

Quality Review Visit of Northern Regional College

May 2018

Key findings

QAA's rounded judgements about Northern Regional College

The QAA review team formed the following rounded judgements about the higher education provision at Northern Regional College.

- **There can be confidence that academic standards are reliable, meet UK requirements, and are reasonably comparable with standards set and achieved in other providers in the UK.**
- **There can be confidence that the quality of the student academic experience meets baseline regulatory requirements.**

Areas for development

The review team identified the following **areas for development** that have the potential to enhance quality and/or further secure the reliability and/or comparability of academic standards at Northern Regional College. The review team advises Northern Regional College to:

- develop a clear reporting mechanism to ensure that all academic appeal information is considered thematically by the Governing Body (Quality Code)
- ensure that all student representatives receive formal training (Quality Code).

Specified improvements

The review team did not identify any **specified improvements**.

About this review

The review visit took place from 1 to 3 May 2018 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Mark Cooper
- Ms Diane Rainsbury
- Mrs Rebekah Osborne (student reviewer).

The overall aim of Quality Review Visit is to:

- provide the relevant funding body with an expert judgement about the readiness of a provider to enter, or continue to operate within, the higher education sector.

Quality Review Visit is designed to:

- ensure that the student interest is protected
- provide expert advice to ensure that the reputation of the UK higher education system is protected, including the protection of degree standards
- identify development areas that will help a provider to progress through a developmental period and be considered 'established'.

Each review visit considers a provider's arrangements against relevant aspects of the baseline regulatory requirements, and in particular:

- the reliability of degree standards and their reasonable comparability with standards set and achieved by other providers
- the quality of the student academic experience, including student outcomes where the provider has a track record of delivery of higher education.

About Northern Regional College

Northern Regional College (the College) was established in 2007 following the merger of Causeway Institute, East Antrim Institute and the North East Institute. The College serves a large geographic area, covering two counties and four district councils in Northern Ireland. There are campuses in Ballymena, where there are two sites, as well as Coleraine, Ballymoney, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey. 4 (S/N/PA/17.5.2.0)72.65.91(2.0/10.8)24116

Judgement area: Reliability and comparability of academic standards

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)

1 In partnership with its 10 awarding bodies and organisations, the College has effective arrangements and agreements in place to ensure that the academic standards of programmes meet those set out in the FHEQ and that programmes have been appropriately benchmarked.

2 The College assures itself that the academic standards for higher education programmes are at a level that meets or exceeds the UK threshold standard through the use of standardisation, internal verification processes, policies and practice.

3 To ensure comparability of academic standards with those of other higher education providers, the awarding bodies and organisations appoint external examiners/verifiers who comment explicitly on comparability in their reports. In addition to this, the College actively encourages academic staff to become external examiners/verifiers to support the development of their own internal setting and maintenance of academic standards.

4 The College is benchmarked against all-0.004 0.6 5ciesntl-0.0m Tw (s)Tj (J 0 (nt)- 0 Td ()Tj -

9 The College has a robust and embedded committee structure

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based Higher Education Officers could be trained to provide flexible and bespoke training to student representatives. The review team therefore advises the College to ensure that all student representatives receive formal training, identifying this as an **area for development**.

31 Students are given formal written feedback on assessments and this is used to help inform future assessments. Peer assessment sometimes informs part of the overall grade for a module and some areas have adopted this approach in conjunction with their partner university where appropriate.

32 Learning support and resources available to students help them successfully achieve in their studies. During induction the student service has a (o)10havudeud6 (he)10 (r)-6 ve foude.5 (f)To

43 Applicants receive comprehensive information to ensure that they are fully informed about the nature of the programme and any important terms and conditions that may have influenced their choice or location of study. The College website is the primary source to

51 The Quality Unit records the number and nature of complaints received by the