 

Higher Education Review

Action Plan

Approved through: HE Management and Strategy Group (HEMSG), September 12th 2016.

The Higher Education provision of Yeovil College and Yeovil College University Centre was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in May 2016. A summary of the QAA’s key findings about Yeovil College are as follows:

## QAA's judgements about Yeovil College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Yeovil College.

* The maintenance of the academic standards of awards **meets UK expectations**.
* The quality of student learning opportunities **meets UK expectations**.
* The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets UK expectations**.
* The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets UK expectations**.

## Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of good practice at Yeovil College.

* The relevance and currency of curriculum delivery achieved through the extensive support for professional development and updating of teaching staff (Expectation B3).
* The extensive opportunities for students' professional development provided by employers' widespread engagement in curriculum delivery and employability support (Expectation B4).

## Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following recommendations to Yeovil College.

By September 2016:

* establish secure institutional oversight of the College's process for the approval of new programmes (Expectation B1)
* revise the wording of the procedures for appeals and complaints in order to ensure clarity of terminology (Expectation B9)
* establish more effective editorial control of public information on the College's website (Expectation C).

By January 2017:

* strengthen the student representation system to further engage students as partners in quality assurance and enhancement, and introduce a system to monitor its effectiveness (Expectation B5)
* identify and embed clear enhancement priorities in order to secure effective dissemination and implementation of the College’s enhancement strategy (Enhancement).

## Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team affirms the following actions that Yeovil College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

* The steps being taken to achieve consistency with institutional standards of course content on VLE pages (Expectation B3).
* The steps being taken through active monitoring to ensure consistently timely feedback on student work (Expectation B6).

The following outlines the specific Actions Yeovil College will undertake in response to the QAA’s findings, with the view of further enhancing all elements of the Higher Education provision offered by the College. The Action Plan is to be ratified through:

* The Higher Education Management and Strategy Group (HEMSG)
* The College Operational Group (COG), formerly Learner Experience Group (LEG)
* The Senior Management Team (SMT)
* The College Board of Corporation

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| **Good Practice** | **Action to be taken** | **Date for completion** | **Action by** | **Success Indicators** |
| The QAA Review Team identified the following features of good practice at Yeovil College, for continued development |
| The relevance and currency of curriculum delivery achieved through the extensive support for professional development and updating of teaching staff (Expectation B3). | Continue HE and professionally specific training and updating of academic staff, including industry liaison, scholarly activity, and techniques relating to embedding this through teaching and learning. For staff new to HE, deploy a ‘buddy’ system, where differentiated practice can be developed. | Ongoing | Directors of CurriculumCurriculum AreasProgramme TeamsCollege Board of Studies for Higher Education (CBSHE) | Continued development of appropriate curriculum which support active progression – internally, locally and regionallyMaintaining and extending the knowledge and experience of Teaching Staff, relative to both pedagogic and industry-related skills and knowledge |
| The extensive opportunities for students' professional development provided by employers' widespread engagement in curriculum delivery and employability support (Expectation B4). | Continue to grow the engagement of curriculum programmes alongside industry needs, responding with the growth of industry skills. Maintain the engagement of professional activities through the engagement of industry directly throughout teaching, learning, assessment, and evaluation factors of all HE programmes.  | Ongoing | Directors of CurriculumCurriculum AreasProgramme TeamsCBSHE | Increased inclusion of Employers in the (informal) evaluation of learner skills and aptitudesEnhanced opportunities for industry input into curriculum designAssurance of maintaining currency of learner skills in readiness for graduationLearner Destination Data (DLHE) |

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| **Recommendations** | **Action to be taken** | **Date for completion** | **Action by** | **Success Indicators** |
| The QAA Review Team identified the recommendations for development within the College by **September 2016** |
| Establish secure institutional oversight of the College's process for the approval of new programmes (Expectation B1) | Ensure the effective deployment of the College HE Course Development and approval process across all provision. To include proposal evaluation and approval through Internal Academic Scrutiny Group (IASG), and incorporate the assurance attained through internal and external validation of all programmes, including Students and Employer representation, regardless of awarding body.  | September 2016 | HEMSGInternal Academic Scrutiny Group (IASG)Curriculum AreasProgramme TeamsDirector of HE and International  | Full compliance of all new programmes to be validated through the College’s Course Approval ProcessPeriodic Peer Review of all Pearson Edexcel programmes sitting external to normal partner University review schema and schedules. |
| Revise the wording of the procedures for appeals and complaints in order to ensure clarity of terminology (Expectation B9) | The wording for Appeals and Complaints procedures, as outlined through the HE Arrivals Lounge through the VLE has been re-worded, along with the full review of details of Complaints and Appeals contained within the Academic Regulatory Framework of the College.  | September 2016 | Director of HE and InternationalHE Student Liaison OfficerLearnersHEMSG (approval) | Indicator of approved awareness of policy and process (demonstrated through HE Induction Survey)Learner feedback  |
| Establish more effective editorial control of public information on the College's website (Expectation C). | The editorial ownership of the College’s University Centre website (<http://www.ycuc.ac.uk>) has now been transferred internally, away from the use of external marketing agencies. A new website with full internal editorial control has been designed by the College Marketing Team, with content approved through HEMSG, the College Operational Group (COG), and Marketing meetings. The annual monitoring of course-related content will continue to be maintained using the same processes, aligned to the production of KIS information and physical publications. However, ongoing content control will operate through the aforementioned groups, overseen by the Director of HE and International, Head of Marketing, and Vice-Principal Curriculum and Quality.  | September 2016 | College Marketing TeamHEMSGDirector of HE and International | Ability to maintain the effective review, currency and updating of public materialsFormal review of material, content control, and effectiveness when connected with web-based monitoring metricsAbility to readjust the design and content based upon user feedback, or changing statutory requirements.  |

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| **Recommendations** | **Action to be taken** | **Date for completion** | **Action by** | **Success Indicators** |
| The QAA Review Team identified the recommendations for development within the College by **January 2017** |
| Strengthen the student representation system to further engage students as partners in quality assurance and enhancement, and introduce a system to monitor its effectiveness (Expectation B5) | Following the review processes the College constituted a new College Board of Studies for Higher Education (CBSHE), focused at ensuring the ongoing connection between learners, curriculum, Senior Management and the Board of Corporation. Utilising sector-wise best practice it was considered that as the central conduit the CBSHE oversees a shared cycle of continuous improvement, emphasising partnership between learners and the College. Meeting 3 times per annum, and being the senior point of metric evaluation the CBSHE is tasked with gaining the assurance for the Corporation and College Senior Management Team (SMT) relating to:* HE provision meeting appropriate needs and expectations
* The evaluation of metric data relating to recruitment, retention, achievement, continuation and destinations
* The evaluation of data relating to student satisfaction and learner views, as an action focused approach
* The evaluation of reports regarding provision, indicating improvements and good practice
* The evaluation and challenge of improvements through Annual Monitoring, with an oversight for impact
* The planning and evaluation of enhancement initiatives, their impact and monitoring
* The implementation and monitoring of the UKQC as part of Programme delivery, monitoring and improvement

The CBSHE will operate in conjunction with HEMSG, Programme Team Meetings (PTMs), and the ongoing annual review cycle, including the regular monitoring and student-agreed Action Plan across all programmes. Whilst core points of formal evaluation (Course Review, Annual Programme Monitoring, Curriculum Area SED) will continue to occur at key points throughout the academic year the focus will remain on continuity.Final annual report to be confirmed through the HE Student Governor within the Board of Corporation.  | January 2017 | HE Student Liaison OfficerDirector of HE and InternationalCurriculum AreasProgramme TeamsHEMSGCBSHE | Increased and enhanced learner engagement, where impacts are measured, recorded clearly, and demonstrates progression.Increase in learner satisfaction metrics across all internal and external formatsBeneficial input in the ongoing development of curriculum design, delivery and assessment.A clear line of sight connected by CBSHE through to SMT, the College Board of Corporation, and all Programme Student Representatives. An ongoing and evolutionary HE Strategy, updated across operational directives and in line with the notions of continual improvement.  |
| Identify and embed clear enhancement priorities in order to secure effective dissemination and implementation of the College’s enhancement strategy (Enhancement). | The College’s Learner Opportunity and Enhancement Strategy identifies 8 Core Enhancement Themes. Throughout the Higher Education Review the QAA Review Team recommended that individual themes were approached in a staggered and strategic manner. The College has decided to initially focus on 2 core themes for the 2016-17 academic period:* Student Partnerships
* Assessment and Feedback

Scheduled Staff Training and Development sessions will compliment the focused evaluation of these through Course Review processes, the revision of Student Engagement practices, metric evaluations of learner feedback. Programme Team Meetings will furthermore be a critical part of this process. Deployed through HEMSG the implementation will thus be reflected through Self-Evaluation processes upon the conclusion of the Academic year.  | January 2017 | Director of HE and InternationalProgramme TeamsHEMSGCBSHE | Ability to monitor the impact of Enhancement strategies through appropriate groups (HEMSG, CBSHE, COG)Positive responses attained from learners through Module Evaluation Templates (METs), Programme Team Meetings (PTMs), Student Surveys, and CBSHEThrough CBSHE, the effective positive evaluation of ‘impact’ relating to enhancement themes as part of the model of continuous improvement and quality assurance.  |

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| **Affirmations** | **Action to be taken** | **Date for completion** | **Action by** | **Success Indicators** |
| The QAA Review Team identified the following affirmations of ongoing action |
| The steps being taken to achieve consistency with institutional standards of course content on VLE pages (Expectation B3). | Maintain the regular 6-weekly review of all Moodle pages within the College’s VLE, alongside formal evaluations through panel related to attaining the published minimum expectations for all VLE activity (Moodle Bronze)Where ‘Best Practice’ is identified ensure this is encapsulated and shared across all Curriculum Areas through Staff Development opportunities. Ensure that ongoing training opportunities continue with the College IT Infrastructure Manager.  | November 2016 | Curriculum AreasProgramme TeamsIT Infrastructure ManagersMembers of HEMSG | Attainment of Moodle Bronze level for all HE programmesEnhanced access and utilisation statisticsImproved responses to learner surveys regarding the utilisation of the VLE as part of their programme of study.  |
| The steps being taken through active monitoring to ensure consistently timely feedback on student work (Expectation B6). | Feedback Monitoring will continue to be part of the duties specific to the personnel of the University Centre, alongside the expected and published timescales (3 or 4 weeks, depending on the awarding body). All programmes will evaluate, through Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, the overall average of feedback timeliness. This is cross-referenced with the details provided from learners through Module Evaluation Templates (METs). Feedback sampling for internal verification will now be incorporated as part of Semester-led sampling practice in order to internally evaluate the effectiveness of feedback provided, in addition to timescale. HE Course Reviews, operating 3 times per annum, will furthermore specifically focus upon feedback timeliness, in addition to learner views. Oversight will be driven through the Self-Evaluation Document of the College, supported by HEMSG.  | November 2016 / Ongoing | University Centre AdministrationProgramme TeamsDirector of Higher Education | Improved capacity to reach 100% timely feedbackEnhanced feedback and feed-forward practice, using exemplars of best practice which furthermore are supported through views reported by learners (METs) and External Examiners |