Integrated quality and enhancement review

Summative review

June 2007

Filton College

SR06/2008

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 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.

Executive summary

The Summative review of Filton College carried out in June 2007

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 strong team culture and the expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders in managing the long-established Edexcel awards should be maintained when these courses convert to Foundation Degrees

- the excellent Higher Education Course Team Leader Handbook includes effective processes and procedures, which provide a good basis for the processes that will be required for the new Foundation Degrees

- the draft documentation prepared for the validation of the FdSc in Mechanical Engineering is an excellent example of engagement with all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure and should inform subsequent developments when HNC/Ds are converted to Foundation Degrees.

Recommendations

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

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

- introduce more formal reporting mechanisms between the post of Assistant Principal (HE) and the Senior Management Team, and ensure that the strong team culture and existing expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders are fully utilised.

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

- consider all elements of the Academic Infrastructure in its review of the FdA Creative Practices, together with the need, expressed by students, for further academic feedback. The outcomes of the review outcomes should be clearly identified and disseminated before the 2007-08 academic year

- clarify further the remit of, and the links between, the higher education course team leader meetings and the higher education boards of study, including the role each plays in identifying and sharing good practice

- produce a detailed resource development plan to underpin the strategic expansion of higher education.

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 Filton College (the College). The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the College discharges its responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes which the College delivers on behalf of Edexcel and the University of the West of England (the University). The review was carried out by Mr Christopher Davies, Professor Paul Luker, Ms Jenny Rice (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 its awarding bodies; meetings with staff, students and employers; reports of reviews by QAA and from inspections by Ofsted/AL1. 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 for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*), subject and award benchmark statements, *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and programme specifications.

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

4   Filton College is a general further education college, situated at the southern edge of South Gloucestershire, adjacent to the city of Bristol. Of the 16-18 year-olds enrolled, 45 per cent are from the South Gloucestershire area and 41 per cent from Bristol. The College's higher education provision is located on three sites. Performing Arts, the Fashion pathway of the FD and Graphic Design are in new accommodation on the West of England Institute of Specialist Education (WISE) site. Photography and Mechanical Engineering are at the Filton Avenue site and Fine Art is delivered at the Royal West of England Academy, Queen's Road site in the city of Bristol. In the academic year 2006-07, there were 137 full-time and 45 part-time students enrolled on higher education programmes. The programmes are taught by 15 full-time staff and 11 staff on fractional appointments. The HEFCE-funded higher education provision at the time of the review, together with the awarding bodies, comprised the following programmes:

Edexcel

- HND Graphic Design

- HND Photography

- HND Performing Arts

- HND Sport and Exercise Science

- HNC Mechanical Engineering

University of the West of England, Bristol

- FdA Creative Practices (two pathways)

- Fine Art

- Fashion.

Partnership agreements with the awarding bodies

5   The College works within the framework of an academic agreement with the University, which was confirmed by the College's full Corporation in May 2007. This agreement clearly sets down the principles, policies and relationship between the two institutions, whereby the College became an associate institution of the University and a member of the University of the West of England's Federation, as provided for in the University's academic regulatory framework. The Federation focuses on partnership arrangements with education and training providers within its collaborative provision to provide clear progression pathways for lifelong learning. Specific arrangements are described in the financial, academic, and service-level agreement schedules that form part of the agreement. The agreement is underpinned by the University's Code of Practice for staff and education or training providers. This outlines the expectations regarding the ongoing operational responsibilities, activities and obligations of the relevant University faculty to those within the collaborative provision. Both institutions are working closely to ensure that procedures and processes are well aligned. Communication is primarily through regular meetings between the Institutional Account Manager nominated by each institution, which for the College is the Assistant Principal (HE).

6   The College has a long relationship with Edexcel, with some Higher National awards dating back to 1994. Apart from submitting external examiner reports, Edexcel has little formal input into the management of its awards.

Recent developments in higher education at the College

7   Although they have worked together previously, the formal relationship between the College and the University is at an early stage of development. The first validated programme, the FdA in Creative Practices, is currently delivering the first year of two of its four validated pathways in fine art and in fashion. The graphic design and photography pathways will start in September 2007, as will a new FdSc in Mechanical Engineering, subject to validation. Further FDs in drama, applied arts, sport and conservation are planned for 2008.

Students' contribution to the review, including the written submission

8   Students on higher education programmes at the College were invited to present a written submission to the Summative review team. However, for a variety of reasons, no submission was made before the visit for either the Development engagement or for the Summative review. Documentary evidence of students' views was available as part of the College's evidence base and the team met with students during the review visit.

B Evaluation of the management of HEFCE-funded higher education

Core theme 1: Academic standards

How are responsibilities for managing and delivering higher education standards delegated within the management structure and what reporting arrangements are in place?

9   At this early stage, the partnership between the College and the University is working effectively. The ultimate responsibility for the assurance of academic standards and quality for the FDs lies with the University Academic Board, under delegated authority from its Board of Governors. Where appropriate, the Principal of the College is invited to attend relevant meetings. Responsibility for the management of standards and quality in collaborative provision is devolved to the Faculty Board with responsibility for the modular scheme to which the programme contributes. For example, the University Art, Media and Design Faculty Board is responsible for the FdA Creative Practices. A faculty coordinator liaises with the relevant programme leader at the College. The College is responsible for day-to-day operational management of the programme in accordance with procedures approved by the University. The Academic Registry at the University oversees all quality assurance procedures and reports to the Academic Board.

10 Effective policies and procedures are in place for the validation and monitoring of academic standards and quality for all institutions within the University's collaborative provision. These are governed primarily by the Academic Regulations 2006, the Modular Assessment Regulations version 3.1 and the Academic Procedures 2006. The full range of institutional documentation, which supports the collaborative provision, was scrutinised during the review.

11 The creation of the post, early in 2007, of Assistant Principal (HE), reporting directly to the Principal, and with membership of the Senior Management Team, is an indication of the College's commitment to enhancing its provision. This replaced a previous higher education coordinator post. Currently, the Assistant Principal (HE) reports verbally on higher education matters to the Senior Management Team every two weeks and is only required to provide it with a written report annually. Since the responsibility for the management and growth of the higher education provision is focused on this postholder, the team considers that it is advisable to introduce more formal reporting mechanisms. Such a change should be combined with the continued use of the strong team culture and existing expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders. This would enable the good practice, recognised in managing the long-established Edexcel awards, to be maintained as the Higher National courses convert to FDs. These measures would provide the executive with an accurate appraisal of the academic standards and quality of the whole provision, and would enable key performance indicators to be identified in a timely manner.

12 Two key subcommittees of the College's Corporation oversee the management and delivery of standards. The Strategic Planning Group, comprising members of the Senior Management Team and the Corporation, considers new developments. The Capacity to Improve working group receives reports from the Higher Education Board of Studies. The College's Higher Education Board of Studies, chaired by the Assistant Principal, meets three times each year, and is responsible, amongst other matters, for overseeing programme

design, approval, monitoring and review. Management at course level is effective, and higher education course team leader meetings are held five times each year. The meetings have recently been enhanced by the attendance of heads of department responsible for timetabling and resource management, and learning area managers, who have high teaching loads and remain close to the teaching that they manage. These processes and procedures are outlined in the excellent Higher Education Course Team Leader Handbook which, to date, has focused on the Higher national courses. The planned review of the FdA Creative Practices, following its first full year of operation, should enable the University and the College to identify where, and how, policies and procedures can be more closely aligned. The FD review will inform changes to the revised Course Team Leader Handbook in order to ensure that it includes processes relevant to FDs. It is desirable that the review considers all elements of the Academic Infrastructure and that its outcomes are clearly identified and disseminated before the 2007-08 academic year. This should lead to enhancement of the existing course and inform course planning for the Higher National awards that will be converted to FDs.

13 Information about the remit of various committees and quality mechanisms is available in a variety of documents. An organisation chart, indicating links between various levels of staff and committees at the College and the University, was produced at the end of the Summative review. However, it is desirable that the remit of the heads of department and course team leaders' meetings and the higher education boards of study is further clarified. This should include the links between them and the role each plays in identifying and sharing good practice. An effective forum for the dissemination of information and experience arising from the development of FDs will become increasingly important as the College increases the number of these programmes.

What account is taken of the Academic infrastructure?

14 Meetings during the review and paragraphs in the self-evaluation revealed some misunderstanding at a senior level in the College about what actually constitutes the Academic Infrastructure, as distinct from processes and systems within the University and the College. It is important that the term is used consistently in its appropriate context and this should be clarified in future meetings and documentation. Course team leaders on all Higher National programmes do understand the components that make up the Academic Infrastructure, although there could be advantage in further clarifying the use made of personal development planning. The team found an excellent example of engagement with all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure in the draft documentation prepared for the forthcoming validation of the FdSc in Mechanical Engineering. This makes appropriate reference to the *Subject benchmark statement* for engineering, the FHEQ, the *Foundation Degree qualification benchmark* and personal development planning. The team commend this as an example of good practice that should inform subsequent developments in the College as Higher Nationals are converted to FDs.

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?

15 The University appoints external examiners for programmes leading to its awards. A prompt has been inserted since the Developmental engagement which should ensure that explicit reference is made to work-based learning in their reports. In this first year of operation, there are no reports yet available relating to the FD. The University Code of Practice states that the College will be provided with an annual report on the external examiners' findings. Processes within the College will then follow those for existing courses.

16   Edexcel external examiners' reports indicate that programmes delivered at the College meet national standards. The reports are read by the Assistant Principal and are copied to the appropriate head of department and learning area manager. The latter works with the course team leader to formulate appropriate responses to external examiners' comments. External examiners' reports are one source of evidence used to inform the annual monitoring of each course. A self-evaluation document is compiled, drawing upon a wide range of evidence culminating in an action plan for the subsequent year. All higher education self-evaluations are compiled into a College self-evaluation. In the following year, outcomes of the action plan are tracked and any important outstanding issues identified.

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

17   Staff teaching on higher education programmes are appropriately qualified, with a number holding postgraduate qualifications. A significant number are engaged in scholarly activity. The College has a generous and well-managed staff development programme. All training undertaken requires a feedback session with a line manager to ensure that any good practice may be disseminated to other staff. Staff appraisal plays an important role in ensuring that management skills and professional development is addressed. The process is managed very effectively and generously. All staff have a quota of 22 days a year for staff development. Eight of these days are targeted by senior management, a further eight are directed by the line manager and six days are at the discretion of the individual for purposes of appropriate scholarly activities. Many examples of good practice were cited by staff, who are keen to take up development opportunities focused on the needs of higher education programmes.

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?

18   The College has day-to-day responsibility for the management of students' learning opportunities, but works closely with the Academic Registry of the University. The Assistant Principal (HE) reports directly to the College Principal and chairs the HE Board of Studies. This helps to retain an oversight of matters relating to the quality of learning opportunities and allows good practice to be identified and shared. The regular course team meetings are attended by heads of department and learning area managers, who have high teaching loads and remain close to the teaching they manage.

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

19   Meetings with students, together with the scrutiny of external examiner and annual monitoring reports, confirm that the quality of the students' learning opportunities is well managed by course team leaders on the longstanding Edexcel awards. The relevant mechanisms, committees and methodologies are clearly outlined in the College's Quality Improvement Handbook, which covers both further and higher education courses. The

College has a separate higher education teaching and learning policy. A well-established system of classroom observation of teaching and learning, common to further and higher education, is in place. The system has recently been enhanced by training for those with line management responsibilities in order to emphasise the coaching element within their role. There is evidence that this system leads to actions that address performance issues and enable good practice to be shared. FD students' learning is subject to University procedures, although the outcomes of these had not been collated at the time of the review.

20   Student questionnaires are currently the main vehicle to gather student feedback on their learning. Four questionnaires are completed each year, two of which are specific to higher education. The College is aware that this is too many and intends to adopt University monitoring processes, which are module focused. This should significantly improve the validity of the data collected and will also ensure anonymity. Student representation is available on a range of committees, but minutes of meetings indicate that attendance is variable. Student feedback is also collected informally through tutorials and in general discussions with staff. There is clear evidence that the views of students are acted upon and inform course action plans. Forms providing feedback to students on their work were amended to meet the concerns expressed by some students. However, staff accept that the feedback loop informing students specifically on action taken could be more transparent.

What account is taken of the Academic Infrastructure?

21   The Academic Infrastructure has been appropriately addressed by the College in all existing Higher National programmes. The Course Team Leaders' Handbook, produced by the Quality and Development Unit contains explicit information about the preparation of programme specifications and information to students. The information in this handbook relates to elements underpinning the quality of students' learning opportunities. The Academic Infrastructure has been appropriately addressed in all the Higher National programmes. A section of the handbook explains the FHEQ and indicates the levels applicable for the awards. The content and format of this handbook have been recognised as good practice by the University, who intend to adapt it for use in the Foundation Degree. For this purpose, more information is required on level descriptors, and especially on the *Code of practice*. Initially, attention should be focused on *Section 4: Assessment of students* and *Section 6: External examining*. To date, the Academic Infrastructure has been dealt with at a managerial rather than an operational level, so subject staff were unable to respond to questions on particular components during meetings, apart from subject benchmarks. The recently appointed Assistant Principal (HE) recognises a need to involve these staff, especially at the level of course team leaders. The natural place for such discussions would be in boards of study and assessment boards.

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

22   Students on all courses speak positively about the quality of teaching and learning they experience. Mechanical engineering students value the constant links between theory and practice made by tutors. The students speak highly of tutors' expertise and their use of an interactive whiteboard during teaching sessions. This enables the students to question and participate fully. They work in groups for projects and brainstorming sessions, and make joint presentations. There are opportunities for working independently in order to prepare

portfolios. Students feel confident that this mix will benefit them in their employment and/or further study. FD fine art and fashion students value the expertise of staff teaching and the wide range of ideas they have introduced on the course. They feel the course is well suited to their future employment and further study. Students on the HND Sport and Exercise Science course also considered that the course was highly relevant to future employment and that this would be enhanced by opportunities to acquire coaching and other vocational awards.

23 Students on the Higher National programmes confirm the quality, quantity and timeliness of feedback on work, which contributes to the development of their skills. They have ready access to tutors, who are helpful and supportive. However, students on the FdA Creative Practice programme feel that they would benefit from more written feedback. They would also value more one-to-one meetings with a relevant subject tutor, to supplement written feedback and to discuss their progress generally.

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

24 Helpful and comprehensive course handbooks and other written material describe the full range of academic and pastoral support available at the College for the Edexcel programmes. The Foundation Degree Course Handbook is currently being rewritten. The draft version, seen during the review, has addressed most of the areas for improvement identified during the Developmental engagement. At induction, it may be helpful to highlight the links between information in the University student handbook and the course handbook.

25 The College's Higher Education Teaching and Learning Policy requires that, during interviews, course teams match learners' experiences and achievements to the requirements of programmes. However, there is evidence of inconsistent practice, with some students, notably those joining the FD, stating that they had not been interviewed. This may have been because recruitment continued during the early weeks of the course. Students may choose to disclose learning needs at enrolment, while diagnostic testing also takes place on some programmes. The practice of self-disclosure may mean that some learning needs are not identified until work has been submitted to tutors. Information is available on notice boards and during induction on the specialist learning support services available. However, during the review, the course teams recognised a need to insert information about the provision of specific learning support, which had been omitted in error from the handbooks.

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

26 The appraisal process ensures that management skills and professional development are addressed. Prior to the validation for the FD, staff development on preparing assignment and briefing material was made available to all staff teaching on the College's higher education programmes. Three staff teaching on the FD programme were supported on masters programmes. All new full and part-time staff must attain a teaching qualification shortly after appointment. Existing staff are required to complete their qualification within a two-year period.

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?

27 Learning resources form part of the annual monitoring process and student access to all learning resources is good. The Learning Resource Centre manager sits on College and University committees, and link librarians from the University work closely with subject teams. Since 2001, £30 million has been spent on building stock benefiting the full range of courses at the College. There is an ambitious plan to further develop the estate in relation to the higher education provision. The capacity of existing resources to support the immediate higher education development planned will be tested during the University validation processes. However, given the scale and the strategic priority to expand higher education, it is desirable that this is underpinned by a detailed resource development plan. This was not available to the team at the time of the review, although the need for this was recognised in minutes of the Higher Education Board of Studies and in meetings with the Assistant Principal (HE).

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 arrangements do 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?

28 In accordance with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning* (*including e-learning*), published by QAA, the academic agreement between the University and the College defines the responsibility for marketing and publicising programmes. Advertising and publicity are agreed jointly, although ultimate responsibility lies with the University. The College's Executive Director, Corporate Development, and the Director of Marketing at the University meet regularly to consider recruitment and marketing. The College has benefited from the assistance provided in the University's Code of Practice for staff and education or training providers in planning open days and welcome weeks.

29 Clear policies and procedures at the College outline the steps that departmental staff should follow in marketing the Edexcel programmes, including website material. All documents are checked and signed off by the Executive Director, Corporate Development. Since the Developmental engagement, the College has been updating its website more regularly in order to keep pace with fast-changing developments and the introduction of new FD pathways and courses. Students confirmed that the literature provided before the start of the course was accurate and reflected their experience during their studies.

30 The academic agreement states that the University, in consultation with the College, shall prepare information for students about their obligations and entitlements as students of the University. Students on FD programmes receive a CD-ROM version of the University student handbook, which is also available in a hard copy. This is an excellent resource covering a wide range of information. It includes relevant extracts of the University ordinances, academic regulations and procedures, student support and the modular scheme assessment regulations. Reference is made to full versions of all these documents, which are available on the University website.

31 The College prepares FD programme specifications, following the guidelines drawn up by the University. These, together with other programme-specific material relating to its awards, must be approved by the University. Currently, programme specifications are only available through the website. However, the newly drafted course handbook for the FdA Creative Practices has responded to recommendations made during the Developmental engagement. It now includes the programme specification, together with a clear statement about progression to the final year of an appropriate honours degree at the University.

32 During the review, staff agreed that some of the information and terminology used to describe the various pathways in the FdA Creative Practices could be clearer. When all four pathways are operating, the College may wish to consider providing discrete handbooks for each. This would enable common core modules to be clearly distinguished from pathway-specific ones and highlight the differences between the various elements of work-based learning required for each.

33 Course assessment boards accurately collate, monitor and check achievement information on the Higher National programmes. This process is also used to inform the tutors and students of their progression onto the next level. Provisional student grades, subject to moderation by external examiners and ratification by assessment boards, are recorded and collated by the course team leaders. Appropriate procedures are in place for the publication of assessment results on all courses. Students on the FD are able to access their assessment results on the University's intranet. Grades for the Higher National awards are entered onto student report forms by a course leader, signed off by a learning area manager and then sent to Edexcel who send the qualification directly to the student.

34 Data are collected on retention, progression and success, and considered by the Senior Management Team. The Executive Director (Human Resources) has responsibility for the College's compliance with both the Data Protection Act, and the Freedom of Information Act. Details are available on the College intranet.

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

35 The Developmental engagement in Assessment at Filton College was carried out in March 2007. The lines of enquiry for the Developmental engagement were discussed in advance of the Developmental engagement team's visit and two were identified and agreed between the team and College representatives. The lines of enquiry were:

● How are the University's assessment policies for FD programmes being embedded in the College's assessment practices in order to maintain and enhance standards?

● How effective are staff development activities in achieving consistency in the quality and standard of feedback to enhance and raise achievement?

36 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. These mainly related to practice on the existing HNC/D provision. The College was encouraged to

ensure that this good practice was retained as these courses converted to FDs. Effective processes were in place to monitor and improve the provision. These included wide-ranging and helpful written guidance for staff; effective practices underpinning the validity and reliability of assessment processes; good information given to students before assessment and effective quality, quantity and timeliness of feedback; and effective staff development enabling enhancement of the provision.

37   Some recommendations were also made, with most relating to the recently established FdA in Creative Practices. The recommendations advised the need for more formal reporting mechanisms between the post of Assistant Principal (HE) and the senior management team. They also identified the desirability of: considering all elements of the Academic Infrastructure in the review of the FdA Creative Practices; clarifying the remit of, and links between, the higher education course team leader meetings and the higher education boards of study; and producing a detailed resources plan to underpin the intended expansion of higher education provision. The desirable recommendations have largely been addressed, as is evident in this Summative review report.

D Foundation Degrees

38   The College has one FD, the FdA in Creative Practice validated by the University. There are 17 students full-time and two part-time students on the programme. Four pathways were validated in 2006 and two of these are currently running, in fine art and fashion. From September 2007, the other two pathways in photography and graphic design will enrol students. The programme specification refers to the relevant subject benchmark statement, the FHEQ and the Foundation degree quality benchmark. The FD structure provides for a well-supported work-based placement of between 50 and 150 hours. The written information for FD students provided during the review did not include health and safety checklists or suggestions on how to approach and correspond with placement providers. Further information was provided after the visit that indicated that all placements are monitored and risk-assessed by the College Safety Adviser.

E Conclusions and summary of judgements

39   The Summative review team 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. These were based upon discussion with staff and students and scrutiny of evidence provided by Filton College and its awarding bodies, the University of the West of England and Edexcel.

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

- the strong team culture and existing expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders in managing the long-established Edexcel awards, which should be maintained when these courses convert to Foundation Degrees (paragraph 11)

- the processes and procedures outlined in the excellent Higher Education Course Team Leader Handbook, which should provide a good basis for processes relevant to new Foundation Degrees (paragraph 12)

- the draft documentation prepared for the validation of the FdSc in Mechanical Engineering is an excellent example of engagement with all aspects of the Academic Infrastructure and should inform subsequent developments when Higher National awards are converted to Foundation Degrees (paragraph 14).

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

The team agreed the College is **advised** to:

- introduce more formal reporting mechanisms between the post of Assistant Principal (HE) and the senior management team, and ensure that the strong team culture and existing expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders is fully used (paragraphs 11, 13).

The team also agreed it would be **desirable** for the College to:

- consider all elements of the Academic Infrastructure in its review of the FdA Creative Practices, together with the views expressed by students about the need for further academic feedback. The review outcomes should be clearly identified and disseminated before the 2007-08 academic year (paragraphs 12, 23)

- clarify further the remit of, and the links between, the higher education course team leader meetings and the higher education boards of study, including the role each plays in identifying and sharing good practice (paragraph 13)

- produce a detailed resource development plan to underpin the strategic expansion of higher education (paragraph 27).

42 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and 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.

43 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and 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.

44 Based upon its analysis of the College's self-evaluation, and 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/or completeness of the information that the College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Filton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2007

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:						
● the strong team culture and existing expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders in managing the long-established Edexcel awards, that should be maintained when these courses convert to FDs (paragraph 11)	Ensure the processes are replicated for, Fd's from HND's Appoint HE QA Co-ordinator Terms of reference to be developed for both CTL & HEBoS. Committees CTL & HEBoS Minutes & Actions to be reported to SMT.	Immediate Sept 07 Sept 07	AP HE	Positive Student Feedback & good retention and achievement on all Fd programmes. Good external examination reports.	SMT at UWE and Filton. HEBoS Students	SED SMT, (C2I), Governors and course reviews

Filton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2007

Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• the effective processes and procedures outlined in the excellent higher education course team leader (CTL) Handbook, that should provide a good basis for processes relevant to new FDs (paragraph 12)	Replication specifically focused & adapted to FDs	Immediate	AP HE Filton & Academic Registrar UWE	Positive staff feedback (expectations/performance of staff).	HEBoS	Course reviews Appraisals SED
• the draft documentation prepared for the validation of the FdSc programme in Mechanical Engineering is an excellent example of engagement with all aspects of the Academic infrastructure and should inform subsequent developments when HNC/Ds are converted to FDs (paragraph 14)	Adoption of model, development and approach for all subsequent validations (immediate). Course Team Leader for Engineering to act as mentor	Sept 07	AP HE and HE QA Coordinator	Successful validations.	SED HEBoS SMT	Good/positive validation outcomes. Positive staff feedback. HE Coordinator ensuring SED completion.

Filton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2007

Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team agreed a number of areas where the College should be **advised** to take action:						
• introduce more formal reporting mechanisms between the post of Assistant Principal (HE) and the Senior Management Team, and ensure that the strong team culture and existing expertise demonstrated by heads of department and course team leaders is fully used (paragraphs 11, 13)	Clear reporting mechanisms to be put in place immediately to include HE BoS reports & Minutes to be considered by SMT & Actions to be taken from HEBoS. Development Plan to be reviewed through SMT & C2I.		AP HE and college executive.	Implementation of new schedule of reporting with formal written reports on HE development, recruitment & performance being delivered to SMT termly, and to C2I when appropriate.	SMT & Governors	SMT & Governors fully informed

Filton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 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:						
● the review of the FdA should consider all elements of the QAA's Academic infrastructure together with the views expressed by students at both stages of the IQER on a need for further academic feedback. Review outcomes should be clearly identified and disseminated before the 2007-08 academic year. (paragraphs 12, 23)	Review complete Dissemination via Fd team briefings to staff & to students at Induction.	June 07 end August 07	AP HE Filton and Academic Registrar UWE	Positive feedback from well-informed students and staff. Positive student surveys in 07/08.	HEBoS SMT.	SED

Filton College action plan relating to the Summative review: June 2007

Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
• there is a need to further clarify the remit of, and the links between, the Higher Education Course Team Leader meetings and the Higher Education Boards of Study, and the role each plays in identifying and sharing good practice (paragraph 13)	Terms of Reference to be developed for committees and to revised schedule of reports and meeting structures/roles to be agreed	Sept 07	HE QA Coordinator and AP HE	Clear evidence of good practice being shared. Improved action planning chart.	HEBoS SMT	Course review SED.
• there is a need for a detailed resource development plan that was not available at the time of the review (paragraph 27)	Developed detailed plan for accommodation, staffing and teaching learning resources to Sept 2010	Sept 07	Principal and VP Resources	Supported development and implementation of growth.	SMT Governors.	SMT Corporation