance Utilise staff satisfaction evaluation forms for each meeting to be analysed by Director of Quality

	practitioners (paragraph 23)	Sources discussion ideas from membership					
•	the College's effective management of its complex partnership arrangements with a large number of awarding bodies provides good opportunities for communication and interaction (paragraph 26)	Review the management of partnership arrangements annually to ensure that the opportunities for communication and interaction are effective and acceptable to all partners	Jan 2012	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Responsive action from College Timely completion of all deadlines Systematic meeting structure in place	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Administer service satisfaction survey to be analysed by Director of Quality
•	the lesson observation process includes a development plan for staff, and the recently introduced peer review practice provides a sound basis for the improvement of teaching quality (paragraph 32)	Review lesson and peer observation process to ensure currency and effectiveness Identify lead manager to lead and develop peer observation process cross-college	Sept 2011 July 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Executive Director	Review report submitted to Executive and corporation with recommendations accepted Appointment made for individual to lead on peer observations	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Review of lesson observation and peer observation process to be carried out in June 2012 and reported to Executive and Corporation
•	the use of the virtual learning	Promote the implementation of the	May 2012	Head of Professional	Dynamic and interactive	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Monitor and review all sites

environment on the DETLLS/ Certificate in Education programme provides a dynamic and interactive learning tool (paragraph 39)	VLE as a dynamic and interactive learning tool Target improvements in all College based VLE programmes		Development Centres and programme leaders	activities available on all programmes with College VLE	Academic Standard Committee	each term via programme management committee meetings
• the support and induction process for new staff, including the opportunity for interactive peer dialogue and discussion, ensures that they are well prepared to teach at higher education level (paragraph 41).	Utilise the content of the induction process as part of the MetHigher discussions Canvass opinion of staff in order to develop contents of the induction process	Jan 2012	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Re-issue of higher education staff induction process incorporating new ideas	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Academic Standard Committee	Review HE staff induction process May 2012
Advisable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for the College to:						
• ensure that the Programme Management Committee meetings are	Scheduled dates for PMCs to be published at start of each academic year	Sept 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Quality Team	100 per cent compliance with meeting schedule Key performance	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and	Termly monitoring of PMC minutes by Director of Quality Improvement (HE)

consistently held, undertake regular analysis of student retention, progression and achievement, and that the discussion and outcomes are recorded in detail with a clear action plan (paragraph 13)	Monitor meetings and intervene where non-compliance occurs	Nov 2011	Quality Team Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	indicators are reported on and action planned in all PMC minutes	Quality Committee	
	Ensure retention progression and achievement are agenda items at all PMCs	Nov 2011		Training identified on staff CPD records	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Academic Strategy Group	
	Provide training on data analysis to programme teams	Nov 2011			Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee Executive Academic Affairs	
	Provide minute-taking training to minute-takers	Nov 2011				
	Monitor minutes from PMCs	Nov 2011				
• develop explicit terms of reference for the Academic Standards Committee to further enhance its role as the senior higher education standards committee, and ensure that the annual monitoring	Develop existing terms of reference for Academic Standards Committees to ensure that the annual monitoring process robustly analyses student data and provides a full critical evaluation	June 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Academic Standard Committee (ASC) Terms of Reference are published on Share point and these are reflected in the minutes of the ASC	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Monitoring of minutes from ASC and QPB
	Ensure all higher education programmes are also included in the Quality	June 2011		Minutes of programme monitoring boards		

process robustly analyses student data and provides a full critical evaluation (paragraph 15)	Programme Boards (QPB)					
• review the Assessment Policy to ensure that examination boards for higher national programmes have clear terms of reference, constitution and membership (paragraph 20)	Include terms of reference for the Higher National Examination Boards in Assessment Policy ensure this includes the membership of all committees and boards	June 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Updated Assessment Policy is published on SharePoint and minutes of exam board reflect the stated terms of reference HN Boards are conducted in line with QAA *Code of practice*	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Monitoring of minutes from examination boards
• further develop the policy for undertaking thematic audits to ensure that there is greater rigour to the process and that timely actions are undertaken (paragraph 21)	Include a section of the process of Thematic Audits in the Academic Standards Policy	July 2011	Director of Quality Improvement(HE)	Updated Academic Standards Policy is published Audits will be timely and include explicit actions which will be monitored	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Annual Policy review process Audit review to be included in the AMR and therefore monitored by the Executive and Corporation academic standard boards

• establish a systematic policy for gathering anonymous student feedback at module level to provide additional information on the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 30)	Develop standardised end of module evaluation form Ensure all module end dates are provided to business support administrators who will circulate evaluation forms Scope the use of online system Ensure end of module feedback is an agenda item on the relevant PMCs	Sept 2011 Oct 2011 Dec 2011 Sept 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) PM's Quality Team Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	All programmes will have completed and analysed student end of module evaluation forms	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee Director HE Executive Director Academic Affairs	Monitoring Feedback in PMC and AMR
• ensure that the procedure for checking and confirming the accuracy and completeness of student handbooks aligns with the clear policy the College adopts for the signing off of marketing and promotional material (paragraph 50)	Adopt the policy for the signing off of marketing and promotional material for student handbooks Ensure that the handbooks are accurate and complete	July 2011	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) PM's	Relevant full and accurate public information Student satisfaction surveys indicate satisfaction with their handbooks	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Monitoring of university sign off

	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• that immediate remedial action is taken to ensure that student handbooks contain full, accurate and current information (paragraph 50)	All updated handbooks to be presented at the Academic Standards Board for review where a full audit of handbooks will take place Proof reading for accuracy to take place Handbooks where appropriate to be sent to HEIs for approval	July 2011 July 2011	PM PM	Relevant full and accurate student handbooks	Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Director of Quality Improvement (HE) Academic Standard Boards	Minutes reflect review of student handbook Audit of student handbook by August 2011
• produce, and make readily available to students, programme specifications for all programmes including higher nationals (paragraph 52).	Produce Programme specifications for Higher Nationals in line with Academic Infrastructure	July 2011	PMs and Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Programme Specifications in place that are aligned to QAA guidelines	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Academic Standards Committee
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**Target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team considers that it is **desirable** for the College to:						
• clarify for staff and students the dual role of academic and	Develop a statement of tutorial entitlement which sets out the dual nature of tutorials to be	Sept 2011 Sept 2011	Quality AD Tutorial Team	Students are aware of the nature of their tutorials	Director of Quality Improvement (HE)	Student survey to ascertain their understanding of the nature of their

pastoral tutorials, for full and part time students, and ensure that the policy is embedded and monitored (paragraph 36)	included in Student Support policy Ensure students are made aware of entitlement by inclusion of tutorial content and time allocation in the Student Handbook Introduce role of tutorials at induction					tutorial
• introduce as a key priority a clear strategy for supporting and developing a more consistent use of the virtual learning environment as part of the College's teaching and learning strategy (paragraph 38).	Include strategy for developing and supporting a more consistent use of the VLE Scope alternative platforms for supporting learning	Sept 2011 Sept 2011	Quality Team Quality Team	Increased use of VLE by all programme teams with the inclusion of all key documentation for the student Minimum engagement by all programme teams	Executive Director Academic Affairs Corporation Academic Standards and Quality Committee	Monitor the utilisation of VLE in the teaching and learning strategy