



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

City of Westminster College

February 2012

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Preface

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

Purpose of IQER

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

The IQER process

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

Developmental engagement

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

The main elements of a Developmental engagement are:

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

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

Summative review

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

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

Evidence

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

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

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

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (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 City of Westminster College carried out in February 2012

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 implementation, for its Edexcel provision, of rigorous systems similar to those used to respond to external examiner reports on university-validated programmes which provides a comparable commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards for its higher national programmes
- the College's thorough, detailed responses to the Developmental engagement reports and the full integration of the resultant action plans into its quality assurance processes facilitates enhancement of its higher education provision
- the 'Supported Experiments' programme encourages and facilitates enhancement by promoting and supporting staff-generated developmental activities
- the well structured programme and module handbooks for the BSc (Hons) Clinical Physiology contain comprehensive reference materials which provide a valuable resource to support learning and are highly valued by the students.

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:

- produce programme specifications for all its Edexcel higher national programmes to reflect expectations articulated in the Academic Infrastructure
- review the Edexcel programme handbooks to demonstrate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and bring them to a standard comparable with those provided for students on validated programmes.

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

- ensure that the College's teaching and learning observation scheme reflects characteristics and requirements of teaching and learning at level 4 and above
- ensure that programme resource requirements stipulated at validation are met in a timely fashion and that students are kept informed of the timescale for their procurement
- include more timely, detailed and accurate information on fees and financial support

- on its website and other documentation to better inform students of the financial implications of undertaking higher education study
- provide more easily accessible and detailed information on its website and other documentation regarding eligibility and means of application for additional learning support.

A Introduction and context

1 This report presents the findings of the Summative review of higher education funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) conducted at City of Westminster 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 Edexcel, Middlesex University and the University of Westminster. The review was carried out by Mr Peter Hymans, Mr Paul Monroe, Mrs Sue Miller (reviewers) and Mr Jeffery Butel (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 its awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, and 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 and the Developmental engagement in the consistency of management of higher education and the comparability of the student experience. A summary of findings from the two Developmental engagements 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*, subject and award benchmark statements, the FHEQ, and programme specifications.

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

4 City of Westminster College was established in 1903 and is the main provider of post-16 education and training in the Borough of Westminster. The College has three sites: Paddington Green Campus, Queen's Park Campus and the Cockpit Theatre. It operates in a culturally diverse area and a high proportion of students are from areas classified as economically disadvantaged. The College mission is 'to provide outstanding education and training to enable our learners to achieve their full potential'. The College offers provision for most subject areas and recruits around 8,000 students annually, of whom approximately one-third are aged 16-18. A majority of these learners study full-time, while the majority of adult learners are enrolled on part-time programmes. In January 2011, the College moved into a new, purpose-built building in Paddington Green and all higher education programmes are based on this campus.

5 As of 2011-12, there are 444 students, representing 326 full-time equivalents, enrolled on higher education programmes with approximately 14.1 full-time equivalent staff engaged in the delivery of their programmes. Higher education is delivered in five schools: Medical Technology and Building Services Engineering in the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and Business and Management Studies, Media and Sonic Arts, and Visual Arts in the Faculty of Arts, Business, Humanities and Leisure. The School of Medical Technology is by far the largest provider with some two-thirds of all higher education enrolments. The College is the third largest provider of directly funded higher education in further education provision in London, and currently has Associate College status with both the University of Westminster and Middlesex University.

6 The following programmes are currently offered by the College. Programmes are shown by awarding body with full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets.

Edexcel

- HNC Building Services Engineering (Electrical) (part-time) (21.0)
- HNC Building Services Engineering (Mechanical) (part-time) (14.5)
- HNC Construction and the Built Environment (Civil Engineering) (part-time) (8.0)
- HNC Music Production (full-time) (30.0)
- HNC Photography (part time) (9.0)
- HND Business (full-time) (23.0)

Middlesex University

- FD Clinical Physiology (part-time, block-release) (12.75)
- BSc (Hons) Clinical Physiology (part-time, block-release) (183.75)

University of Westminster

- FD Professional Photography (full-time) (24.0)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The College has partnership agreements with two higher education institutions, Middlesex University and the University of Westminster. In both cases the university is responsible for the award of the credit and quality assurance and for liaison/link tutor support. The College works within the academic regulations of both institutions. The College also has approval to deliver programmes which are awarded by Edexcel, under the Edexcel Standard Note.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 The College relocated all its higher education provision to the new, purpose-built Paddington Green Campus in January 2011 and appointed a Director for Higher Education Development in August 2011. Higher education student numbers are slightly down from the 368 at the time of the last Developmental engagement. HEFCE has confirmed that the College's Student Control Number for 2012-13 is 87. The College has received approval from Edexcel to run a suite of Qualifications Credit Framework higher national qualifications in: Applied Biology, Computing Systems Development, Health and Social Care, Public Services, Sport and Sport Science, Travel and Tourism Management, and Vehicle Operations Management, in addition to the existing higher national provision. The FD Audio Technology is no longer offered and all students have completed.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education programmes were invited to present a submission to the team. A submission was presented, written by College staff following a consultation exercise with students. Meetings were held with students from each of the faculties with higher education provision. Student responses were summarised and students invited to comment. The submission was then disseminated to other students by student

representatives. The submission was helpful in informing the review. In addition, students met the coordinator at the preparatory meeting and the team 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?

10 The responsibility for the management and development of higher education and the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards is shared between senior members of the College staff: the Vice-Principal (Quality) is responsible for quality and standards and the Vice-Principal (Curriculum) for curriculum management, while the Quality and Standards Manager oversees quality assurance and quality improvement. Directors of faculty and heads of school are responsible for academic standards at programme level, and this is coordinated by the Director of Higher Education Development.

11 For all university-validated delivery, programme team meetings are held at least three times a year to discuss external examiner reports, student surveys, the input of employers, other focus groups and other relevant programme-related issues. Formal Assessment Boards are held at least three times a year to consider the results of units taken, and to agree and award final marks and grades. In addition, the College operates a parallel scheme across all programmes (also called Assessment Boards), which consider external examiner reports and individual student progress against intended learning outcomes and which report to termly Quality Monitoring Meetings. The outcomes of both schemes are reported on at the College's Higher Education Board and from there to the Senior Management Team for operational matters, to the Senior Leadership Team for strategic matters, and to the Governing Body.

12 The Higher Education and Training Strategy and Development Plan 2012-15 applies to all higher education programmes, sits within the overall College Strategic Plan, and addresses the strategic aims in the latter document. The quality assurance systems differ slightly from awarding body to awarding body, but the College is successful in harmonising their different requirements. The implementation, for its Edexcel provision, of rigorous systems similar to those used to respond to external examiner reports on university-validated programmes, provides a comparable commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards for its higher national programmes. The team considers that the introduction of a system, over and above that required by Edexcel to respond to Edexcel external examiner reports, represents good practice.

13 Quality Monitoring Meetings are used to monitor and improve quality systems and academic standards. Membership includes both vice-principals, faculty directors, deputy directors, heads of school, the Quality and Standards Manager, and the Quality and Management Information Development Coordinator. The College's thorough, detailed responses to the Developmental engagement reports and the full integration of the resultant action plans into its quality assurance processes facilitates enhancement of the College's higher education provision. The team considers this to be good practice.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

14 Effective use is made of the Academic Infrastructure during programme design, development and validation, with clear reference to the *Code of practice* and subject benchmark statements. Programme specifications are provided for programmes validated by Middlesex University and the University of Westminster. However, there are no programme specifications available for Edexcel higher national programmes, and there is some confusion among staff regarding the term 'specification' as used by Edexcel to refer to a given programme of study, and 'programme specification' as one of the component parts of the Academic Infrastructure. The College has recognised this and intends to address the issue as part of its new policy to require all current higher education programmes continuing in 2012-13 to undergo the same internal validation processes as new programmes. However, the team considers it advisable that, as matter of urgency, the College produces programme specifications for all its Edexcel higher national programmes to reflect expectations articulated in the Academic Infrastructure.

15 There has been staff training on the Academic Infrastructure with specific reference to the Integrated quality and enhancement review method. Where the validation process is university-led the Academic Infrastructure is embedded effectively in the development and validation of the programmes, including a requirement to map documentation to the 10 sections of the *Code of practice*. It is less clear where the Academic Infrastructure has been used to inform subsequent programme delivery and assessment, especially in terms of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*.

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?

16 The College has effective systems to ensure that academic standards meet the requirements of their awarding body partners. Middlesex University and the University of Westminster require the College to conform to university regulations on admissions, student selection, programme approval, monitoring and audit, assessment, external examination, student discipline, and complaints. The College is responsible for the appointment of staff, delivery of programmes, internal verification/moderation, learning resources, and student support services. The relationship with the awarding bodies is strong and coherent, and maintained effectively by formal and informal liaison with link tutors appointed by the universities. The College has greater autonomy in terms of Edexcel higher national programmes.

17 There are formally constituted assessment boards in all faculties, where faculty management teams discuss student progress. The use of assessment boards was variable but has been extended during the 2010-11 academic year to cover all higher education programmes.

18 Annual Monitoring Reports are produced by the programme leaders for each university-validated programme, but not for Edexcel higher national programmes. There is some variability in the report style and format; reports for the School of Medical Technology specify targets for Foundation Degree Clinical Physiology and BSc Clinical Physiology that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

19 There is an effective 'Learner Voice Strategy' that uses internal student surveys, 'Principal's forums', and meetings with the Students' Union and employer groups to determine stakeholder perceptions of the programmes. These lead to action plans that address issues raised at programme, school and faculty level. Most programme committees

have student representation, with representatives elected for a year, except in the School of Medical Technology where new representatives are elected to serve for each new block of study. Student module evaluations are under development and will be in use in the next academic year.

20 The College has addressed the recommendations made in the two Developmental engagements with regard to the maintenance of academic standards, and has monitored the progress made. Where action has been taken this is noted and where action is pending there is a narrative explaining the current position.

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

21 The College has an effective training and development policy and accurate records are kept of staff engagement. In general a 'whole college' approach predominates, but there are examples of dedicated higher education training and development opportunities. Staff development days are timetabled throughout the year and staff are encouraged to complete the continuous professional development requirements of their professional bodies. How the College monitors and measures the outcomes and benefits of staff training and development, or how the outcomes of such training and development impact on academic standards, is less obvious.

22 Advanced Practitioners are effective in supporting professional, commercial and industrial updating. For example, the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics is involved with an independent charity that supports professional development in engineering and empowers individuals to embrace contemporary practice.

23 There is limited evidence of research and scholarly activity and the self-evaluation makes it clear that mechanisms for recording staff development are not well developed. The College is seeking to employ an improved system to record individual scholarly activity and continuous professional development in order to help it monitor and identify how effective it is in enhancing academic standards.

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 College has operational responsibility, subject to university oversight, for the quality of learning opportunities as detailed in the Memoranda of Collaboration and Partnership Agreements with the University of Westminster and Middlesex University. Management and quality of Edexcel programmes are the responsibility of the College within the scope of the Edexcel Standard Note. Annual external examiner visits from Edexcel provide the required quality oversight.

25 The organisational structure demonstrates clear lines of responsibility and reporting from programme teams to the Higher Education Board and senior management, and through

the link or liaison tutors and external examiners to the university boards. A response to external examiner reports is required by the universities and these are channelled through the Quality and Standards Manager. A similar process is followed in response to Edexcel external examiner reports. The Quality and Standards Manager is able to use these to identify good practice and any generic issues.

26 Operational management of higher education programmes is devolved to the programme leader. The appointment of the Director of Higher Education Development, and the inclusion of responsibility for higher education into the remit of the faculty deputy directors, ensures that oversight of the management of the quality of learning opportunities for higher education is embedded in the College management and reporting structure. This structure ensures that annual monitoring reports, programme reviews and self-evaluation reports are informed by input from student representation, employer links, link tutors and external examiners.

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

27 Termly assessment boards and Quality Monitoring Meetings, supported by the more frequent programme, school and faculty meetings, monitor quality and student progress throughout the year and inform the reports made to the Higher Education Board. Action plans, to address identified areas for improvement, are generated to support the review reports. These are monitored for implementation and completion through the committee structure. The implementation of the action plans developed as a result of the Developmental engagement reviews has resulted in a renewed emphasis on consistency of approach between programme teams.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

28 During the planning and validation of programmes the College, supported by its university partners, ensures that the proposed learning opportunities reflect relevant elements of the Academic Infrastructure. However, post-validation reference to the Academic Infrastructure, for example on assessment practice and support for work-related learning, is limited and staff new to higher education are not, as matter of routine, made aware of the Academic Infrastructure. Paragraphs 14 and 15 provide further comment on the use of the Academic Infrastructure.

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

29 The College assures the quality of teaching through implementation of its policies and procedures for the observation of learning and teaching. The College uses a standard Ofsted-style graded observation format, taking into account the expected level of the observed class. Staff informed the team that, where appropriate, they supplemented this with informal discussion with colleagues of the specific requirements of higher education teaching. All staff are observed at least once each year, but as many staff deliver both further education and higher education, their annual observation may not be at higher education level. The team considers it desirable that the specific characteristics and requirements of teaching and learning in higher education are recognised formally in the teaching observation scheme for sessions delivered at level 4 and above. Staff who are identified as requiring further development are supported by the Advanced Practitioner team to improve their practice. Students were generally positive about the standard of teaching and the range of methods used.

30 Students can express their views through representation at programme team meetings, focus groups, College surveys, and participation in the National Students Survey. An online survey on the virtual learning environment in the autumn term is followed up by tutorial discussions. More formal focus groups are run in the spring term and reported to programme teams and heads of school and inform annual programme monitoring. Positive and negative issues are collated and inform a cross-college report. The route for feedback to students on issues raised is less well defined and can result in students becoming unnecessarily concerned about issues which might affect their learning, but which are, unbeknown to them, in hand. Feedback on issues that are included in the cross-college report are presented in the form of 'You said We did' comments on plasma screens located throughout the College. However issues of specific interest to only one programme would not be included.

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

31 Students value the induction to the College and their programme of study. Individual tutorials are available to all students, with special arrangements for part-time students to maximise their accessibility to this resource. Communication through email and the virtual learning environment is also used to support learning. Students reported positively on the support they receive from programme tutors and most found the detailed feedback on their assignment work very helpful. In the School of Medical Technology turnaround time for assignments and receipt of feedback has been delayed due to the block attendance pattern, where students are in College periodically for short periods of time, and the required double-marking; although in the main, students report that this has not been detrimental to their learning. Support is available from the dyslexia and disability team to which students can self-refer at any time or be referred by their tutor. Information about the support services is provided at induction. The termly College Assessment Board meetings are used to monitor the progress of individual students by the course teams. Early identification of students whose progress gives concern enables additional support to be provided.

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

32 All staff take part in an annual appraisal which, with information from lesson observations, helps to inform their development needs. The College holds staff development days which are currently targeted at the development of teaching and learning, and through its membership of the Pan-London Peer Review and Development Group is able to share and discuss good practice with other institutions. These opportunities ensure that staff take part in a range of activities, within and outside the College, with partner colleges and with awarding bodies.

33 Teaching teams are able to book training sessions from a menu of activities produced by the Advanced Practitioner Team and delivered within the appropriate faculty. The advanced practitioners also work with staff on 'Supported Experiments', which the College uses as a training and development technique. Supported Experiments provide an opportunity to try out new approaches to teaching and learning with the support of an expert colleague who takes on a coaching role, aids reflection and provides feedback and support. This enables the College to capture the ideas of individual staff, and to recognise innovative approaches. The team considers this to be good practice. A newsletter entitled 'Teaching and Learning Communiqué' is produced monthly and reports on training, shares good practice, and supports scholarly research and activity. The self-evaluation makes it clear that mechanisms for recording staff development are not well developed and the College is seeking to address this.

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?

34 Resources required are identified in advance at the programme validation stage. Provision of resources is devolved to the school budgets and includes a system of capital expenditure bidding for high-value capital items. The recent relocation to a new campus has resulted in a programme of renewal and replacement of much of the physical resource. Students are generally satisfied with the resources they use, although in photography there has been some dissatisfaction with the older equipment and the availability of equipment on loan. This is being resolved through the appointment of additional technician support to maintain and monitor the use of specialised equipment. Students on the music production programmes have been concerned about the lack of specialist equipment, notably a public address system. This concern has been raised by students several times over the last year and echoed by the external examiner, but with little feedback from the College on progress made. It is now resolved, with funding agreed. However, the lack of communication between the programme team and the students and external examiner has proved unnecessarily stressful for the students. The team considers it to be desirable that the College ensures that programme resource requirements stipulated at validation are met in a timely fashion and that students are kept informed of the timescale for their procurement.

35 Access to library resources, e-journals and e-books is developing, and students confirm that core texts are available, although medical technology students remain less satisfied and rely on access through their workplaces for some materials. Some students commented that Learning Zone opening hours were restrictive, especially for those on block attendance, and that areas for quiet study are limited. All students regard the virtual learning environment as a useful source of study materials.

36 Most students are in vocationally-related employment. In the medical technology programmes work-based modules and associated assessment are an important component. The photography and music programmes in particular make good use of live project briefs to support the vocational relevance of the programmes and enhance the learning opportunities.

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?

37 Under the terms of its agreements with its awarding bodies the College is responsible for producing all publicity material relating to its higher education programmes. It produces a twice-yearly course guide and publicity leaflets. The College website has recently been updated and contains a clear link to higher education programme information on the home page. Programme information is easily accessed by following links to the web-based versions of the publicity leaflets. The website has awarding body logos on the home page and in the text of the Course Guide there are references to the awarding bodies, but it is not clear which awarding body validates which programmes. Students stated

that while they were aware of the awarding body they were not sure of the nature of the relationship.

38 The website section on fees for higher education students contains useful general information for prospective students and hyperlinks to the government website and Student Finance England. However, programme-specific fee information for students enrolling in 2012 was not available on the website or in course information leaflets until 9 February 2012. Current students reported confusion regarding fee levels before and on enrolment which continued into their second year of study. The team considers it desirable that the College includes more timely, detailed and accurate information on fees and financial support on its website and other documentation to better inform students of the financial implications of undertaking higher education study.

39 The College website section on learning support has no specific higher education additional learning support information and no links from the higher education section of the website. Although the College is currently supporting several higher education students with additional needs, the team considers it desirable that the College provides more detailed information on eligibility and means of application for additional learning support on its website and in other documentation. The College states it has clear procedures for providing information in a variety of formats to suit students with specific needs. However none of the publicity material supplied makes reference to obtaining copies in alternative formats or languages.

40 The College produces a student handbook which incorporates a diary and useful generic college information. University partners produce a programme handbook template; insertion of college-specific information is the responsibility of the College although this has to be approved by the University. The College produces HNC and HND programme handbooks. However, these contain little information on course content and no programme specifications. The HNC Building Services Engineering handbook directs students to the full programme documentation on the Edexcel website, but students on other Edexcel programmes had not accessed this information and, as a result, were not in possession of the definitive programme details. The team considers it advisable that the College reviews the Edexcel programme handbooks to demonstrate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and bring them up to the standard comparable with those provided for students on other programmes.

**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?**

41 The Marketing and Communications team, managed by the College's Head of Strategic Communications, has overall responsibility for the content and design of the website. Heads of school have direct access to the content management system of the website to request changes to course information if approved by the relevant director of faculty. It is the responsibility of the heads of school to ensure that their sections of the website are accurate and current.

42 In a meeting with the team, staff stated that the content of the website was audited at the start of the academic year but were unable to confirm whether this was an annual process. A new post for an e-marketing/website manager to take responsibility for the College website has been identified. However, at the time of the review, there was no post or committee with responsibility for overview of the accuracy and completeness of the information published on the website.

43 The Senior Advanced Practitioner provides guidance on overall content requirements for the virtual learning environment while heads of school are responsible for managing the content for their subject areas. The action plan from the 2010 Developmental engagement included the development of minimum requirements for the uploading of course materials on to the virtual learning environment. This has been completed but the College recognises that not all schools have engaged with the virtual learning environment as fully as they might. It has plans to improve this in the current academic year.

44 The College states that matters relating to public information are discussed at the College's IQER Group which feeds issues into the Higher Education Board and then upwards through the College committee structure. However, there are few references to public information in the minutes of meetings.

45 It is not standard College practice to circulate programme handbooks to employers prior to publication, but employers of students on the BSc (Hons) Clinical Physiology receive the programme handbook in advance and are able to comment on its accuracy and completeness. Students on all programmes are able to give feedback on public information at focus groups and student surveys.

46 The action plans from the 2009 Developmental engagement in assessment, and the 2010 Developmental engagement in the consistency of management of higher education and the comparability of the student experience, included the development of a course information template including reference to assessment. This has been completed and all programmes have a course information leaflet which has been uploaded to the College website, although at the time of the review visit information on fees was missing. The College has now addressed this omission.

47 Students confirm that, with the exception of information on fees, they are generally satisfied with the information they receive. Students on the BSc (Hons) Clinical Physiology highly value their programme and module handbooks. These handbooks are very well presented and contain comprehensive reference materials which provide valuable learning support. The team considers these to be an example of good practice. Students on other programmes feel that their handbooks are satisfactory when supplemented with information available on the virtual learning environment.

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 engagements

2009 Developmental engagement in assessment

48 The Developmental engagement in assessment visit took place in February 2009. The three lines of enquiry, agreed with the College in advance, are set out below. The lines of enquiry reflected a broad range of assessment issues.

Line of enquiry 1: Is the marking of learners' work and the moderation of these marks rigorous, fair and transparent?

Line of enquiry 2: Do students have access to appropriate information about assessment and the materials and resources consistent with the assessment criteria and guidelines in order to complete their work in a timely and appropriate manner?

Line of enquiry 3: Is clear, readily accessible and easy to understand information on assessment available to learners in a variety of formats?

49 The Developmental engagement report identified a range of good practice which included involvement of work-based assessors and professional body moderators in marking and moderation, the wide range of assessment support for students including those with additional needs, and the high quality of published assessment information.

50 The Developmental engagement report also made a number of recommendations. The College was advised to ensure wider use of consistent citation and referencing protocols and better alignment of assessment tasks, grading criteria and mark allocation. It also advised the College to ensure improved student access to specialised resources, including journals and physical facilities. It was felt desirable that best practice in feedback to students on assessed work is shared and that the virtual learning environment be developed to provide students with speedy formative feedback. It was also considered desirable for the College to include assessment information in all course information sheets and their web-based equivalents, and that information in programme handbooks be updated regularly. It was also considered desirable for the College to ensure a more consistent approach to programmes' use of the virtual learning environment. The College has made considerable progress in implementing these recommendations.

2010 Developmental engagement in the management of higher education and comparability of the student learning experience

51 The lines of enquiry for the Developmental engagement agreed with the College in advance of the team's visit are set out below. The lines of enquiry reflected a broad range of issues related to the consistency of the management of higher education and the comparability of the student experience.

Line of enquiry 1: How, and to what extent, does the College deliver consistent management and coordination of its higher education provision to ensure academic standards across programmes?

Line of enquiry 2: To what extent is there a consistent management of quality assurance and improvement procedures to ensure the quality and comparability of learning opportunities for learners on higher education programmes?

Line of enquiry 3: To what extent does the College employ a consistent approach to, and management of, the public information it provides on its higher education provision in order to ensure accuracy and completeness?

52 The Developmental engagement report identified a range of good practice: in citation and referencing, in the clear assessment scheduling across all programmes, and in the effective means of identifying and addressing higher education students' learning support needs. Further good practice was identified in the information provided on learning and pastoral support, provision of student-friendly programme specifications in course handbooks, and comprehensive guidance provided with assignment briefs in a number of subject areas.

53 The Developmental engagement report also made a number of recommendations. It was considered essential for the College to ensure that document management protocols are followed in order that course information sheets are up to date and accurately reflect the current course offer. The College was advised to monitor the effectiveness and transparency of systems for the identification and funding of resources necessary to secure the sustainability of programmes, and to establish clear roles and responsibilities within the College's quality assurance and enhancement structures to support the development of consistent and comparable learning opportunities across programmes. It was also considered advisable for the College to develop and ensure the use of a mandatory course information template which includes reference to assessment and establishes minimum requirements for the deposition of course materials on the virtual learning environment. It was considered desirable for the College to review the terms of reference of the Higher Education Board, to review the systems for monitoring academic standards of its higher education provision, and explore means of simplifying and streamlining its structure and operation. It was also considered desirable for the College to ensure that there is a clear higher education focus in continuing professional development planning, to monitor arrangements for eliciting student feedback, and to seek means of enhancing student engagement with the process. Furthermore it was considered desirable that the College ensured more effective communication with students about organisational changes which impact upon their learning opportunities and to extend the use of interactive materials to support web-based student learning opportunities. The College has made considerable progress in implementing these recommendations.

D Foundation Degrees

54 The College's 2009 Higher Education Strategy identified Foundation Degrees as a major component of its growth plans over the next five years. The College currently offers two Foundation Degrees: the FdA in Professional Photography which is delivered in the Faculty of Arts, Business, Humanities and Leisure and validated by the University of Westminster, and the FdSc in Clinical Physiology which is delivered in the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and is validated by Middlesex University. The remaining students on the FdA Audio Technology have completed and the programme is no longer offered. The College discontinued its HNC Business Studies, run in conjunction with the University of Westminster, and replaced it in November 2010 with a Foundation Degree in Financial Services, validated by the Open University. However, due to circumstances beyond the College's control, this initiative has been discontinued and the College has, in its place, established an Edexcel HND Business Studies.

55 The College's 2012 Higher Education Strategy seeks to expand its Edexcel higher national provision rather than its Foundation Degree provision. Both the University of Westminster and London South Bank University are in discussions with the College to establish progression agreements from an extended range of diplomas to the second and third year of university degrees.

56 The College has a well established commitment to work-based and work-related education which has been exemplified in its Foundation Degree provision. However, student numbers are low and it remains to be seen how viable these programmes remain, particularly in the light of the resurgence in higher national provision.

57 In the course of the review the team identified the following areas of **good practice** in relation to Foundation Degrees:

- the College's thorough, detailed responses to the Developmental engagement reports and the full integration of the resultant action plans into its quality assurance processes facilitates enhancement of its higher education provision (paragraph 13)
- the 'Supported Experiments' programme encourages and facilitates enhancement by promoting and supporting staff-generated developmental activities (paragraph 33).

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

- ensure that the College's teaching and learning observation scheme reflects characteristics and requirements of teaching and learning at level 4 and above (paragraph 29)
- ensure that programme resource requirements stipulated at validation are met in a timely fashion and that students are kept informed of the timescale for their procurement (paragraph 34)
- include more timely, detailed and accurate information on fees and financial support on its website and other documentation to better inform students of the financial implications of undertaking higher education study (paragraph 38)
- provide more easily accessible and detailed information on its website and other documentation regarding eligibility and means of application for additional learning support (paragraph 39).

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

59 The 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 bodies: Edexcel, Middlesex University and the University of Westminster.

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

- the implementation, for its Edexcel provision, of rigorous systems similar to those used to respond to external examiner reports on university-validated programmes which provides a comparable commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards for its higher national programmes (paragraph 12)
- the College's thorough, detailed responses to the Developmental engagement reports and the full integration of the resultant action plans into its quality assurance processes facilitates enhancement of its higher education provision (paragraph 13)
- the 'Supported Experiments' programme encourages and facilitates enhancement by promoting and supporting staff-generated developmental activities (paragraph 33)
- the well structured programme and module handbooks for the BSc (Hons) Clinical Physiology contain comprehensive reference materials which provide a valuable resource to support learning and are highly valued by the students (paragraph 47).

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

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

- produce programme specifications for all its Edexcel higher national programmes to reflect expectations articulated in the Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 14)
- review the Edexcel programme handbooks to demonstrate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and bring them to a standard comparable with those provided for students on validated programmes (paragraph 40).

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

- ensure that the College's teaching and learning observation scheme reflects characteristics and requirements of teaching and learning at level 4 and above (paragraph 29)
- ensure that programme resource requirements stipulated at validation are met in a timely fashion and that students are kept informed of the timescale for their procurement (paragraph 34)
- include more timely, detailed and accurate information on fees and financial support on its website and other documentation to better inform students of the financial implications of undertaking higher education study (paragraph 38)
- provide more easily accessible and detailed information on its website and other documentation regarding eligibility and means of application for additional learning support (paragraph 39).

64 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.

65 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.

66 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.

City of Westminster College action plan relating to the Summative review: February 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
In the course of the Summative review the team identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the College:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the implementation, for its Edexcel provision, of rigorous systems similar to those used to respond to external examiner reports on university-validated programmes which provides a comparable commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards for its higher national 	Seek team feedback on any inhibitors to this system being rolled out across all programmes	April 2012	Quality and Standards Manager	Clarity about any reasons not to roll out system	Vice-Principal Curriculum at Higher Education Board	Review of Higher Education Board minutes
	Consider at IQER Group and Higher Education Board	May 2012	Members of IQER Group and Higher Education Board	Clarity about process for roll over	Vice-Principal Curriculum at Higher Education Board	Review of Higher Education Board minutes
	Roll out as appropriate for 2012-13 start	September 2012	Heads of School	Consistent systems for all higher education programmes	Vice-Principal Quality at Higher Education Board	Review of Higher Education Board minutes

programmes (paragraph 12)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the College's thorough, detailed responses to the Developmental engagement reports and the full integration of the resultant action plans into its quality assurance processes mainstreams enhancement of its higher education provision (paragraph 13) 	IQER Summative review Action Plan integrated in self-evaluation Action Plan	April 2012	Quality and Standards Manager	Self-evaluation Action Plan contains all improvement actions for higher education programmes 2012-13	Vice-Principal Quality at Higher Education Board	Confirmation of plan in Higher Education Board minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'Supported Experiments' programme encourages and facilitates enhancement by promoting and supporting staff-generated developmental activities (paragraph 33) 	<p>Higher education staff to attend the Supported Experiments Fair</p> <p>Higher education staff to identify Teaching and Learning development actions in their Individual Performance Reviews</p>	<p>July 2012</p> <p>October/November 2012</p>	<p>Higher education teaching staff</p> <p>Higher education teaching staff</p>	<p>Good participation at fair by higher education teams</p> <p>Identified continuous professional development in all higher education staff Individual Performance Reviews</p>	<p>Senior Advanced Practitioner (reported at Senior Management Team)</p> <p>Senior Advanced Practitioner</p>	<p>Review records of Supported Experiment Fair attendance</p> <p>Audit Individual Performance Review records</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the well structured programme and module handbooks for the BSc (Hons) Clinical Physiology contain comprehensive reference materials which provide a valuable resource to support learning and are highly valued by the students (paragraph 47) 	IQER Group to consider BSc Clinical Physiology handbook as model and identify good practice to be incorporated in other handbooks (including comprehensive reference materials)	June 2012	IQER Group	All non-BSc teams have identified changes to course handbooks and incorporated them for 2012-13	Director of Higher Education Development at IQER Group	Review at IQER Group October 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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produce programme specifications for all its Edexcel higher national programmes to reflect expectations articulated in the 	All teams to develop and write programme specifications using Academic Infrastructure/Quality Code	July 2012	Heads of School	All programme specifications included on website	Vice-Principal Quality at Higher Education Board	Check that specifications available for all programmes on website

Academic Infrastructure (paragraph 14)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the Edexcel programme handbooks to demonstrate engagement with the Academic Infrastructure and bring them to a standard comparable with those provided for students on validated programmes (paragraph 40) 	IQER Group to determine minimum standards for programme handbooks	April 2012	IQER Group	Minimum standards paper to Higher Education Board	Vice-Principal Curriculum at IQER Group	Check that handbooks are available and comply with agreed standards
	Higher Education Board confirms model	May 2012	Higher Education Board	Minimum standards confirmed	Vice-Principal Curriculum (at Higher Education Board)	
	Minimum standards in place for all programmes	September 2012	Heads of School	Handbooks demonstrate engagement with Academic Infrastructure/Quality Code	Vice-Principal Quality at Higher Education Board	
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:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the College's teaching and learning observation scheme reflects characteristics and requirements of 	Integrate exemplars of best practice for level 4 and above into support and training materials for observers	September 2012	Senior Advanced Practitioner	Policy and Procedures for 2012-13 incorporate exemplars for level 4 and above	Vice-Principal Quality (at Senior Management Team)	Check that moderated observation records show sound judgements for teaching and learning at level 4 and above

teaching and learning at level 4 and above (paragraph 29)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that programme resource requirements stipulated at validation are met in a timely fashion and that students are kept informed of the timescale for their procurement (paragraph 34) 	Validation reports sent to Director of Faculty	April annually (or as required)	Quality and Standards Manager	Resource requirements clearly costed in validation docs	Director of Faculty (Validation Meeting)	Validation document complete
	Resource requirements considered by Senior Leadership Team	As required	Senior Leadership Team	Senior Leadership Team minutes show consideration/approval of resources	Director of Faculty (from Senior Leadership Team)	Review of Senior Leadership Team minutes
	Resource response sent to relevant Director and Head of School for distribution to students	As required	Heads of School	Positive feedback from students through Higher Education focus groups	Quality and Standards Manager (through Higher Education Focus groups)	Student self-evaluation reports satisfaction with responsiveness to queries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include more timely, detailed and accurate information on fees and financial support on its website and other documentation to better inform students of the financial implications of undertaking 	Receive and publish detailed and accurate fee information, including details of financial support by 28 February 2012 for the forthcoming academic year (2012-13)	28 February 2012	Head of Strategic Communication	Accurate fee information appears on website	Vice-Principal Curriculum at Senior Management Team	Review of website
	Agree deadlines for publication for future year	May 2012	Director of Higher Education Development/Head Of Strategic Communication	Publication of schedule	Vice-Principal Curriculum at Senior Management Team and	Higher Education Board minutes

higher education study (paragraph 38)					Higher Education Board	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide more easily accessible and detailed information on its website and other documentation regarding eligibility and means of application for additional learning support (paragraph 39) 	Receive and publish detailed information on eligibility and application process for additional learning support	May 2012 and then in October annually	Head of Strategic Communication/ Head of School of Disability Support	Accurate and accessible information on website	Vice-Principal Quality at Senior Management Team and Higher Education Board	'Mystery shopper' review of details on College website to determine accessibility

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