



# **Integrated quality and enhancement review**

**Summative review**

**Craven College**

**March 2012**

**SR 050/12**

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ISBN 978 1 84979 570 8

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

## 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 Craven College carried out in March 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 Higher Education Scheme is an effective mechanism that facilitates constructive liaison with partner universities and the application of regulatory requirements
- the establishment of productive partnerships with the main awarding body partners has enabled the College to widen access and strengthens the opportunities for higher education in the region
- the support provided by the College for a comprehensive range of staff development opportunities and initiatives enables the development of a stronger research culture and promotes enhancements to learning opportunities
- the strategic approach taken to encourage students' active participation in the quality management of higher education and the systematic use of their views enhances the provision
- the range and high level of personalised support is accessible and especially valuable to part-time students
- the specialist learning resources are greatly enriched by the excellent use staff make of their extensive links with professional practitioners, employers and local industry.

### 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:

- review the assessment marking criteria to ensure they align with the generic outcomes in the Higher Education Scheme and reflect the development of critical autonomy as defined in the FHEQ.

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

- work with the University of Bradford to ensure timely signing of the partnership agreement to further secure academic standards
- improve the robustness of annual monitoring procedures to ensure the accurate and timely recording and evaluation of student withdrawals, retention and progression data

- broaden the terms of reference for the Higher Education Scheme (Standards) Subcommittee to ensure its role in the oversight of the quality of learning opportunities is made fully explicit
- review lesson observation procedures to ensure all higher education staff are observed at this level on a regular basis
- review internal course proposal and development procedures to ensure that learning resource requirements for new programmes are considered in more detail, and costed before submission for validation, to ensure sufficient and timely resourcing of new programmes
- review quality assurance arrangements to ensure the consistency of content and the accuracy of public information on the virtual learning environment.

## 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 Craven 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 Bradford, the University of Huddersfield, York St John University, London Metropolitan University, and Edexcel. The review was carried out by Mr Maldwyn Buckland, Mr Bob Millington, Ms Ann Hill (reviewers) and Mrs Freda Richardson (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 partnership agreements, responsibilities checklists, the Higher Education Scheme, the higher education self-assessment report and quality improvement plan, and annual monitoring reports. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, 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 Craven College is a general further education college occupying seven sites in Skipton, North Yorkshire, five miles from the West Yorkshire and East Lancashire borders. The College opened a purpose-built Aviation Academy situated at Leeds-Bradford International Airport in 2005, with financial support from the regional development agency, Yorkshire Forward. Higher education is offered at three sites including the Aviation Academy.

5 The College offers a wide range of further education provision in all subject sectors. In 2010-11 the College recruited 1,768 full-time students and 4,594 part-time students, of whom 4,139 were adults. Higher education programmes have been offered since 1988 as a small proportion of the College's provision. Significant growth in higher education numbers took place between 2007 and 2009. Current provision is mainly Foundation Degrees with a small number of higher national diplomas and certificates directly validated by Edexcel and some bachelor degrees with honours programmes. In 2011-12 the College enrolled 462 higher education students (315 full-time equivalents) compared with 382 (256 full-time equivalents) in 2010-11. This comprises 139 (112 full-time equivalent) students supported by direct HEFCE funding and a further 323 (203 full-time equivalents) who are indirectly funded.

### Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

6 The College currently has partnership agreements with five awarding bodies. The three main partners are the University of Bradford, York St John University and the University of Huddersfield. The relationship with London Metropolitan University is in its last year of operation and the College has signed (February 2012) a termination agreement that covers arrangements for continuing students. Edexcel provision will mostly complete this



year, although there may be a small number of current HNC Business students who will progress to a part-time HND in 2012-13. The higher education programmes that come within the scope of the review are listed below, beneath their awarding bodies, with full-time equivalent numbers in brackets.

### **Edexcel**

- HND Business - top-up, part-time (3)
- HNC Business - final year, part-time (3.5)
- HNC Fine Art - final year, part-time (2.5)

### **London Metropolitan University**

- FdSc Aviation Management and Operations - final year, part-time (3)

### **University of Bradford**

- BA (Hons) Air Transport Management - full-time (11)
- BA Combined Studies (levels 4 and 5 only) - part-time (9.18)
- BA (Hons) Young Children's Learning and Development - top-up (new), part-time (4.8)
- FdSc Aviation Management and Operations, full and part-time (43.36)
- FdSc Business - (new) part-time (3.35)
- FdSc Computing and Networking - (new) part-time (3.35)
- FdA Fashion and Jewellery (Design for the Body) - part-time (8.04)
- FdA Garden Design - part-time (17.42)
- FdA Hospitality Management - part-time (6.7)
- FdA Media (Moving Image and Audio) - part-time (2.68)
- FdA Outdoor and Adventurous activities - part-time (0.67)
- FdA Performance (Physical Theatre) - (new) part-time (2.68)
- FdA Photography - part-time (10.72)
- FdSc Sports and Development Coaching - (new) part-time (6.03)
- FdA Theatrical and Media Make-up - (new) part-time (7.37)
- FdA Travel Operations Management - full and part-time (17.34)
- FdA Venue and Events Management - part-time (8.04)
- FdA Young Children's Learning and Development - part-time (15.41)

### **University of Huddersfield**

- BA (Hons) Education and Training - part-time (17.4)
- PGCE/Cert Ed - part-time (27.5)

### **York St John University**

- FdA Animal Welfare and Management - full-time (17)
- FdA Environmental Conservation - full and part-time (22.37)
- FdA Equine Science and Husbandry - full-time (23)

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

7 The College's strategy of continuing to grow higher education in line with demand and funding constraints while reducing the number of partnerships has created recent changes and developments including new courses and adjustments to existing courses. The University of Bradford has adopted courses originally validated by Leeds Metropolitan University and these are being converted from 15 to 20 credits in line with the University of Bradford norm. 2011-12 is the transition year for these changes and there is a clear plan to ensure effective completion. Courses validated by York St John University were approved at 15-credits in line with the majority of courses at the College at that time. One course was converted during 2010-11 and the remaining two will be converted during 2011-12 as they become due for review.

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

8 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the team. A student submission was presented with the self-evaluation. This was a summary of focus groups held by the Higher Education Development Manager and Higher Education Administrator with a representative sample of student cohorts. Notes from the focus groups were provided to the team as requested at the preparatory meeting. The focus group meeting notes and the student submission were helpful to the team in validating other sources of evidence. The coordinator met with a group of students at the preparatory meeting and the team held a confidential meeting with a representative group of students during the review 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?**

9 The College manages academic standards through a single cross-college framework, the Higher Education Scheme, which is differentiated from that of the further education provision and relies on the same College curriculum management and support services structures. The scheme framework comprises the Higher Education Scheme Committee, and subcommittees including the Scheme Approvals Board (Assessment), Scheme Approvals Board (Modifications), Scheme Board of Examiners, Scheme Committee (Standards), and Scheme Committee (Approvals).

10 The scheme is managed by the Scheme Management Team composed of the Principal, senior managers including the Director of Curriculum who is the Scheme Leader, the Higher Education Development Manager, route leaders, divisional managers, and heads of departments. The Higher Education Development Manager reports to the Director of Curriculum and coordinates operational and developmental activities in liaison with divisional managers and the Higher Education Scheme Administrator.

11 Internal members of the Higher Education Scheme Committee are the Scheme Leader, Higher Education Development Manager, Quality and Performance Manager, route

leaders, scheme administrator, divisional managers, and heads of department. Awarding body representatives and employer representatives are external members. The scheme committee has an operational and strategic role in the management of academic standards. Staff confirmed that the scheme provides a comprehensive and systematic procedure for the oversight of higher education provision from senior management to course team level. The team considers it to be an effective mechanism for the management of standards and confirms the good practice established during the Developmental engagement.

12 Partnership agreements between the College and its awarding bodies articulate the agreed accountabilities, clearly setting out the respective responsibilities. Monthly monitoring meetings between the College and partner universities confirm consistent oversight of the partnerships and service level agreements. The team noted that the current agreement with the University of Bradford remains to be signed and that ongoing negotiations are taking place. The College confirmed that the agreement should be signed in the near future. The team consider it desirable that the College work with the University of Bradford to ensure the partnership agreement is signed in a timely manner to further secure academic standards.

13 Staff confirmed that close collaborative relationships exist between the College and its main university partners. University liaison representatives commented enthusiastically about the positive relationships they have with staff which contribute to the enhancement of higher education offered by the College. Staff agreed that the helpful and supportive communication established at all levels ensures the effective implementation of quality assurance processes in a timely manner. The establishment of these productive partnerships has enabled the College to widen access and strengthens the opportunities for higher education in the region, and is good practice.

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

14 The College sets and maintains academic standards through engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. Rigorous validation processes demonstrate that the College's curriculum design procedures take full account of the FHEQ, relevant precepts of the *Code of practice*, and subject benchmark statements. Employers are involved in course design and validation in accordance with the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of and engagement with the Academic Infrastructure. They welcome the continuing professional development support provided by the College which enables them to access training on the Academic Infrastructure, for example a session on 'Getting the levels right'.

15 Generic assessment marking criteria set by the College are identical at all levels and vary only on the weighting of the component parts. While the generic outcomes in the Higher Education Scheme are derived from the FHEQ level descriptors, these are not fully reflected in the assessment marking criteria. The level 6 marking criteria contain an element of personal reflection and do not clearly facilitate the development of critical autonomy. In addition the external examiner for the BA (Hons) Air Transport Management top-up reported that dissertation criteria were inappropriately structured for work at this level. In response to the external examiner's feedback the higher education self-assessment report and quality improvement plan includes an action to review marking criteria. Staff stated that the generic marking criteria are effective in providing helpful and structured feedback to students and that their use does not prohibit the development of students' critical skills. They confirmed that the criteria will be reviewed at a staff development event scheduled for May 2012, and updated for the following academic year, but that the overall structure is unlikely to change. The team considers it advisable that the College reviews the assessment marking criteria to ensure they align with the generic outcomes in the Higher Education Scheme and reflect the development of critical autonomy as defined in the FHEQ.

**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 Higher Education Scheme documentation confirms clear lines of responsibility between the College and its awarding bodies. This contributes to the effective management, monitoring and review of provision. Obligations set out in the documentation include the management of processes relating to all higher education courses, assessment procedures and regulations, quality assurance, major and minor modifications, planning and development, admissions and selection, and student support and guidance. External examiners, recommended by the College for validated courses, are appointed by the universities and Edexcel; external examiners for franchised courses are sourced and engaged exclusively by the University.

17 The College's primary mechanism for assuring standards is the annual monitoring process. Course leaders, informed by data produced by the College's management information service, complete a course self-assessment report and quality improvement plan. Course self-assessment reports are subject to a rigorous internal validation process undertaken by the Higher Education Development Manager. In addition, performance reviews of each programme are undertaken by the Quality and Performance Manager and the Higher Education Development Manager. An overall higher education self-assessment report and the quality improvement plan are completed early in the new academic year, incorporating outcomes of the performance reviews and course self-assessment reports. These are received and considered by the Higher Education Scheme (Standards) Subcommittee. A feature of the provision is the good use made of the course self-assessment report validation meetings where the reports are formally graded to discuss the programme as a whole and to assist in the further maintenance and development of standards and quality.

18 There are comprehensive systems and processes in place for annual monitoring, and staff are diligent in discharging their individual roles and responsibilities. However, the team expressed concern at the College's interpretation and utilisation of some higher education data. In-year retention data is monitored but overall cohort retention across two or three-year programmes, and progression between years, is not always scrutinised closely. In addition, the College maps in-year retention data against national cohort benchmarks, resulting in the potential for publishing inflated retention outcomes significantly above national averages. Some key documents such as self-assessment reports and performance reviews have incomplete cohort data and this can result in the inadequate recording and monitoring of specific issues and actions taken. The College is generally clear on causes of specific issues and takes steps to address them. However, the team found little evidence of full monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators and underlying causes. The team considers it desirable that the College improves the robustness of its annual monitoring procedures to ensure the accurate and timely recording and evaluation of student withdrawals, retention and progression data.

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

19 The College's staff development policy incorporates a mandatory training and development programme. This contributes effectively to staff understanding and compliance with Higher Education Scheme requirements. Staff are well supported in attending and engaging with non-mandatory activities including research and scholarship activities and the acquisition of higher qualifications. They take ownership of their individual needs through the

implementation of a personal continuing professional development plan. New staff have access to a range of staff development activities designed to support their induction into the College, its processes and procedures including the Higher Education Scheme and the opportunity to observe established and experienced tutors. There is a comprehensive range of staff development opportunities available to higher education staff. The team considers the College's support for higher education staff development and scholarly activity to be an example of good practice.

**The team concludes that it has confidence in the College's management of its responsibilities as set out in its partnership agreements for the management and delivery of the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding bodies.**

## **Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities**

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

20 Senior management and reporting arrangements for the quality of learning opportunities are as described for academic standards in paragraphs 9 to 11. Day-to-day management of the programmes follows the arrangements set out in the Higher Education Scheme. Activities centre on the work of course team leaders and regular team meetings to which student representatives are invited. Procedures such as the observation of teaching, performance reviews and self-assessment are fully embedded in the College's further education curriculum management and overseen by divisional managers. Other aspects remain distinctive to higher education. For example route operational meetings chaired by the Higher Education Development Manager bring together course team leaders from a cluster of related programmes and are valuable in the development of the College's action plan.

21 Minutes for the Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards) reveal that comparatively few separate agenda items are devoted to learning opportunities and that discussion of these matters normally arises indirectly from consideration of the higher education self-assessment report and its improvement plan. The team considers that it is desirable that the terms of reference of this pivotal subcommittee are broadened to ensure that its role in the oversight of the quality of learning opportunities is made fully explicit. This will facilitate discussion of standard agenda items relevant to learning opportunities.

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

22 The College has substantial delegated responsibilities for managing the quality of higher education learning opportunities. These include admissions and enrolment, tuition and student support, and the provision of resources. Variations required by validating partners are fully understood by staff and are supported in scheme documentation.

23 Opportunities for the College to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its obligations focus on the annual monitoring reports produced at programme and scheme level. The majority of course self-assessment reports are thorough and evaluative in considering the quality of learning opportunities provided to students. When concerns arise the College carries these forward in well focused quality improvement plans.

24 The College has made good progress in implementing its Developmental engagement action plan, for example in improving the consistency of formative feedback and ensuring the timely return of assignments.

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

25 Programme specifications prepared at the time of validation confirm that the Academic Infrastructure has been effectively embedded and informs the delivery of learning opportunities. Staff provided useful examples of the way they were making reference to the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant sections of the *Code of practice* to align the College's provision, especially in relation to admissions and careers guidance.

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

26 The College has an effective teaching, learning and assessment policy applicable to all levels of study. Its emphasis on individualised, vocationally directed learning is fully relevant to the delivery of higher education programmes. Robust arrangements for lesson observations ensure effective implementation and continuous improvements in delivery. Sessions are graded and standardised at curriculum level and individual staff action plans are drawn up, which are then carried forward into appraisals. The results are summarised and incorporated in self-assessment reporting. Standards of higher education teaching and learning are high with 84 per cent of sessions recently observed graded good or better. However, there are no formal arrangements for the observation of higher education lessons and only about 40 per cent of higher education staff are observed, while teaching at this level, in any one year. Regular observation of higher education classes would help ensure consistency and enable all staff to benefit from feedback on matters that are specific to higher education delivery, such as level and currency of teaching. The team considers it desirable that the College reviews its lesson observation procedures to ensure that all staff teaching higher education are observed at this level on a regular basis.

27 Good use is made of student views in the quality assurance of learning opportunities. The importance of this is made clear to students in the higher education directory and student handbooks, and their views are analysed and evaluated in detail at all levels in the self-assessment cycle. A wide range of methods is used to capture the student voice including informal tutorials, questionnaires, consultation with student representatives, and focus groups. The strategic approach taken to encourage students' active participation in the quality management of higher education and the systematic use of their views enhances the provision and is good practice.

28 Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the teaching and learning on their programmes. Teaching staff are well qualified and over 70 per cent have a higher level qualification. All tutors are required to hold a teaching qualification, or acquire one within a set term. Arrangements are sufficiently flexible to enable highly experienced vocational staff, such as a veterinary surgeon and an internationally respected garden designer, to contribute as visiting lecturers. This encourages vocational currency and knowledge exchange on the programmes.

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

29 Student support arrangements are comprehensive and easily accessed. Students receive a high level of individual support from tutors with regular opportunities to discuss progress. Full use is made of email, the internet and mobile phones to ensure that timely support is available wherever students are working, regardless of mode of study.

30 The effectiveness of support for students is reviewed and monitored at programme level and addressed in the student services self-assessment report, which includes a separate improvement plan for higher education. The consistency of support arrangements is underpinned by the use of standard documentation across the provision such as individual learning plans. Students confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the support available to them. The team considers the range and high level of personalised support which is accessible and especially valuable to part-time students to be good practice.

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

31 The College's staff development policy is effective in supporting learning opportunities on higher education programmes. Arrangements include time remission for attending professional development days, funding support for external courses, and the use of annual appraisals for the initiation, monitoring and evaluation of activities. The College has recently set up an annual higher education conference and a scholarly activities group. These initiatives enable the development of a stronger research culture and promote enhancements to learning opportunities, as referred to in the good practice identified in paragraph 19.

### **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?**

32 The higher education resources strategy is fully integrated with further education, based on devolved annual allocations and bids by divisional managers within a coordinated annual cycle. This enables the maintenance of the specialist physical and human resources required by students across all sites. Course team leaders liaise directly with library staff to ensure the sufficiency and currency of learning resources in print and, increasingly, in electronic formats.

33 The College is prioritising the development of the intranet and electronic book and journal provision to maximise opportunities for off-site learning. The higher education virtual learning environment has a wide range of learning materials which streamline access to library resources, course materials, and support information through a single portal. The range of materials available at course level is generally well developed and the virtual learning environment is an effective learning resource.

34 The specialist learning resources are greatly enriched by the excellent use staff make of their extensive links with professional practitioners, employers and local industries, who support work-based learning, educational visits and live projects, or contribute specialist laboratory or land-based facilities or visiting lectures. Such initiatives help to maintain a high level of vocational currency on the programmes and are greatly appreciated by students. The team considers this to be a feature of good practice.

35 Students confirmed their overall satisfaction with the availability of resources, but raised some programme-specific issues. The College has responded well to previous

student concerns and has made improvements. Good examples include enhanced photographic facilities and the extended support and opening hours of the Aviation academy learning resource centre. However, for the new FdSc Sports and Development Coaching, the College's original planning proposal provided insufficient detail to inform effective resource planning. The team considers it desirable that internal course proposal and development procedures are reviewed to ensure that learning resource requirements are considered in more detail and costed before submission for validation, to ensure sufficient and timely resourcing of new programmes.

**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?**

36 The College publishes a dedicated higher education directory which is available electronically as well as in hard copy. It provides information relating to career potential and progression to other programmes of study. Course details provided are also available on the College website. The information is well structured and attractively laid out. It includes details on the modules covered and the entry criteria required for each programme. There are no contributions from employers and the College may wish to consider including case studies to promote their good links with employers. Progression opportunities for students are articulated for all courses. There is inconsistent guidance regarding teaching and learning strategies and no guidance on assessment methods.

37 The awarding bodies and the College have a clear understanding about their respective responsibilities regarding public information. All published materials are available in a variety of accessible formats and media. Logos and various accreditations are visible in all published information and they are clear and distinctive.

38 Course team leaders take responsibility for information included on the virtual learning environment and students are clear about where to find information. Students confirmed that the College's virtual learning environment provides good levels of information and that they know where to find it.

#### **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?**

39 The College works closely with its partner universities to gain approval for published programme information. Formal arrangements are in place to assure the accuracy of information and the College has clear and robust procedures for ensuring the consistency of all published information. Staff confirmed that they were clear about the arrangements.

40 There is a clear process for approving information for the higher education directory. Course team leaders are responsible for ensuring the consistency and accuracy of the course-level information by providing and revising an online document held centrally by



the marketing department. The Director of Curriculum is responsible for approving and signing it off.

41 At programme level, course team leaders sign off draft copies of published information and proof materials are sent for checking and approval to partner universities. Information required for the higher education directory and for course-specific leaflets is provided by the College's marketing department and approved by the appropriate university marketing department. Partner universities are satisfied with the quality assurance processes which assure the accuracy and completeness of published information, including the system for checking the timings of changes to information and any subsequent inconsistencies that may occur.

42 The College has responded effectively to the Developmental engagement recommendation to improve the security and robustness of the system designed to ensure the accuracy and completeness of all published information on assessment. The team found that these processes are effective and found no inconsistencies or discrepancies regarding the presentation of published information on assessment on the website, in the directory or on the virtual learning environment.

43 The College provides templates for course and module handbooks to ensure a standardised approach to information available to students. Module handbooks contain individual assessments and details on submission procedures. Standard templates for course and module handbooks are widely used. In response to the Developmental engagement, all module handbooks are available on the virtual learning environment.

44 Course team leaders are responsible for ensuring the consistency and accuracy of course-level information on the College virtual learning environment. There are some variations and inconsistencies in types of materials contained on the virtual learning environment and some resources are out of date, for example on the FdA Venue and Events Management programme. College staff undertake spot checks for compliance with specified content. The team considers it desirable that the College review the quality assurance arrangements to ensure the consistency of content and accuracy of public information on the virtual learning environment.

45 Students confirmed that they are satisfied with the accuracy of published information that they were supplied with before they enrolled and subsequent to enrolment, and that they receive all the programme information they require to achieve the programme intended learning outcomes.

46 The marketing department has responsibility for updating and assuring the accuracy of the College website and its content, and this takes place on a regular basis. The website is easy to navigate, uncluttered and accessible. Students commented that they find the website easy to use and could find the course they were looking for before enrolment. Students were unaware that they could contribute to its development and continuous improvement.

**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**

47 The Developmental engagement took place in November 2010. The review considered three lines of enquiry, as follows.

**Line of enquiry 1:** What impact does formative assessment and formative feedback have on students' learning and achievement?

**Line of enquiry 2:** How does the College implement and adhere to assessment regulations?

**Line of enquiry 3:** How consistent and accurate is the information provided to students on assessment and how does student feedback impact on assessment practices?

48 The team found that the strategic management of higher education and in particular the development of the Higher Education Scheme, formative feedback on summative assessments and the variety and vocational relevance of assessment tasks to be good practice.

49 The College was advised to improve the security and robustness of the system designed to ensure the accuracy and completeness of all published information on assessment. The team considered it desirable that the College implement strategies to share best practice in providing written feedback on summative assessments, develop a more consistent approach to formative assessment that supports all students in improving their performance and achievement, and develop strategies to monitor the return of marked work and ensure that it complied with the College policy of a three-week turnaround time.

## **D Foundation Degrees**

50 The College offers 18 Foundation Degrees validated by the University of Bradford and York St John University. The majority of this report therefore refers to Foundation Degree provision and all the findings relate to Foundation Degree awards.

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

51 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, the University of Bradford, the University of Huddersfield, York St John University, London Metropolitan University, and Edexcel.

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

- the Higher Education Scheme is an effective mechanism that facilitates constructive liaison with partner universities and the application of regulatory requirements (paragraph 11)
- the establishment of productive partnerships with the main awarding body partners has enabled the College to widen access and strengthens the opportunities for higher education in the region (paragraph 13)

- the support provided by the College for a comprehensive range of staff development opportunities and initiatives enables the development of a stronger research culture and promotes enhancements to learning opportunities (paragraphs 19 and 31)
- the strategic approach taken to encourage students' active participation in the quality management of higher education and the systematic use of their views enhances the provision (paragraph 27)
- the range and high level of personalised support is accessible and especially valuable to part-time students (paragraphs 29 and 30)
- the specialist learning resources are greatly enriched by the excellent use staff make of their extensive links with professional practitioners, employers and local industry (paragraph 34).

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

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

- review the assessment marking criteria to ensure they align with the generic outcomes in the Higher Education Scheme and reflect the development of critical autonomy as defined in the FHEQ (paragraph 15).

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

- work with the University of Bradford to ensure timely signing of the partnership agreement to further secure academic standards (paragraph 12)
- improve the robustness of annual monitoring procedures to ensure the accurate and timely recording and evaluation of student withdrawals, retention and progression data (paragraph 18)
- broaden the terms of reference for the Higher Education Scheme (Standards) Subcommittee to ensure its role in the oversight of the quality of learning opportunities is made fully explicit (paragraph 21)
- review lesson observation procedures to ensure all higher education staff are observed at this level on a regular basis (paragraph 26)
- review internal course proposal and development procedures to ensure that learning resource requirements for new programmes are considered in more detail, and costed before submission for validation, to ensure sufficient and timely resourcing of new programmes (paragraph 35)
- review quality assurance arrangements to ensure the consistency of content and the accuracy of public information on the virtual learning environment (paragraph 44).

56 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.

57 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.

58 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.

**Craven College action plan relating to the Summative review: March 2012**

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
<p>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:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Higher Education Scheme is an effective mechanism that facilitates constructive liaison with partner universities and the application of regulatory requirements (paragraph 11)</li> </ul>	<p>Annual review of the effectiveness of the Higher Education Scheme with partner universities and awarding organisations</p>	<p>July 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Scheme Leader</p>	<p>Mutual agreement that Higher Education Scheme continues 2012-13</p>	<p>Principal</p>	<p>Discussion with partners</p> <p>Annual Monitoring Reports</p> <p>Higher education quality improvement plan</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the establishment of productive partnerships with the main awarding body partners has enabled the College to widen access and strengthens the</li> </ul>	<p>Extend opportunities for relevant local full-time vocational higher education through regular formal meetings with partners to agree joint responses to the challenges of the higher education</p>	<p>July 2013</p>	<p>Higher Education Scheme Leader</p>	<p>Recruitment from Widening Participation categories</p> <p>Increased recruitment to vocational higher education</p>	<p>Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)</p>	<p>Higher education self-assessment report 2013-14</p>

opportunities for higher education in the region (paragraph 13)	sector			Productive partnership meetings as measured through partner evaluation feedback		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the support provided by the College for a comprehensive range of staff development opportunities and initiatives enables the development of a stronger research culture and promotes enhancements to learning opportunities (paragraphs 19 and 31)</li> </ul>	<p>Staff development programme to respond to changing needs</p> <p>Extension of the activities of the Scholarly Activity Group</p> <p>Scholarly Activity Group activities to be aligned to the FHEQ</p> <p>Continue to provide support for relevant staff development activities</p>	July 2013	Higher Education Development Manager	<p>Improved participation in scholarly activity and more accurate recording, sharing and dissemination</p> <p>Student feedback will be gathered through questionnaires/focus groups as appropriate to measure the impact of staff development activities on their learning experiences</p>	Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)	Higher education self-assessment report 2012-13 and quality improvement plan 2013-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the strategic approach taken to encourage students' active participation in the quality management of higher education and the systematic use of their views</li> </ul>	<p>Annual schedule of thematic student focus groups</p> <p>Encourage further involvement of students in the decision-making process by increasing attendance of students at Route Operation</p>	September 2012	Higher Education Administration Coordinator	<p>Programme scheduled and meetings take place</p> <p>A broad and diverse representation of student voice and appropriate evaluation of impact on programme quality</p>	<p>Route Operational Meetings</p> <p>Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)</p>	Higher education self-assessment report 2012-13 and quality improvement plan 2013-14

enhances the provision (paragraph 27)	Meetings					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the range and high level of personalised support is accessible and especially valuable to part-time students (paragraphs 29 and 30)</li> </ul>	<p>Deploy experienced tutors in staff development session on support for students</p> <p>Increase publicity for support for part-time students</p>	September 2012	<p>Higher Education Development Manager</p> <p>Student Services Coordinator</p>	<p>Programme in place</p> <p>Publicity in place</p>	Route Operational Meetings	Higher education self-assessment report 2012-13 and quality improvement plan 2013-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the specialist learning resources are greatly enriched by the excellent use staff make of their extensive links with professional practitioners, employers and local industry (paragraph 34)</li> </ul>	Monitor learning resources to ensure they remain relevant to the vocational areas and support staff to continue and develop employer links	January 2013	Higher Education Development Manager	<p>All resourced appropriately</p> <p>Capture the use staff make of their excellent employer links to enrich learning resources through external examiner feedback</p>	Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)	Mid-year review of quality improvement plan 2012-13

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the assessment marking criteria to ensure they align with the generic outcomes in the Higher Education Scheme and reflect the development of critical autonomy as defined in the FHEQ (paragraph 15)</li> </ul>	Review marking criteria with a specific focus on level 6 in conjunction with partner universities	June 2012	Higher Education Development Manager	Revised marking criteria approved and in place and commented on in external examiners' reports	Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)	External examiner reports
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is <b>desirable</b> for the College to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with the University of Bradford to ensure timely signing of the partnership agreement to further secure academic</li> </ul>	Discussions with the University of Bradford to finalise the agreement	June 2012	Principal and Higher Education Scheme Leader	Partnership agreement signed by June 2012 and by September each year for the following year	Senior Management Team	Accurate financial forecasting 2012-13



standards (paragraph 12)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improve the robustness of annual monitoring procedures to ensure the accurate and timely recording and evaluation of student withdrawals, retention and progression data (paragraph 18)</li> </ul>	<p>Timely reporting of cohort data</p> <p>In-year retention issues to be formally reported to the Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards), through a mid-year updating of the Quality Improvement Plan to show impact of actions to date</p>	<p>June 2012; October 2012; January 2013</p>	<p>Management Information Systems</p> <p>Higher Education Development Manager</p>	<p>Data reported in a timely manner</p> <p>Issues formally reported and actions continue to be evaluated for impact on performance indicators</p>	<p>Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)</p>	<p>Higher education self-assessment report 2011-12 and quality improvement plan 2012-13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>broaden the terms of reference for the Higher Education Scheme (Standards) Subcommittee to ensure its role in the oversight of the quality of learning opportunities is made fully explicit (paragraph 21)</li> </ul>	<p>Terms of reference to be reviewed and agreed with partner universities</p>	<p>May 2012</p>	<p>Higher Education Scheme Leader</p>	<p>Revised terms of reference in place for 2012-13</p>	<p>Principal</p>	<p>Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review lesson observation procedures to ensure all higher education staff are observed at this level on a regular basis (paragraph 26)</li> </ul>	Lesson Observations planned for 2012-13 and 2013-14 to ensure that higher education tutors are observed teaching higher education sessions over a two-year cycle	July 2012	Higher Education Development Manager  Teaching & Learning Manager	At least 50% of higher education tutors observed teaching higher education sessions in 2012-13	Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)	Higher education self-assessment report 2012-13 and quality improvement plan 2013-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review internal course proposal and development procedures to ensure that learning resource requirements for new programmes are considered in more detail, and costed before submission for validation, to ensure sufficient and timely resourcing of new programmes (paragraph 35)</li> </ul>	Review procedures to ensure that accurate costings are in place prior to validation	June 2012	Director of Curriculum	Costings in place prior to validations and resources in place in response to enrolments	Senior Management Team	Validated courses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review quality assurance arrangements to ensure the consistency of content and the accuracy of</li> </ul>	Prepare virtual learning environment guidelines for staff to ensure the consistency and accuracy of content	July 2012	Higher Education Scheme Leader  Higher Education Development Manager	Consistent and accurate content	Higher Education Scheme Committee (Standards)	Higher education self-assessment report 2012-13 and quality improvement plan 2013-14

public information on the virtual learning environment (paragraph 44)	<p>Include above in staff development programme</p> <p>Investigate procedures for monitoring content</p>		Technology Services Manager			
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**RG 920 06/12**

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