



Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

North Lindsey College

June 2012

SR 080/12

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 689 7

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk

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 bodies 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 North Lindsey College carried out in June 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 comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement procedures encourage ownership of the processes by programme teams and reinforce their relationships with the awarding bodies
- the opportunities for joint staff and student research enhance student learning
- the peer collaboration scheme encourages teachers to reflect on their own practices and to work collaboratively to enhance the quality of teaching and learning
- the short credit-rated modules offered at pre-entry stage support students' achievement and progression and prepare them effectively for the next stage of their studies in higher education
- the strategies that engage employers at many different levels of the provision enhance the quality of student learning and their employability
- the academic advocacy policy and processes inform students' understanding of assessment and enhance their achievement and progression
- the interdisciplinary student experience group encourages dialogue between students on different programmes and provides their composite views of the provision
- the auditing procedures for public information provide systematic and transparent processes for the review and revision of documentation by staff.

Recommendations

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

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

- make students fully aware of the role that student representatives play in representing their views
- develop further its strategies to secure for its students wider, more timely and effective access to key texts and electronic sources of information
- introduce a formal policy and protocols for the access, regulation and control of information exchanged between staff and students using social and other networks.

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 North Lindsey 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 Bishop Grosseteste University College, Edexcel, the University of Huddersfield, University of Hull, Lincoln and Sheffield Hallam University. The review was carried out by Mr Tom Cantwell, Ms AnnMarie Colbert, Ms Pat Millner (reviewers) and Mr Robert Hodgkinson (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, the awarding bodies, meetings with staff and students, reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted. In particular, the team drew on the findings and recommendations of the Developmental engagement in assessment. A summary of findings from this Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also considered the College's use of the Academic Infrastructure, developed by QAA on behalf of higher education providers, with reference to the *Code of practice*, 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 North Lindsey College is a general further education college offering courses to the North Lincolnshire community. It was established in 1953 as a technical college and was originally closely linked to the steel industry. It has since developed and expanded to offer provision across most curriculum areas. In 1992 the University of Lincoln granted it associate college status. Until 2003 the provision was franchised, and consequently it moved to direct HEFCE funding and established a University Centre for its higher education provision. Thirty full-time, part-time and fractional staff support this. There are 2,687 full and part-time further education students.

5 Six awarding bodies validate the provision. There are 845 higher education students, of whom 408 are full-time and 437 part-time, making approximately 634 full-time equivalents.

Higher education provision at the College

6 The current higher education awards are as follows, with the relevant awarding bodies and full-time equivalent student numbers in brackets.

Bishop Grosseteste University College

- FdA Children's Services (Early Childhood) (81)

Edexcel

- HNC/D Engineering (148)
- HND Tourism and Hospitality (9)

Integrated quality and enhancement review

University of Huddersfield

- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education and the Certificate in Education (56)
- BA (Honours) Education (17)

University of Hull

- FdA Children's Services (6)
- FdA Counselling (26)
- FD (Education) Learning Support (25)

University of Lincoln

- BA (Honours) Business Studies (45)
- BA (Honours) English and History (72)
- BA (Honours) Social Science (89)
- FdA Human Resource Management and Business (42)
- FdA Leadership and Management (34)
- FdSc Computer Information Systems (58)
- FdSc Sport Performance and Exercise Development (30)
- HND Business Studies (43)

Sheffield Hallam University

- FdEng Integrated Engineering (32)
- FdEng Integrated Engineering (Top Up) (31)

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

7 The collaborative agreements with the five university awarding bodies and Edexcel define the operational responsibilities of the College. These outline the structure and scope of the collaboration between the partners. The awarding bodies are responsible for programme design and approval, validation, ensuring common standards, moderation, final assessment and award, regular meetings to monitor quality and the process of annual evaluation and continual improvement of academic outcomes. The College is responsible for acceptance of applications, programme delivery, assessment and internal moderation, the quality of teaching and learning, application of the awarding bodies' standards, regular internal monitoring of quality and compliance with awarding body requirements for annual evaluation and review.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

8 The College and the University of Lincoln are developing a number of full-time level 6 programmes for introduction in September 2012. A new BA (Hons) in Applied Studies, approved by Bishop Grossteste University College, is due to start in September 2012. It will provide progression opportunities for entry to level 6 programmes from the FdA Children's Services (Early Childhood). Two new Foundation Degrees in Biosciences and Biochemistry have been developed by the College and validated by Sheffield Hallam University. The College has extended its links with a locally based international steel company to offer a Foundation Degree in Integrated Engineering. The College is developing its science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes to provide an internal progression route for A-level entry to its higher education programmes. By September 2012,

the College expects to open a higher education learning village to promote its higher education provision and ethos.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

9 Students studying on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. The FdA Children's Services (Early Childhood) students devised a research plan as part of a programme module. They proposed using a focus group leading to a written submission and suggested suitable questions. The College's Student Experience Group agreed these with some revisions. Subsequently the College advised them that the submission need not be written and the students decided to submit a video response using the questions already agreed. The focus group questions were distributed to all student representatives and the questions were discussed. The student representatives took notes during this discussion and then used these to inform the summary discussions. A number of these discussions were videoed, edited and submitted by the students. They represent an accurate reflection of the views presented. During the visit the students were given the opportunity to expand on some of the points that were made in the submission. Their evidence was of value to the team in reaching its judgements.

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 Formal agreements and academic regulations prescribe clearly the respective responsibilities of each partner in a range of processes and procedures that include their accountability for quality assurance, programme management, student recruitment, admissions and support. Additional responsibilities are reflected in awarding body and College policies, procedures and other documentation, that include assessment and teaching and learning strategies. These policies and other documents appropriately reflect the precepts of the *Code of practice*.

11 Structures for the management of academic standards are clearly delineated and appropriate, reflecting the relationships between the College and each awarding body and awarding organisation. The provision is managed as a separate specialised function in the College's University Centre. The Director of Higher Education, who has overall responsibility for the strategic development of the provision, leads the Directorate Management Team. This comprises the Director of Higher Education, an Associate Director of Higher Education, three higher education coordinators and administrative support.

12 The internal reporting structures are appropriate to the College's arrangements with the awarding bodies and effective in supporting the management of the responsibilities delegated. The College's Corporation Board receives twice-yearly reports on the provision from the Principal and an annual higher education self-evaluation report for its approval. The Senior Management Team receive monthly briefings from the Director of Higher Education who chairs the College's Higher Education Board of Studies. The Board of Studies receives strategic level minutes and papers from all awarding bodies. This body

Integrated quality and enhancement review

approves and monitors the higher education self-evaluation and development plan, reviews the external examiner action plan, programme level reports and quality action plans.

13 Subject teams are organised into cognate groups and there are monthly operations meetings chaired by programme leaders. These meetings analyse programme data, address student performance and provide opportunities for sharing experience. The meetings are used effectively to share good practice and to ensure consistency between the awarding body academic policies and the *Code of practice*. The Associate Director of Higher Education reports their outcomes at Directorate Management Team meetings. Following its Developmental engagement, action plans are progressed more effectively.

14 Programme Leaders chair course committee meetings at which students' progress, the outcomes of module evaluations and other forms of student feedback are monitored and reviewed. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Development Group acts as a forum for the consideration of improvements to the College's quality assurance and enhancement processes and procedures.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

15 There is a high level of engagement with the Academic Infrastructure that is well embedded in the College's processes and procedures. As new programmes have been developed and validated by awarding bodies, staff knowledge and understanding of the FHEQ, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and relevant subject benchmark statements have become well established. The College's more recent development of honours degree programmes has extended familiarisation and use of the Academic Infrastructure to underpin academic standards. Staff are adept at differentiating the level of teaching and learning and skills requirements to support students' transition from one level to the next. An induction programme and checklist developed by the Business and Management subject team ensures that all staff new to teaching in higher are made aware of the relevant programme specifications, university regulations and quality assurance procedures that underpin delivery of the programmes. Management-led staff development sessions at higher education symposia and the Quality Enhancement and Development Group meetings maintain staffs awareness of the Academic Infrastructure.

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 Curriculum development is shared between the College and the awarding bodies and with Edexcel. The programme teams develop programmes for awarding body partner validation with the support of the Director of Higher Education or the Associate Director of Higher Education. Sheffield Hallam University has commended the quality of the documents prepared for the validation of its programmes. The awarding body develops the curriculum for the Bishop Grosseteste University College provision. Responsibility for examination boards resides with each awarding body. For the University of Hull provision, the College's Associate Director of Higher Education chairs the module and programme boards. The Edexcel awards boards are devolved to the College. Following the Developmental engagement recommendations, the Associate Director of Higher Education chairs the Edexcel award boards. The College's obligations for the operation of examination and award boards are discharged effectively.

17 The College has established comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement procedures that promote a high level of ownership by programme teams. These are well matched to, and underpin, the College's relationships with the awarding bodies. The phased

annual quality assurance and enhancement process enables teams to undertake timely reviews of programme performance, their operation and management. Programme annual monitoring reports inform the discursive critical review of cognate areas. Cognate area reviews for the programme groups provide programme teams with the opportunity to work collaboratively with one another. The reviews provide a specific focus on assessment and student feedback, stimulating self-evaluation, action planning and the sharing of good practice between programmes. These then become part of the annual higher education self-evaluation report. The comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement procedures encourage ownership of the processes by programmes teams and reinforce their relationships with the awarding bodies. This represents good practice.

18 All programmes are selected for programme performance review within a four-year cycle. The impact of the process of review is evident in improvements made to the management and delivery of the programmes. These improvements include the development of work-based and placement learning and programme handbooks for the FdSc Computer Information Systems programmes, and the enhanced approach to the provision of academic advocacy adopted in the BA (Hons) Social Science programme. The FdSc Sport Performance and Exercise Development team used the review process to develop strategies to improve retention. The outcomes of programme performance reviews inform the annual monitoring reports.

19 The approach to self-evaluation is comprehensive and enables the College to assure itself of the effectiveness of its management structures and processes for the assurance of academic standards. The higher education self-evaluation document and the development plan that arises from it are key elements in the quality assurance and enhancement cycle. Following approval by the Corporation the development plan is received and monitored by the Board of Studies.

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

20 The College has effective measures to stimulate staff development. These include management-led staff development for individual staff or programme teams and other in-college or externally based opportunities. There are opportunities for staff to exchange teaching roles at their partner universities. The College's Higher Education Development Plan requires staff to maintain their currency with regard to key policies and the Academic Infrastructure. It also identifies College initiatives, such as academic advocacy tutorials for staff development. An effective performance appraisal and development review policy and process provides the basis for the monitoring and evaluation of individual and team development needs. These needs are discussed in the context of programme performance statistics and annual review reports.

21 The College has introduced a range of systems and practices to promote a discrete higher education identity within the institution. These include regular higher education symposia and quality assurance and enhancement development group meetings. The latter provide the opportunity for all staff to undertake internal staff development activities. College staff are also encouraged to attend and to present academic papers at conferences. A higher education symposium is held twice yearly to encourage the transfer of good practice between programmes and cognate areas. Some development sessions are delivered by the awarding bodies and have included the consideration of academic regulations and specific sessions relating to the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. Each event is formally evaluated.

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

Core theme 2: Quality of learning opportunities

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

22 Responsibilities for the management of the quality of learning opportunities and reporting arrangements are detailed in paragraphs 10 to 14. The structures provide for the engagement of staff, cross-fertilisation of ideas and the enhancement of teaching and learning. Communication between the College and each awarding body is well established and effective. The Principal, Director of Higher Education and the Associate Director of Higher Education represent the College at awarding body strategic boards and committees. Responsibility for ensuring each programme leader fulfils the requirements of their role in assuring the maintenance of academic standards rests with the Director of Higher Education. Programme leaders maintain productive dialogue with their respective awarding body through attendance at course committee and moderation meetings and in liaison with designated awarding body representatives.

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

23 The processes by which the College assures itself it is fulfilling its obligations in providing appropriate learning opportunities are supported by paragraphs 16 to 19. The review of curricula, teaching, learning and assessment is accomplished through well-established forms of student feedback including module evaluations. This information is included in the mid-year programme area interim review process that contributes to the first cycle of meetings and reporting, which informs the annual monitoring reports. These inform college-level reporting. The programme area interim review process gives staff the opportunity to identify potential strengths and areas in need of development and to provide evaluative commentary. Action plans from the previous period are made available, to which programme teams are required to respond. This information is used to inform monthly operations meetings and the Higher Education Board of Studies. Recently the review has been revised to include consideration of mid-year module evaluation results so that timely feedback can be provided to students groups. In addition the review has included emerging development areas to which programme teams are required to indicate progress made. These processes are rigorous.

24 Responsibility for assessment differs depending upon the requirements of the programme and awarding body. Internal moderation of module assessments is transparent and precedes moderation by the awarding body and review by external examiners. The College has responded to a recommendation in its Developmental engagement by developing more explicit written guidelines for the management of the assessment of Edexcel programmes. For the University of Huddersfield awards, consortium meetings enable all college partners to focus on assessment outcomes. External examiner feedback also informs the quality assurance and enhancement process. Their reports are generally positive. Student satisfaction is generally good and they value the support provided

by staff. In addition the attendance of external examiners at the internal progress boards for all of the Business and Management programmes provides additional scrutiny and feedback on students' progress.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

25 The processes by which the College takes account of the Academic Infrastructure are reflected in paragraph 15. The College has mapped its policies and procedures to the precepts of the *Code of practice*. Previous staff development has focused on employability within the curriculum, approaches to work-based learning and support for disabled students. Future higher education symposium events will include a session on the implementation of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Staff gave examples of sections of the *Code of practice* that had influenced the design and content of programmes. These included embedding career planning in the BA (Hons) English and History degree curriculum and producing a work-based learning briefing document for FdSc Computer Information Systems programme.

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

26 A learning and teaching strategy provides an effective framework for promoting high quality, innovative teaching which enhances students' employability and develops their high-level skills. The strategy identifies key performance indicators against which to judge the effectiveness of staff. Staff are enthusiastic and inventive in their teaching and students verify that they enjoy a varied range of teaching and learning methods. The FdSc Sport Performance and Exercise Development students benefit greatly from tutors who are research active and the input of professional practitioners acting as consultants. Research-engaged teaching is fostered in which students become part of an academic project and collaborate with staff. The outcomes of research projects are presented at subject enhancement sessions and published in a College research and scholarship periodical. These opportunities for joint staff and student research enhance student learning and represent good practice.

27 The College undertakes management-led teaching observations based on Ofsted's protocol. It has also introduced a peer collaboration scheme to replace its peer observation of teaching scheme. The new scheme provides the opportunity for staff to reflect on their teaching and to work collaboratively with peers, to develop further the themes identified by the directorate and those areas chosen by them. Current themes include academic advocacy (see paragraph 32), assessment and feedback. Staff are committed to at least three meetings with their peers. The scheme is effective in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and represents good practice.

28 The College has introduced short credit-rated modules that are validated by the University of Hull. These are delivered independently of programme timetables, often prior to the start of the academic year. Most of the modules are free to students and offer opportunities for credits to be gained that can be used to count toward the completion of full programmes. They include a degree starter module, a bridging course for business students, mathematical skills for engineering students and a module that encourages student engagement in higher education. The modules benefit students who have little prior experience of studying in higher education, they build students' confidence, and help them to develop relevant study skills. Students are very positive about the benefits of these modules that are judged as good practice.

29 The College engages in a wide variety of strategies to gain employers' participation in enhancing the delivery of the provision. The College provides examples covering Engineering, Sport and Children's Services that illustrate the strong industrial links with employers. Gaining employers' participation enhances students' opportunities for work placement, consultancy, project work and employability. Teaching syllabuses are tailored to employer needs and specialist modules offered to meet the needs of local industry. Employers are involved in College conferences and judging student projects. The strategies that engage employers at many different levels of the provision enhance the quality of student learning and their employability are judged as good practice.

30 Students' views on the quality of teaching are represented in the National Student Survey, as well as a College higher education survey based on National Student Survey questions. Students provide additional feedback at the student experience group, in student representation on course committees and at the Higher Education Board of Studies. The College subjects this information to detailed analysis. However, there is some variability in students' awareness of the role that student representatives play in providing feedback. Students need to be better informed about who represents them and what committee's student representatives can attend. It is desirable that the College makes students fully aware of the role that student representatives play in representing their views.

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

31 Student support is well developed and underpinned by a comprehensive higher education management structure, an extensive reporting system and a dedicated higher education information and advice office. Students benefit from well-designed induction programmes that introduce them to a range of support. In addition programme-related support is offered including a course socialisation event. The systems to identify needs and provide additional support are clear and effective including detailed information on the College website and access to the College's Success Centre.

32 An academic advocacy policy provides additional support for each student as they undertake their assessments. This complements the advice given by tutors in tutorials. Designated staff are provided with an extra time allowance to undertake the role of academic advocate. The academic advocacy staff handbook provides a framework for academic advocates to guide and support students from induction to programme completion. The handbook provides for the collection of statements from each student on their progress, maintains examples of evidence to support their statements and uses a tracking template to record their progress. The process demonstrates the College's commitment to monitor, support and encourage students to improve their skills. It informs students' understanding of assessment and enhances their achievement and progression and is judged to be good practice.

33 A student experience group has been established to encourage inter-disciplinary dialogue within the student community. The College has provided students with training to help them prepare for the meetings. The establishment of an interdisciplinary student experience group encourages dialogue between students on different programmes and provides their composite views and feedback on the provision. It is judged to be good practice.

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

34 Staff are highly qualified and benefit from the College's support in gaining their qualifications. They are encouraged to undertake scholarly activity that includes

publishing academic papers, engaging in doctoral research and attendance at conferences. Cognate area reviews, which promote cross-curricular discussion of quality matters arising from programme level review systems, identify opportunities or needs for staff development for individuals or teams. The College has a policy of recruiting new staff that are appropriately qualified and who preferably already hold a teaching qualification. New staff not holding a teaching qualification are encouraged to undertake a suitable programme that the College finances. The induction of new staff includes provision for their mentoring and shadowing. The training of new staff is comprehensive and includes awarding body staff development opportunities.

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?

35 The College's higher education provision is located in discrete, dedicated accommodation. A separate library is provided and new, high quality buildings are used to house the entirety of the higher education provision. Students are generally satisfied with the standard and availability of physical resources and specialist equipment. Following its Developmental engagement report, library resources have improved, including access to key texts at times of peak demand. However the students still experience difficulties in obtaining texts. The timing of some assignments can place additional demands for large numbers of texts, in particular for open book examinations. There are widely different systems of access to awarding body library facilities and to electronic references and books. Some students have full access and others have none. It is desirable for the College to develop further its strategies to secure for its students wider, more timely and effective access to key texts and electronic sources of information.

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 materials that the College publishes include its higher education prospectus, programme and module handbooks and various publicity leaflets. Most of this is published on its website. The College's website is attractively designed to engage students and provides access to the information that the College publishes, including programme materials. The prospectus, which is also published on the website, is comprehensive and contains information on the entirety of the provision. This includes general information on studying, access to finance and requirements for attendance. The information on work-based learning is well structured. A substantial work placement employer pack is provided for the FdSc Sport Performance and Exercise Development programme that contains detailed information for both employers and students on feedback, planning and the employers' contribution to assessment. This is also available on the website.

37 The College maintains a social media account that it uses to publicise information on events. Some staff have set up social media groups to promote dialogue and to share ideas with students on their work. The College is exploring further the potential value of social media but is aware of the dangers of unrestricted activity. At present it is reliant on

informal guidance to staff and students and no formal policy or protocols have been developed fully. It is desirable for the College to introduce a formal policy and protocols for the access, regulation and control of information exchanged between staff and students using social and other networks.

**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?**

38 Where an awarding body validates programmes, responsibilities for providing information and ensuring their accuracy and completeness are shared between it and the College. These responsibilities are articulated in the partner agreements. The College is solely responsible for information relating to the Edexcel awards. University of Huddersfield programmes and modules are standardised across the consortium and supplied complete to the College. For programmes validated by the Universities of Lincoln and Hull responsibility is delegated mainly to the College. The Bishop Grosseteste University College supplies the contents of the programme handbook, which is formatted by the College. The awarding bodies, some of which conduct periodic checking reviews of materials, approve information for the higher education prospectus. The College's comprehensive checklist and quality assurance cycle describes clearly the responsibilities of staff for the origination, review, approval and frequency of revision of all public information. It is an effective basis for ensuring that public documents are checked and updated.

39 The College operates an effective approvals procedure for all information that is distributed externally. A transparent and comprehensive audit trail is evident from the originator of the document to the final approval. This information includes non-standard letters, posters, advertisements, press releases and other written communications. Standard templates are downloadable from the staff intranet. This process ensures the accuracy and effective version control of promotional material. The Director of Higher Education is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and completeness of all information that is published externally.

40 Once approved by the College and awarding body, programme information is published as leaflets or on the website. The Associate Director of Higher Education is responsible for ensuring that the website is current and liaises with the College web team, programme leaders and higher education coordinators. The website is hosted externally which can incur a slight delay if information is to be altered. There is effective version control of other general information published for students.

41 Programme leaders and their teams are responsible for contextualising the formats supplied. All programme handbooks are moderated by the Associate Director of Higher Education using a comprehensive audit process. The audit process requires all module handbooks to be signed by the module tutor, approved by the programme leader and audited by a higher education coordinator. Improved programme handbooks and programme specifications have been introduced in response to the Developmental engagement report. Full programme specifications for all awards are accessible on the College website. They are also provided to students within programme handbooks but not all are available on the virtual learning environment. The processes that are used to ensure the accuracy and content of programme documentation are rigorous and transparent. Programme performance review audits are used to check the content of module handbooks, assessment briefs and feedback on assessed work. The auditing procedures for public information provide systematic and transparent processes for the review and revision of documentation by staff are judged as good practice.

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

42 The Developmental engagement in assessment for the College was undertaken in June 2011. There were three lines of enquiry, which were as follows.

Line of enquiry 1: Given the variety of awarding bodies, how appropriate, effective and consistent are the assessment processes that underpin academic standards?

Line of enquiry 2: How effective are the assessment processes, policies, procedures and feedback to and from students in supporting and enhancing students' learning and their progression?

Line of enquiry 3: Are the College's procedures effective in ensuring that it provides accurate, complete and timely information on its assessment practices?

43 The lines of enquiry focused on the structures, policies and procedures that underpin the assessment process including the documentation available to students. They covered the implementation of awarding bodies regulations on assessment across the programmes and the responsibilities of the College in these processes. The Developmental engagement in assessment covered all the higher education programmes offered by the College.

44 The Developmental engagement identified a number of areas of good practice. These include the introduction of cognate area reviews, which stimulate self-evaluation, action planning and the sharing of good practice between programmes. The report highlights the introduction of programme performance reviews for some programmes to provide opportunities for the programme teams to demonstrate the effective operation of their programmes. In addition the attendance of external examiners at the internal progress boards for the FdA Business and Human Resource Management programme provides additional scrutiny and feedback on students' progress. The Academic Advocacy process and the support offered by students to their peers informs students' understanding of assessment and the short credit-rated modules offered at pre-entry stage prepare them effectively for the next stage of their studies. The Developmental engagement identified an advisable recommendation to develop more explicit written guidelines for the management of the assessment of Edexcel programmes. Desirable recommendations included reviewing the effectiveness of the monthly operation meetings to ensure the resolution of actions and the tracking of students' performance. Finally the College needs to develop further the programme handbooks and programme specifications to ensure these are clear, complete, accurate and available to all students.

D Foundation Degrees

45 The Foundation Degree programmes are offered in conjunction with Bishop Grosseteste University College, the University of Hull, University of Lincoln and Sheffield Hallam University. As of June 2012, the College delivers 10 Foundation Degrees. They represent 362 full-time equivalents. Two new Foundation Degrees in Biosciences and

Biochemistry have been developed by the College and validated in 2011 by Sheffield Hallam University. From 2011, the College has extended its links with a locally based international steel company to offer a Foundation Degree in Integrated Engineering by full and part-time modes of study.

46 All the conclusions in paragraphs 48 to 50 apply to the Foundation Degree provision.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

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

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

- the comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement procedures encourage ownership of the processes by programme teams and reinforce their relationships with the awarding bodies (paragraph 17)
- the opportunities for joint staff and student research enhance student learning (paragraph 26)
- the peer collaboration scheme encourages teachers to reflect on their own practices and to work collaboratively to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 27)
- the short credit-rated modules offered at pre-entry stage support students' achievement and progression and prepare them effectively for the next stage of their studies in higher education (paragraph 28)
- the strategies that engage employers at many different levels of the provision enhance the quality of student learning and their employability (paragraph 29)
- the academic advocacy policy and processes inform students' understanding of assessment and enhance their achievement and progression (paragraph 32)
- the interdisciplinary student experience group encourages dialogue between students on different programmes and provides their composite views of the provision (paragraph 33)
- the auditing procedures for public information provide systematic and transparent processes for the review and revision of documentation by staff (paragraph 41).

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

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

- make students fully aware of the role that student representatives play in representing their views (paragraph 30)
- develop further its strategies to secure for its students wider, more timely and effective access to key texts and electronic sources of information (paragraph 35)

- introduce a formal policy and protocols for the access, regulation and control of information exchanged between staff and students using social and other networks (paragraph 37).

51 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.

52 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that it has **confidence** that, in the context of this Summative review, the College discharges its responsibilities effectively, as set out in the relevant partnership agreement for the management of the quality of learning opportunities to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

53 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, other documentary evidence and from its meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that, 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.

| North Lindsey College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 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 comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement procedures encourage ownership of the processes by programme teams and reinforce their relationships with the awarding bodies (paragraph 17) | Align quality assurance and enhancement processes with the Quality Code for Higher education | June 2013 | Associate Director Higher Education | All internal quality assurance and enhancement processes aligned with Quality Code For Higher Education | Director Higher Education | Corporation Board, Higher Education Board of Studies |
| | Staff development sessions relating to revised quality assurance and enhancement processes | June 2013 | Associate Director Higher Education | Completed staff development sessions, evaluation of staff development sessions | Director Higher Education | Higher Education Board of Studies |
| | Completion of Annual Quality Assurance Process with Sheffield Hallam University (Engineering) | Sept 2012 | Programme Leader Engineering | Approved Annual Quality Assurance Report for FdEng Integrated Engineering | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Board of Studies, Monthly Operations Meetings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the opportunities for joint staff and student research enhance student | Completed internal scholarship journal | Sept 2012 | Scholarship Coordinator | Internally published document | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Board of Studies Scholarship Review |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| learning (paragraph 26) | Interdisciplinary scholarship event | July 2013 | Scholarship Coordinator | Scholarship event completed and evaluated | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Board of Studies, Scholarship Forum |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the peer collaboration scheme encourages teachers to reflect on their own practices and to work collaboratively to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (paragraph 27) | Review of Peer Collaboration Scheme at the Higher Education Symposium | Sept 2012 | Higher Education Coordinator | Briefing paper, student satisfaction, staff evaluation | Quality, Standards Performance (QSP) Coordinator | Higher Education Board of Studies |
| | Peer Collaboration Scheme to inform internal staff development | Oct 2012 | Higher Education Coordinator | Schedule of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Development aligns with staff needs and expertise Performance appraisal targets informed by Peer Collaboration Scheme | QSP Coordinator | Evaluation of staff development Higher Education Directorate Meetings, Higher Education Board of Studies, Performance Appraisal targets |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the short credit-rated modules offered at pre-entry stage support students' achievement and progression and prepare them effectively for the next stage of their studies in | Develop schedule of equivalent programmes for Summer 2013 (not reliant on funding) | Jan 2013 | Higher Education Coordinator | Taster sessions catering for wide range of programmes to be scheduled and completed | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Board of Studies, Monthly Operations Meetings |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| higher education (paragraph 28) | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the strategies that engage employers at many different levels of the provision enhance the quality of student learning and their employability (paragraph 29) | Dissemination of practice by Sport, Early Childhood Studies, Engineering | Jan 2013 | Higher Education Coordinator | Scheduled sessions as part of Quality assurance and Enhancement Group, staff evaluation | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Directorate Meetings, Higher Education Board of Studies |
| | Develop guest lecture/workshop series focussing on employability skills | June 2013 | Higher Education Coordinator | Minimum of three sessions to take place during academic year | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Directorate Meetings, Higher Education Board of Studies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the academic advocacy policy and processes inform students' understanding of assessment and enhance their achievement and progression (paragraph 32) | Review Academic Advocacy to ensure compatibility with FHEQ level 6 provision | Oct 2012 | Quality Standards Performance Coordinator | Approved Academic Advocacy documentation and student satisfaction | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Directorate Meeting, Monthly Operations Meeting |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the interdisciplinary student experience group encourages dialogue between students on different programmes and provides their | Increased attendance of students at Student Experience Group | June 2013 | Higher Education Coordinator | Increased attendance at Student Experience Group | Associate Director Higher Education | Higher Education Directorate Meeting, Higher Education Board of Studies |
| | Organisation of interdisciplinary student events | June 2013 | Higher Education Coordinator | Three social events per academic year | Associate Director Higher Education | Student Experience Group, Higher Education Board of Studies |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| composite views of the provision (paragraph 33) | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the auditing procedures for public information provide systematic and transparent processes for the review and revision of documentation by staff (paragraph 41). | Develop further auditing procedure for the publication of Programme and Module Handbooks | Feb 2013 | Associate Director, Higher Education Coordinators, Programme Leaders | All audit lists completed, sampled and continue to be accurate | Director Higher Education | Higher Education Directorate meetings, Higher Education Board of Studies, Monthly Operations Meetings |
| 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"> make students fully aware of the role that student representatives play in representing their views (paragraph 30) | Promotional information to be provided to all students | Oct 2012 | Higher Education Coordinators | Increased student satisfaction from Higher Education Survey (Internal) | Quality Standards Performance Coordinator | Student Experience Group Higher Education Board of Studies, Cognate Area Review, Course Committee Meetings |
| | Student representative reports to be uploaded to the College virtual learning environment | June 2013 | Programme Leaders | Reports available on the College virtual learning environment | QSP Coordinator | Course Committee Meetings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop further its strategies to | Attendance of Library Resources Manager at | July 2013 | Library Resources | Resourcing requirements | QSP Coordinator | Monthly Operations |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
| <p>secure for its students wider, more timely and effective access to key texts and electronic sources of information (paragraph 35)</p> | <p>Monthly Operations Meetings (1 per semester)</p> <p>Delivery of learning resources sessions by Learning Resource staff members</p> | <p>Dec 2012</p> | <p>Manager</p> <p>Library Resources Manager</p> | <p>reviewed formally</p> <p>All new students to receive learning resources information session</p> | <p>Associate Director Higher Education</p> | <p>Meetings, Higher Education Directorate meetings</p> <p>Monthly Operations Meetings, Higher Education Directorate meetings</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce a formal policy and protocols for the access, regulation and control of information exchanged between staff and students using social and other networks (paragraph 37). | <p>Include statement as part of existing Academic Advice and Guidance Booklet</p> | <p>Oct 2012</p> | <p>Higher Education Coordinator</p> | <p>Statement provided to students</p> | <p>Director Higher Education</p> | <p>Student Experience Committee, Monthly Operations Meetings, Higher Education Directorate Meetings</p> |

RG 1028 09/12

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk