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Preface

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

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 the QAA and consist of:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* which includes descriptions of different higher education qualifications
- the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*
- subject benchmark statements which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications which are descriptions of what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study
- award benchmark statements which describe the generic characteristics of an award, for example Foundation Degrees.

In addition, Developmental engagement teams gather evidence by focusing on particular aspects of the theme under review. These are known as 'lines of enquiry'.

Outcomes of IQER

Each Developmental engagement and Summative review results in a written report:

- Developmental engagement reports set out good practice and recommendations and implications for the college and its awarding bodies, but do not contain judgements. Recommendations will be at one of three levels - **essential**, **advisable** and **desirable**. To promote an open and collegial approach to Developmental engagements, the reports are not published.

- Summative review reports identify good practice and contain judgements about whether the college is discharging its responsibilities effectively against core themes one and two above. The judgements are **confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence**. There is no judgement for the third core theme, instead the report will provide evaluation and a conclusion. Summative review reports are published. Differentiated judgements can be made where a team judges a college's management of the standards and/or quality of the awards made by one awarding body to be different from those made by another.

Colleges are required to develop an action plan to address any recommendations arising from IQER. Progress against these action plans is monitored by QAA in conjunction with HEFCE and/or the college's awarding body(ies) as appropriate. The college's action plan in response to the conclusions of the Summative review will be published as part of the report.

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 Kingston Maurward 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 the College delivers on behalf of Bournemouth University (the University). The review was carried out by Mr Jonathan Doney, Mrs Sally Powell (reviewers) and Mrs Christine Plumbridge (Coordinator).

2 The Summative review team (the team) conducted the review in agreement with the College and in accordance with *The handbook for an integrated quality and enhancement review*, (the handbook) published by QAA. Evidence in support of the Summative review included documentation supplied by the College and awarding bodies, meetings with staff, students, employers and partner institutions, 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 the Developmental engagement is provided in Section C of this report. The review also

Partnership agreements with the awarding body

5 The College works within the framework of a Memorandum of Agreement, revised in August 2006, with Bournemouth University, which is its only validating and awarding institution. This Memorandum clearly sets down the principles, policies and relationship between the two institutions. In conjunction with this document, the College also follows the

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8 Students on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a submission to the Summative review team. They accepted this invitation for the Developmental engagement and submitted the results of a questionnaire designed for the purpose of IQER by Bournemouth University Students' Union. This was issued to all full and

17 The links between the FD programmes, their module aims and the intended learning outcomes are clearly communicated to students in programme specifications. The interrelationship of theory and practice within these programmes is clearly evident. In the FD in Animal Behaviour and Welfare programme, the College has demonstrated achievement of the intended learning outcomes, using the vehicle of a work-based learning project, designed in collaboration with a local employer. During the Summative review visit, a meeting with a representative of that organisation and a review of the resultant student work, confirmed the value of the project in enabling theoretical and practical intended learning outcomes to be demonstrated. This is regarded by the team as an example of good practice that the College should seek to emulate in other areas of its FD provision.

18 Complaints and appeals procedures are included in student handbooks. Students confirm that they are aware of these, and expressed confidence in the informal processes operated by course tutors for resolving any difficulties.

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

19 Academic standards are discussed and managed appropriately. The terms of reference of the College's Higher Education Planning and Standards Committee include the oversight of the assessment of higher education students throughout the College. The HE Planning and Standards Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Board, which in turn reports to the Quality and Standards Committee of the Board of Governors.

20 Procedures for annual monitoring are robust. Programme leaders prepare an annual monitoring report which incorporates commentary on assessment practice and results, with feedback from students and external examiners. The report includes an action plan for the following academic year. Subsequently, a synoptic report is presented to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee of the University. Progress against action plans is monitored annually and supported by the HE Planning and Standards Committee within the College. Currently, monitoring by the University is undertaken by Partnerships, Access and Community Engagements, the School of Conservation Science and the Academic Development and Quality Unit committees. The School will take over this responsibility for all programmes from the academic year 2007-08. Further support is provided by the Bournemouth University Partners in Administration Team. Link tutors report annually to

opportunities and funding to further support staff wanting to pursue research. New staff without teaching qualifications are encouraged to participate in the in-house teacher training programme within an appropriate timescale. All teaching staff have relevant work experience, which is supplemented by opportunities to participate in continuing professional development. Students and employers confirm that staff are up to date with current trends, practices and issues in the subjects that they teach.

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 body.

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?

23 The responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities reflect those for managing academic standards described in paragraphs 9 to 14.

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

24 The College follows the procedures outlined in the University's Academic Policies, Regulations and Procedures and its Academic Development and Quality Guidance Notes. Twice-yearly Management Liaison meetings ensure that operational matters affecting student learning opportunities are discussed. The terms of reference of the College's Higher Education Planning and Standards Committee incorporate a review of learning opportunities which underpin academic standards.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

25 The University prefers to seek confirmation of adherence to its guidance notes, incorporating quality assurance guidelines, rather than to separately promote the Academic Infrastructure. As these guidance notes incorporate the Academic Infrastructure, the Academic Development and Quality Unit updates the guidelines in response to changes such as new editions of sections of the *Code of practice*, published by QAA. The HE Coordinator and full-time higher education administrative posts provide a focus for higher education assessment activity in the College. The Coordinator role is shared between two people. They ensure that the Academic Infrastructure has been appropriately addressed.

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

26 Students praise the quality of teaching and learning they experience. Teaching is monitored by a comprehensive observation scheme. Observations are carried out by peers, a member of the College-wide appointed observer team or a curriculum manager. The College has four advanced teaching practitioners and a number of subject learning coaches. A pilot study of the coaching role has been ongoing throughout 2007. The occasional use of external consultants to carry out some observations is being trialled and it is hoped that this will enhance the higher education provision. The students are complimentary about their tutors' depth of subject knowledge and experience and their teaching skills. It is clear that the management processes provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice and

ensure that staff expertise continues to develop. The cross-College approach to lesson observations incorporating both further and higher education is intended as a developmental strategy that provides all College staff with the chance to review and evaluate their teaching strengths and areas for development. All staff find these processes, which clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement, to be useful and informative.

27 A variety of mechanisms is used to gather student feedback, including a student representative scheme, attendance at programme team meetings, and regular surveys conducted by both the College and the University. Students on higher education programmes tend to speak to teaching staff directly if they have issues to raise. Student representatives complete a comprehensive evaluation sheet prior to any scheduled meeting. This provides valuable information on the quality of teaching and academic and pastoral support. Such feedback is seen as an essential part of the management and development of each programme. Students receive information from their representatives on any action that is taken.

28 The University is working towards achieving a consistent methodology for collecting feedback from students that avoids questionnaire fatigue. Currently, the results of University surveys are scanned to obtain data and results are fed back to the College students through the Annual Report on Programme Monitoring process. Action plans within the process are discussed at programme team meetings at which student representatives are present. This ensures that students are aware of actions taken in response to their feedback. The University is working towards an electronic system that will enable the tutor to receive reports almost immediately.

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

29 All part-time applicants are normally interviewed as part of the selection process. Full-time applicants are interviewed as appropriate, for example, to ascertain academic suitability or to provide advice about support for additional learning needs. Additional learning support needs are identified through a process of self-disclosure. Specific support required is discussed with adult literacy and numeracy advisers at interview. Where College resources are insufficient, support is drawn from the University, which is a member of a regional network of adult literacy and numeracy providers. Subsequently, such need may be determined by post-enrolment referral from the individual or programme leader, or by unit leaders, following submission of assignments. Clear information in the course handbook guides students to the range of services available. The sharing of resources and the identification of best practice is identified and shared between the College and the University. Examples were cited of the College and the University working together effectively. Although new higher education students are not screened for academic need at

activity and attendance on courses. Each member of staff has three weeks of each year dedicated to staff development, including time specifically allocated for higher education issues. A comprehensive programme of activities is promoted to higher education academic, administrative and support staff.

31 Staff are increasingly taking advantage of a wide variety of developmental opportunities at the University. A programme of conferences and workshops is planned, and the College

35 There is a good working relationship between the University and the College marketing managers. They communicate regularly to ensure consistent format and accuracy of published information. They collaborate on events such as open days and on the preparation of advertisements and higher education programme publicity. The University marketing team updates the central courses database throughout the year following any new course approval, reviews or validations. This helps to ensure the currency of information on the College and University websites.

36 Information provided by the University is used by the College in its publicity material on the website and in the full and part-time prospectus. Details of all programme-specific materials are confirmed by both the programme leaders and the Higher Education Coordinator before being sent to the University for final approval. This includes the programme specifications that are contained in the helpful course handbooks. These handbooks are regarded highly by students who confirm that they are an effective and accurate reference point throughout their studies. From the 2007-08 academic year, the assessment regulations will be incorporated in full into these handbooks. Changes have recently been introduced that will ensure that programmes likely to be introduced, but which are still subject to validation, do not appear in the prospectus until an appropriate stage in the validation process has been reached.

37 Processes for the admission of full-time students following the University awards policy are set out in the Academic Policies, Regulations and Procedures document in addition to more detailed guidelines provided annually by the University registry. The College works in partnership with the University in issuing formal and informal communications to applicants. Work is in progress to harmonise the admission of part-time students with that of full-time students, with adaptations being made to the College application form. Data from previous admissions rounds are collected and analysed to inform recruitment strategy and admissions/selection practice. The College has a proactive approach to reaching admissions targets but, where these have not been reached, has acted to prevent non-viable programmes from continuing. The College complies fully with data protection and freedom of information legislation. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services has responsibility for ensuring cross-college compliance with this.

38 Appropriate procedures are in place for the publication of assessment results. Pass lists, signed by the Chair of the Examination Board, are published within seven days of the meeting. These are followed up by an individual results letter within two weeks. The University registry sends graduation pass lists to the College's Higher Education Coordinator for checking before publication of award ceremony programmes.

The team considers that reliance can be placed on the accuracy and/or 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

39 The Developmental engagement in assessment at Kingston Maurward College was carried out in February 2007. The lines of enquiry for the Developmental engagement were discussed in advance of the team's visit and three were identified and agreed with the College representatives. The lines of enquiry were:

- How are the practitioners involved in the process of assessment design to ensure the fulfilment of programme learning outcomes?
- Are the principles and procedures of assessment explicit, valid and reliable to support the achievement of appropriate academic standards?
- Is appropriate tutorial and summative feedback provided to students in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement?

40 The Developmental engagement team identified a number of areas of good practice for dissemination in the context of the College's management of student assessment. The College had engaged effectively with the Academic Infrastructure; information on all aspects of assessment to staff and students was communicated effectively; marking and moderation processes were robust and students received good-quality and timely feedback on their assessed work. The active role played by work-based and tutor practitioners in assessment design ensured a link between theory and practice.

41 Some recommendations were also made. These focused mainly on continuing to develop the effective processes which were already in place, such as staff development, links with external agencies and practitioners that strengthen work-based learning, and further development of the assessment handbook. The College was encouraged to make better use of oral feedback to groups following examinations and to ensure that feedback forms were completed consistently.

D Foundation Degrees

42 The College works in partnership with Bournemouth University. There are 62 students on the full-time FD programmes. All programme specifications refer to relevant subject benchmark statements, the FHEQ and the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark*. At the planning stage, and subsequently, there has been effective engagement with employers. Work-based learning is the core of these programmes. An information pack for work-based learning and placement activity provides standard forms for correspondence with placement providers and briefings for students. Health and safety checklists and guidance on visits to the placement by College staff are included. A standard report outlining the skills students are required to achieve, together with criteria for measuring their success, is completed at the conclusion of each placement. The team saw evidence that these are completed appropriately and used to monitor students' progress.

43 Both work-based and tutor practitioners play an active role in assessment design and subject-based industrial liaison groups, or their equivalent, operate effectively. Liaison with placement providers also assists strengthening of links between theory and practice. In some subject areas, work-based learning takes place in environments where providers need to fulfil professional accreditation requirements. Account is taken of this in advising students about planning their placements. The College has initiated discussion with the University about the creation of a higher-level employer liaison group, to have strategic impact in the land-based subjects offered by the College. It would be beneficial to progress this proposal.

44 Currently, articulation agreements are in place with universities outside the south west for students to complete a full degree in their subject. Discussions are underway to explore whether a BSc top-up route with Bournemouth University might be possible for students on the FDs in Animal Behaviour and Welfare and in Equine Sports and Management.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

45 The Summative review team identified a number of features of good practice in the College's discharge of its responsibilities for academic standards and for the quality of learning opportunities of the awards offered on behalf of its awarding body. These were based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by the Kingston Maurward College and its awarding body, Bournemouth University.

46 In the course of the review, the team identified the following areas of **good practice**.

- the use of a work-based project, designed in collaboration with a local employer, that enables theoretical and practical learning outcomes to be demonstrated on the FD in Animal Behaviour and Welfare (paragraph 17)
- management processes are in place to ensure that the College's high-calibre staff continue to develop and enable good practice to be shared (paragraphs 22, 30, 31)
- effective methods for obtaining student feedback on learning resources in the Learning Resource Centre (paragraph 33).

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

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

- seek further clarification and written confirmation from the University about the change of academic management responsibility, consider any implications for the partnership agreement, and review the new arrangements in the light of experience following the first full year of its operation (paragraph 10)
- engage actively with the University to find ways of meeting student and employer demands for additional progression routes to further study (paragraph 11)
- continue to monitor the assessment schedule in order to avoid the bunching of assignments reported by students and the consequent pressure on staff to return work promptly (paragraph 15).

48 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and other documentary

Kingston Maurward College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Good practice	**Action to be taken**	**target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
¸ management processes ensuring that high-calibre staff continue to develop, and that enable good practice to be shared (paragraphs 22, 30, 31)	Teaching observation scheme - ongoing development to highlight HE teaching strategies Review of conditions of service underway to recognise HE development needs. More proactive advanced planning to enable staff to undertake CPD		DP			
¸ effective methods of obtaining student feedback on learning resources in the Learning Resource Centre (paragraph 33)	Continue process Develop VLE as a tool to disseminate actions taken to students 07/08 Academic year					

Kingston Maurward College action plan relating to the Summative review: May 2007						
Desirable	**Action to be taken**	**target date**	**Action by**	**Success indicators**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation**
The team agreed the following areas where it would be **desired** to take action:						
seek further clarification and written confirmation from the University about the change of academic management responsibility, consider any implications for the partnership agreement, and review the new arrangements in the light of experience following the first full year of its operation (paragraph 10)	BU undertaking partnership review; KMC will be invited to contribute 07/08 end of year KMC review session July 08 to be held as normal	Autumn term 07/08	SMT	Completed review Review completed and action identified	HEAPS Committee/ Governing Body HEAPS/ Governing Body	SMT feedback SMT

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