



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Xaverian College**

**October 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 effectively manages 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 (FHEQ)*, which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*
- 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 Xaverian College carried out in October 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 agreement, for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body. The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in the College's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, for the quality of learning opportunities it offers. The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

### Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice** for dissemination:

- effective and positive relationships between the College and the University, enhanced by the support and commitment of staff who manage and deliver on the programmes, ensure that academic standards are maintained
- effective assessment practice across all programmes, involving external examiners and expert sector practitioners, results in the College having rigorous procedures that support the assessment process
- extensive use of the College virtual learning environment by staff and students clearly supports and enhances the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students
- a rigorous observation of the teaching and learning process has a clear focus on improving strategies to enhance the student experience
- the extensive range of in-house professional development opportunities, focusing on the sharing of good practice, supports improvements in teaching, learning and assessment
- the syllabus specification handbooks, programme regulation handbooks, workbooks, and subject materials are comprehensive and detailed.

### 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 **desirable** for the College to:

- review the existing College committee structure in order to establish a forum that complements the existing arrangements with the University, through which the planning, monitoring and reporting of higher education provision is captured
- ensure all higher education activity is integrated into the College self-assessment reporting processes
- address the perceived variability in student experience across higher education programmes by reviewing the College student induction process and student engagement with University academic life.

## 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 Xaverian College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of the University of Manchester. The review was carried out by Mr Liam Curran and Ms Sally Powell (reviewers) and Mr Bob Saynor (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, the preparatory meeting with staff, students and the partner institution, and reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. There was no Developmental engagement in assessment. 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 The College does not currently deliver any Foundation Degree (FD) awards.

4 Xaverian College is an inner-city Catholic Sixth Form College with 1,902 students enrolled in 2011-12. The College is situated two miles south of Manchester city centre. It is located in Rusholme, a bustling district with a thriving restaurant trade, retail outlets, and numerous university halls of residence. Sixty per cent of Xaverian students are from wards which attract widening participation uplift, and over 55 per cent would qualify for an Education Maintenance Allowance. The College currently has a total of 80 HEFCE-funded enrolments, 48 of whom are full-time and 32 part-time. In addition there are 19 full-time and one part-time international non-HEFCE funded students studying on these programmes: 11 in Life Sciences, one in Medicine and eight in Pharmacy.

5 The College delivers three Foundation Year programmes in partnership with the University of Manchester. These are in Life Sciences, Medicine and Dentistry, and Pharmacy. There are currently 11 (four full-time equivalent) staff who teach in higher education, which is delivered within one of the five academic departments at the College. The Foundation Year programmes are delivered within the Faculty of Science, Technology, Electronics and Mathematics.

6 The Mission Statement of the College is based on that of the Xaverian Brothers: 'through excellent education and example, we commend to our students a way of life rooted in the love of God and our neighbour'. From this mission the College aims to enable young people to realise their full potential, to nurture their spiritual, moral and personal development, and to positively contribute to local and national developments.

7 The higher education awards funded directly or indirectly by HEFCE are listed below with full-time equivalent numbers of students for 2011-12 in brackets:

### University of Manchester

- Foundation Year programme in Life Sciences (40)

- Foundation Year programme in Medicine and Dentistry (16)
- Foundation Year programme in Pharmacy (8).

## **Partnership agreements with the awarding body**

8 The College has a single formal partnership agreement with the University of Manchester (the University). The Foundation Year Life Sciences programme commenced in 2004 in collaboration with the Faculty of Life Sciences at the University. The Medicine and Dentistry programme commenced at the College in 2006 in collaboration with the School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry, in the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences at the University. This programme links to the MBChB and BDS programmes at the University. The Pharmacy programme commenced in 2009 in collaboration with the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences at the University.

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

9 There are no recent new developments in higher education at the College and no immediate plans for future ones. The number of students on the higher education programmes over the last two years has remained steady.

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

10 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. A student written submission was submitted in advance of the team visit. The students responsible for the final collation and production of the report participated in the QAA facilitator and student training. Unfortunately, at the time of the production of the student written submission, all the Medicine and Dental students had already taken their examinations and had left the College. The College arranged email contact with one of the students from this programme who had agreed to obtain some feedback wherever possible. The College did not play any role in the focus groups which were organised just prior to the Life Sciences and Pharmacy examinations. Relatively few students attended the focus groups. The College acknowledges that some important issues were raised and has responded to them. The report was written completely independently by the students who at the time did not have available any of the feedback from the end of year student surveys. The report provided the team with valuable information that they could follow through during the review and at the meeting with students during the visit.

# **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?**

11 Higher education at the College is delivered in partnership with the University, and a five-year contract of agreement is in place. This was last renewed in 2009 following an institutional review of these arrangements which took place in 2008. The contract specifies

the terms under which the College may provide the programmes including the approval of staff teaching and the arrangements for annual and periodic review. The positive working of these arrangements was noted by both College and University representatives during the review visit.

12 The Higher Education Coordinator, who is also the Head of Faculty for Science, Technology, Electronics and Mathematics in the College, is responsible for the management of the Foundation Years. The Coordinator takes a lead in liaison with the University and has undertaken a secondment to the University to work on further development of the Foundation Year provision. The Higher Education Coordinator also acts as College Teaching and Learning Coordinator and assumes academic and pastoral responsibility for all higher education students at the College. The formal recognition, by the University, of the dedication and commitment of the Higher Education Coordinator to his role in supporting the Foundation Years was noted by the review team. The effective and positive relationships between the College and the University to ensure that academic standards are maintained, which are enhanced by the support and commitment of staff who manage and deliver on the programmes, is good practice.

13 The Higher Education Coordinator is a member of the College's Core Planning Team and reports to the Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards and to the Senior Management Team. Each individual Foundation Year programme reports to a number of committees. These include various University school and faculty committees, the Programme Management Team for Life Sciences, the Examination Boards for Medicine and Dentistry, and the Examination Board for Pharmacy. Higher education matters are considered as an agenda item at planning meetings, but are otherwise not formally addressed clearly through the College committee structure. The team considers it desirable that the College review the existing College committee structure in order to establish a forum that complements the existing arrangements with the University, through which the planning, monitoring and reporting of higher education provision is captured.

14 The University has overall responsibility for the content of the programmes and has appointed a programme leader at the University for each Foundation Year. Recruitment, admissions and Examination Boards are managed by the University. The proportion of teaching responsibilities for each programme varies. Medicine and Dentistry are taught equally by the College and University, while the Life Sciences and Pharmacy programmes are taught predominantly at the College, with fortnightly sessions at the University. For Medicine and Dentistry, the College delivers basic science teaching and learning, while the University provides evidence-based learning activities specific to Medicine or Dentistry. For the other Foundation Year programmes, the University input currently includes attendance at specialist lectures and use of specialist resources. Students met by the review team were generally positive about their interaction with the University. However, students on the Life Sciences programme expressed the view that greater exposure to the University would be beneficial to their studies.

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

15 The University has a Manual of Academic Procedures which sets out the University quality standards and enhancement processes. The procedures are comprehensive and provide the College with information on the University expectations in relation to the management of academic standards and compliance with University regulations. The procedures include details on student support, teaching, learning and assessment, approval monitoring and review procedures, and links to information on the Academic Infrastructure. The section which covers guidance and procedures for the quality assurance of collaborative provision applies to the College and is reflected in the systems and procedures which the College follows.

16 Subject benchmark statements are not available for Foundation Year level provision, but the College draws substantially on level 3 A-Level academic specifications and syllabus content. College staff include experienced examiners who are able to design curricula to meet the specific needs of Life Sciences, Medicine and Dentistry and Pharmacy. Staff were able to articulate to the team their interpretation of teaching at an appropriate level within this framework whilst offering 'challenge and stretch' to students, commensurate with study to support progression to degree level studies. This is also supported by comments from external examiner reports and periodic review reports.

17 The Higher Education Coordinator plays a key role in determining the arrangements and methods for assessment in line with University regulations. The team was provided with extensive evidence of assessment practice, including programme handbooks, subject notes, assessed material, reports of internal and external examining and records of continuing professional development and staff training. Students met by the team were complimentary about the preparation and support they receive from staff in the fulfilment of the assessment requirements. University representatives and external examiners were very positive about the thoroughness of assessment, including arrangements for standardised mark schemes and double blind marking. The College demonstrated effective assessment practice that fully satisfies the precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. This effective assessment practice across all programmes, which involved external examiners and expert sector practitioners, results in the College having rigorous procedures that support the assessment process and 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?**

18 A self-assessment process is coordinated at faculty level within the College. The faculty self-assessment reviews are subject to faculty and curriculum area audits, which serve to highlight strengths and concerns relating to the subject area. Quality improvement plans are generated from this activity. Audit results are reviewed by the Principal and a panel of senior College staff and external peers.

19 To date, the ongoing monitoring and review of the Foundation Years has been substantially undertaken by the University and has not directly engaged with these College processes. For example, in Life Sciences, the Programme Management Team, which is chaired by the University Programme Leader for Life Sciences, and includes College representation, has considered the results of assessment, external examiner reports, the minutes of the staff and student meetings, and other issues arising from the operation of the programme. For Medicine and Dentistry, and for Pharmacy, discussions on these topics have been held at the examination board meetings. The review team identified inconsistency across the three Foundation Years with regard to annual programme monitoring. The College has recognised that it would be beneficial to strengthen the annual monitoring process by incorporating Foundation Years into their existing self-assessment activity. Although the University is satisfied with the ongoing operation of the programmes, the review team considers that it would be desirable to ensure all higher education activity is integrated into the College self-assessment reporting processes.

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

20 The College has achieved Investors in People status which demonstrates the commitment of the College Management Team and staff to personal and professional

development. The Assistant Principal of Quality and Standards is responsible for staff development in the College, and for approval of requests for training and development. A system of performance review is in place to identify staff development needs. The College makes a contribution to applications involving a significant financial contribution, for example higher degree study. The processes for staff development are set out in a College policy document and a flowchart showing the stages of staff engagement in continuing professional development. The currency of staff teaching on the Foundation Years is recognised through the University's approval of the programmes under review.

21 The staff development activities are embedded in the management of higher education provision at the College. They include an extensive range of training opportunities, which focus on the development of learning, teaching and assessment skills.

**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?**

22 The responsibilities and arrangements for managing and reporting on the quality of learning opportunities are those described in paragraphs 11 to 14. The management arrangements at the College are effective in managing and supporting the quality of learning opportunities for its higher education provision. They are clear and understood within the College and by the University.

23 Heads of faculty, curriculum leaders and members of the College teaching teams are supported by the Higher Education Coordinator, who also has a remit to improve teaching, learning and assessment and the sharing of good practice. The Quality Strategy encourages a self-critical culture within the College and promotes continuous improvement. The quality improvement framework within the College is designed to help it fulfil its mission and meet its strategic targets within the overarching College development plan.

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

24 The systems and procedures by which the College assures itself that it is meeting its obligations are described in paragraphs 18 and 19. The collaborative agreement between the College and University states that the College is responsible for supplying materials, equipment, staffing resources, and adequate resources for staff support and development. It is the responsibility of the College within the agreement to monitor the standards, quality and content of the programme.

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

25 Higher education staff have an appropriate understanding of the Academic Infrastructure in terms of assessment, the role of external examiners, and teaching at the appropriate level. In addition, College staff are familiar with, and promote to students, the

requirements of the awarding body in terms of academic performance and appeals, careers advice, and disability support. The College provides a number of support services for students including counselling and additional learning support specific to individual subjects. Students who do not progress to the University are supported by the Higher Education Coordinator in their applications to other universities.

26 The team concludes that appropriate reference is being made to the Academic Infrastructure and that it is being used effectively to maintain the quality of learning opportunities.

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

27 As part of the Quality Strategy, the College operates an annual cycle of observation of teaching and learning to assess the quality of the students' learning experience. This process identifies areas for improvement in teaching and learning, and opportunities to share good practice, which results in developmental plans for individual staff. The external examiners commented favourably about how these observations encourage and promote effective and challenging teaching and learning strategies for students. This is reflected in the fact that two members of the teaching staff have recently received awards for excellence in teaching.

28 The College undertakes student surveys which result in valuable feedback regarding key elements of the programme. Students complete individual module evaluations which give staff an insight into the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The College uses student feedback effectively and examples were identified where changes to assessment planning, examination loading, and information provided to students have been changed after quality improvements were identified. The College recognised the value of student surveys in identifying and resolving student issues and concerns regarding teaching and learning.

29 The Higher Education Coordinator approves the teaching and learning content of all modules on the Foundation Year programmes with the appropriate University Programme Director. The College teaching teams provide a good range of formative and summative assessment opportunities for students, which are supported by comprehensive subject workbooks that are a valuable resource to students. This was confirmed by students who indicated that they found the workbook resources very helpful and supportive in their own learning and were continuing to use the subject workbooks when they progressed to the University.

30 Students claimed that there were inconsistencies between programmes with regards to student-staff consultation arrangements and that these meetings were infrequent. The team identified variability between the Foundation Year induction processes which students commented upon. The College organises activities for students such as providing opportunities to attend lectures at the University. Life Sciences students indicated they did not feel as integrated into the University as the Medical and Dentistry and the Pharmacy students. Some students suggested that this had an impact on the quality of their transition to the University. The team considers it desirable for the College to address the perceived variability in student experience across higher education programmes by reviewing the College student induction process and student engagement with University academic life.

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

31 Student surveys are used to gauge student views on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment. This feedback is used to identify issues of teaching quality, which are actively addressed by senior staff both through the staff development mechanisms and through programme management. The College has policies and procedures for supporting students which are generic to all College provision. These include an effective tutorial system which supports students well, as was confirmed by students.

32 Students receive a College library induction in the first week of starting their programme. This includes an introduction to e-books and the journal database Athens. The team viewed the library and central support facilities available to students, which clearly satisfied the requirements of the provision.

33 The College has an award-winning virtual learning environment and in 2008 was awarded a place in the Technology Exemplar Network. The network, sponsored by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) and the Learning and Skills Council, gathered together best users of technology in the further education sector across the country. During 2008-09 the College acted as mentor to other colleges moving toward e-maturity. All higher education students are able to access the College and University virtual learning environments. All student monitoring, assessment and reviews are conducted online. Students can gain access to lecture notes and past examination papers. Students reported that they found these lecture notes and handouts very helpful, and that they provided an excellent bank of reference material for further study and revision. They confirmed that the College has an excellent range of learning resources which assisted them throughout their studies. The professional development workshop topics attended by staff highlighted an emphasis on using the technology to support teaching, learning and assessment practice. The extensive use of the College virtual learning environment, by staff and students, clearly supports and enhances the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students and is good practice.

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

34 There is a thorough system of lesson observation in place to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff are observed annually by their line manager with moderation by senior managers and external consultants. The College has further improved its systems for using the outcomes from lesson observations to support professional development and improvements in the student experience. Strategies to raise the level of student attainment and improve teaching and learning have been successfully implemented through a comprehensive internal training and development programme. In the 2009-10 academic year, 84 per cent of 107 lessons observed were judged to be good or outstanding for learning, and 82 per cent were judged to be good or outstanding for teaching.

35 The outcomes from observation are used to support professional development and further improve the quality of teaching and learning. The College has introduced new continuing professional development strategies which include mentoring support, the sharing of lesson plans, peer and joint observations, and a series of themed activities for all teachers and learning support staff. Observation outcomes are linked closely to the professional development reviews and continuing professional development plans of individual members of staff. Good practice is shared through a programme of professional development twilight sessions for all teaching staff during the spring and summer terms. The rigorous observation

of teaching and learning process with a clear focus on improving strategies to enhance the student experience is good practice.

36 The College financially supports members of staff who wish to undertake postgraduate qualifications. There are also bursaries available to support staff who apply for support for projects in areas that may raise the level of student attainment and improve teaching and learning. Staff gain valuable development through their roles as senior examiners for examination boards. Staff also have access to relevant lectures and facilities offered at the University. The College is part of the Northern Catholic Colleges Teaching and Learning collaborative partnership to facilitate the sharing of good practice.

37 The College operates a clear staff development policy which demonstrates its commitment to supporting staff. The responsibilities of individual staff members, College managers and the Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards are clear. The staff development application and appraisal process is comprehensive and clearly indicates the roles and responsibilities of staff and managers. Both internal and external staff development has been undertaken by higher education teaching staff. All new College staff have an induction programme and access to relevant procedures and College support for teaching and learning. The extensive range of in-house professional development opportunities focusing on the sharing of good practice to support improvements in teaching, learning and assessment is 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?**

38 As part of the annual planning process, the College allocates a separate budget for higher education provision, which is managed by the Higher Education Coordinator. This is primarily used to purchase textbooks, subject knowledge booklets and consumables for practical laboratory work. It has been noted by the University institutional review and external examiners that the College provides excellent learning and social facilities for all Foundation Year programmes. The library is well equipped and the computer resources available for higher education students were particularly impressive.

39 As part of the agreement between the University and College, the College is required to provide materials and equipment necessary to enable all students to study the programme properly and effectively. This agreement encompasses the provision of adequate staff resources, facilities and environments. Appropriate resources are made available to staff and students to satisfy the intended learning outcomes of the provision.

**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?**

40 The collaborative agreement between the College and University clearly sets out the obligations of the College. This includes the requirement to seek approval from the University for any amendments to the programme materials, content or University

information provided to students. The agreement states that the College will submit all promotional material relating to the programmes to the University for annual approval before using any such material for promotional or recruitment purposes. The College acknowledges that the University has the final right of veto in relation to all publicity material. The College is responsible for the collation and submission of student data in line with the University requirements. This is provided on an annual basis, or at such other times and in such format as the University may reasonably require. This agreement sets out each institution's obligations and the team verified that the College fulfils the terms of the agreement.

41 Each programme of study has in place two comprehensive handbooks; one covering information on programme regulations, and another including details of module syllabus information. The programme regulation handbooks are detailed and outline how students can access support services such as registry, induction, support and guidance, counselling, and intranet services within the University and the College. The syllabus specification handbooks include aims and learning outcomes, together with an outline of the assessment process and an explanation of the credits associated with the programme, and the points required for successful progression to the University. Progression arrangements for successful students are set out in each programme regulations handbook. All completing students are provided with a University transcript of their programme. Those not completing the requirements for progression to the University may still be able to progress to degree programmes elsewhere.

42 These handbooks clearly set out the University and College information. They contain explicit references to the requirements for entry to the University, set within the context of the College. The syllabus specification handbooks are supplemented by comprehensive workbooks and subject materials to assist students in completing the modules successfully. The information available in the programme regulations handbooks includes the structure of the programme, teaching, learning and assessment requirements, support and guidance, student representation and feedback, teaching and learning resources, and student progression information. This information is clearly set out in relation to the College and University context. The handbooks are highly valued by the students. The comprehensive syllabus specification handbooks, programme regulation handbooks, and the detailed workbooks and subject materials are good practice.

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

43 The University publishes specific information about the Foundation Year programmes on its website and in prospectuses. The College does not publish any marketing and promotional information relating to the programmes. However, the College makes a direct contribution to the formulation and production of the programme-specific regulation handbooks and syllabus specification handbooks. These handbooks follow University guidance and are formally approved annually. The College has more of an involvement in the syllabus specification handbook for the Life Sciences and Pharmacy, with the University taking a lead on the Medicine and Dentistry syllabus specification handbook. These handbooks are updated by the Higher Education Coordinator and forwarded to the University for verification and updating with the University's contribution. The Higher Education Coordinator then checks the handbooks prior to publication. The handbooks are distributed to the students at registration and are also placed on the University virtual learning environment.

44 The individual course information is produced and advertised in line with University guidance. The syllabus specification handbooks contain detailed information on the modules

delivered on the Foundation Year programmes. The convention used predominantly is to provide the topics covered, the objectives, and the assessment strategy. However, there is some inconsistency in presentation and content, in a minority of handbooks. For example, the Mathematics Biomedical module is presented in a different format, and the Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences module includes learning outcomes where this level of information is not presented in other module specifications. However, taken as a whole, there is a responsive and effectively-managed process in place. This is achieved through close working between the College and University to ensure that the information is accurate and complete.

45 Students following the Life Sciences programme reported that the information provided before they started their studies did not emphasise fully the extent of delivery at the College compared with the University. However, the team checked the information available to students, which clearly stated that the programme is delivered predominantly at the College with access to University facilities and services.

**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**

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

## **D Foundation Degrees**

47 The College does not currently offer Foundation Degree awards.

## **E Conclusions and summary of judgements**

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

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

- effective and positive relationships between the College and the University, enhanced by the support and commitment of staff who manage and deliver on the programmes, ensure that academic standards are maintained (paragraphs 11 and 12)
- effective assessment practice across all programmes, involving external examiners and expert sector practitioners, results in the College having rigorous procedures that support the assessment process (paragraph 17)

- extensive use of the College virtual learning environment by staff and students clearly supports and enhances the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students (paragraph 33)
- a rigorous observation of the teaching and learning process has a clear focus on improving strategies to enhance the student experience (paragraphs 34 and 35)
- the extensive range of in-house professional development opportunities, focusing on the sharing of good practice, supports improvements in teaching, learning and assessment (paragraph 37)
- the syllabus specification handbooks, programme regulation handbooks, workbooks, and subject materials are comprehensive and detailed (paragraphs 41 and 42).

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

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

- review the existing College committee structure in order to establish a forum that complements the existing arrangements with the University, through which the planning, monitoring and reporting of higher education provision is captured (paragraph 13)
- ensure all higher education activity is integrated into the College self-assessment reporting processes (paragraph 19)
- address the perceived variability in student experience across higher education programmes by reviewing the College student induction process and student engagement with University academic life (paragraph 30).

52 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

53 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

54 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, 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.

<b>Xaverian College action plan relating to the Summative review: October 2011</b>						
<b>Good practice</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>
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>effective and positive relationships between the College and the University, enhanced by the support and commitment of staff who manage and deliver on the programmes, ensure that academic standards are maintained (paragraphs 11 and 12)</li> </ul>	Maintain effective and positive relationships between the College and University by regular Programme Management Meetings; increase the number of Programme Management Meetings for Foundation Year in Pharmacy	January 2012	Higher Education Coordinator	Excellent relationships between College and University maintained; increase in the number of Programme Management Meetings for Foundation Year in Pharmacy	Senior Management Team (SMT)	University Annual and Institutional Reviews and College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty Self-Assessment Report)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effective assessment practice across all programmes, involving external</li> </ul>	Maintain high standard of effective assessment practice across all programmes; continue	January 2012	Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards and Higher Education	High standard of rigorous and effective assessment procedures and	Programme Directors (University) and Senior Management	University Annual and Institutional Reviews, College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty

examiners and expert sector practitioners, results in the College having rigorous procedures that support the assessment process (paragraph 17)	to provide the extensive range of in-house and external professional development opportunities on assessment procedures particularly for new staff teaching on higher education programmes		Coordinator	practice to ensure academic standards are maintained across all programmes	Team (SMT)	Self-Assessment Report) and external examiner reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extensive use of the College virtual learning environment by staff and students clearly supports and enhances the quality of the teaching and learning experience for students (paragraph 33)</li> </ul>	Continually update and develop the extensive range of excellent learning resources provided on the virtual learning environment to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning experience for all students across all higher education programmes	December 2011	Curriculum Leaders	Excellent learning resources on the virtual learning environment across all programmes which enhances the quality of the teaching and learning experience for all higher education students	Higher Education Coordinator and Programme Management Team	Learner Voice Surveys, Student-Staff Committee and College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty Self-Assessment Report)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a rigorous observation of the teaching and learning process has a clear focus on improving strategies to enhance the student</li> </ul>	Maintain thorough system of lesson observations to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning; extend range of themed lesson observations and increase number of	May 2012	Heads of Faculty and Curriculum Leaders	Increase in percentage of lessons judged to be good or outstanding; positive student feedback on assessment of teaching and	Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards	Faculty Lesson Observation Profile and Learner Voice Surveys

<p>experience (paragraphs 34 and 35)</p>	<p>lesson observations across higher education programmes</p>			<p>learning</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extensive range of in-house professional development opportunities, focusing on the sharing of good practice, supports improvements in teaching, learning and assessment (paragraph 37)</li> </ul>	<p>Increase the extensive range of in-house professional development opportunities by focusing on the sharing of good higher education practice between Curriculum Teams to support improvements in teaching, learning and assessment</p>	<p>June 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Coordinator and Curriculum Leaders</p>	<p>Staff receive appropriate professional development opportunities to provide high standard of teaching and learning across all higher education programmes</p>	<p>Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards</p>	<p>Professional Development records and College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty Self-Assessment Report)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the syllabus specification handbooks, programme regulation handbooks, workbooks, and subject materials are comprehensive and detailed (paragraphs 41 and 42)</li> </ul>	<p>Annually update and revise the syllabus and regulation handbooks in accordance with University guidelines to address curriculum developments and changes in University regulations; ensure the high quality of the detailed subject handbooks is consistently maintained across all programmes</p>	<p>September 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Students have comprehensive information on the structure of their programme, teaching, learning and assessment requirements, support and guidance, student representation and feedback, teaching and learning resources, and progression information</p>	<p>Programme Directors (University) and Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards</p>	<p>University Annual and Institutional Reviews and College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty Self-Assessment Report)</p>

<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>review the existing College committee structure in order to establish a forum that complements the existing arrangements with the University, through which the planning, monitoring and reporting of higher education provision is captured (paragraph 13)</li> </ul>	The College to establish a committee (composed of the Higher Education Coordinator, relevant Curriculum Leaders and the Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards) to consider the outcomes from Programme Management Meetings and plan, monitor and report on the higher education provision within the College	April 2012	Higher Education Coordinator and Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards	The planning, monitoring and reporting of higher education provision is an integral part of the Quality Review Cycle	Senior Management Team (SMT)	College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty Self-Assessment Report)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure all higher education activity is integrated into the College self-assessment reporting processes (paragraph 19)</li> </ul>	A detailed review of all the higher education provision in the College will be included in the Self-Assessment Report for the Faculty of Science, Technology, Electronics and Mathematics	October 2011 (completed)	Higher Education Coordinator	Higher education provision in the College integrated into the College self assessment reporting process	Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards	College Quality Assurance Cycle (Faculty Self-Assessment Report)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>address the perceived variability in student experience across higher education programmes by reviewing the College student induction process and student engagement with University academic life (paragraph 30)</li> </ul>	<p>Establish a Staff-Student Committee on the Pharmacy Programme; increase student engagement with University academic life by organising more University-linked activities such as guest lecturers and laboratory-based activities.</p>	<p>January 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Coordinator</p>	<p>Parity across higher education programmes in terms of Staff-Student Committees; the perceived variability in student experience across the different higher education programmes is addressed</p>	<p>Programme Directors (University) and Assistant Principal for Quality and Standards</p>	<p>Learner Voice Surveys and Student-Staff Committees</p>
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