

BASELINE REPORT ON QUALITY ARRANGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This is the summary statement from Borders College on the policies and procedures that we have in place in relation to quality assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching and of the learner experience. The statement also outlines the role of the governing body in these policies and procedures. This report was approved by the Board of Management on Thursday 11 December 2008.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT RELATING TO QUALITY

The following arrangements are in place to enable the Board of Management to engage with issues relating to quality assurance and enhancement (**Curriculum and Quality Committee and the Leading and Learning Scheme**). These arrangements provide the opportunity for the Board of Management to be satisfied that the college is meeting its responsibilities for delivering a high quality learning experience to students.

Curriculum and Quality Committee

The Curriculum and Quality Committee was established in January 2008 and meets 4 times during the academic year. Following this meeting, a report is submitted to the Board of Management. This committee has the delegated authority to address all operational and strategic aspects of quality assurance and enhancement of educational provision.

The committee comprises of 2 members of the Board of Management (1 of which is the chair), 2 Assistant Principals, the curricular staff member on the board of management and a co-opted member of the public. Students are also invited to attend this committee.

The role and remit of this committee is:

1. To discuss issues relating to development of the College's Academic Programme and wider curriculum
2. To monitor and review progress on the College's Strategic Education Objectives
3. To monitor the College's Key Performance Indicators relating to Effectiveness
4. To receive reports annually on the work of Academic Board.
5. To monitor Student Satisfaction
6. To monitor College complaints and compliments
7. To monitor College arrangements for Student Representation
8. To monitor the Quality Assurance Strategy
9. To receive reports on curriculum visits by Board Members on a bi-annual basis

Leading and Learning Scheme

The Leading and Learning Scheme enables the Board Members to establish a link and a relationship with curricular departments. Each curricular department has a maximum of 2 board members allocated to them. The Board Members can visit the

department twice during the academic year, one of which is to discuss the Department Self-evaluation Report and Development Plan.

A report is produced by the Board Member and is submitted to the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Academic Board

Academic Board meets four times per year to discuss a number of items relating to the academic standards of provision within the college. The remit of this group is to advise the Principal on academic matters including the planning, management, approval and future development of the curriculum. The members of this committee include the Principal, AP Curriculum and Quality, AP Learner Support, Curricular Managers, Quality Enhancement Manager, representative students from each department, two board members (Academic and Student). A summary report is provided to the Curriculum and Quality Committee on an annual basis.

ADDRESSING THE KEY PRINCIPLES

The Strategic Plan guides the College's approach to quality enhancement, and encourages a culture and ethos of quality. Quality Enhancement is reflected in a range of objectives and targets within the College's Strategic Plan for 2007- 2010 (D1.4, D1.5 and D1.5a)

The annual cycle for quality enhancement integrates self-evaluation with operational planning and performance management and links all of these back to the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Priorities for that year. Strategic Priorities are reviewed annually and inform Operational Planning.

The College maintains a continuous approach to quality enhancement that relies upon a continuous cycle of monitoring, planning, action and evaluation.

CREATING A QUALITY CULTURE

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT HANDBOOK

The purpose of the handbook is to provide all staff with the essential information and guidance they need to implement the College's Quality Enhancement System. This document is published on the College Website www.borderscollege.ac.uk and all staff are provided with a printed copy.

The Quality Enhancement System includes the following elements:

- Self-Evaluation and Action Planning,
- Managing Performance and target setting
- Internal Quality Reviews
- External Quality Reviews
- Approval Procedures
- Internal/External Internal Verification
- Learner and Stakeholder Feedback

APPROVAL PROCEDURES

The **Approval Committee** must internally approve all assessed units and awards. As a centre to run SQA and other awarding body qualifications, it is the College's responsibility to ensure that all our provision is valid, viable and able to meet the needs of our clients. This is equally true for those courses which employ the College SCQF credit rating and levelling process. An **Approval Panel** will be held for awards and courses to be SCQF credit rated. The Approval Committee monitors any recommendations.

The Approval Committee notes the Panel's decisions are reported to the **Academic Board**.

The membership of an Approvals Committee and Approvals Panel and relevant application forms can be found in the Approvals Policy available on the College web site under College documents. www.borderscollege.ac.uk

INTERNAL VERIFICATION

As a centre approved to run SQA and other awarding bodies provision, it is the responsibility of the College to ensure that all provision is valid, approved and assessed to the national standard of the awarding bodies. The Internal Verification Policy can be accessed on the College web site. www.borderscollege.ac.uk

The College list of IV's is updated annually and is available from the Quality Department. Each curricular department holds a list of IV's for their area of activity.

EXTERNAL VERIFICATION

External awarding bodies such as SQA, NCFE, edexcel, Equestrian Qualifications (GB) Ltd (EQL) and City and Guilds appoint External Verifiers who by arrangement with the College periodically visit subject areas and verify assessed learner work. In some cases samples of student work will also be sent to an awarding body. This ensures that the College meets the awarding body standards and ensures national standards. The procedure for dealing with External Verification is held within the Quality Enhancement Handbook 2008, which is available on the College website.

ENGAGING WITH EXTERNAL QUALITY AGENCIES

HM Inspectors regularly undertake an independent review of the quality of the College provision using a Scottish National Framework. For this reason the College has made the framework central to its quality system and strives to operate to the most stringent standards in each of the 10 HMIe indicators.

The College holds SQMS and Investors in People accreditation. A proposed annual desk audit by SQA will confirm compliance with SQA quality standards and similar processes are in place with our other awarding bodies. The College is committed to maintaining external measures of quality and will continue to develop its systems so that they remain in line with the above bodies.

INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEWS

Over and above the annual monitoring of programmes and services using the self-evaluation system, the College operates an annual programme of internal reviews. An annual schedule of Quality Reviews is published in November. Internal College reviews will be needs led and may be conducted in response to:

- Self-evaluation outcomes
- Identification using KPI data of programmes as a “course for concern”
- Learner or stakeholder feedback
- External Review
- External Verification
- Internal or External Audit

HIGH QUALITY LEARNING

MANAGING COURSE AND TEAM PERFORMANCE

Borders College is committed to ensuring the enhancement of quality across the range of its provision and services. In order that we can measure our progress it is important to set targets, to plan to achieve our targets and to monitor our progress against these targets.

As part of the strategic plan the Board identified 10 key performance indicators for the College, which set the framework for monitoring progress towards our key strategic aims. These are available within the Quality Enhancement Handbook 2008.

Each Department and Programme area will use the College Key Performance Indicators as the basis of setting their own targets. Targets will be set using the latest sector average benchmark for performance and the College’s previous performance over a three year period. In this way the College, the Departments and the Programme area teams will set targets for each year to “**meet or beat**”

BLOCK REVIEW

As part of managing performance curricular teams conduct a block team review twice a year, usually in January and June. The main focus of these reviews is to:

- Review action points from the previous operational plan
- Receive course tutor reports
- Receive student representative feedback
- Evaluate learner feedback
- Receive feedback from peer evaluation on examples of good practice
- Evaluate performance indicators

A Guide to Department Block Meetings is available on the College web site www.borderscollege.ac.uk

INDIVIDUAL STAFF PERFORMANCE

The “overarching principle” on which the college system for staff review is based is that **our staff are our most valuable resource and therefore supporting and developing staff to enable effective performance of their job role is a priority.** Detailed documentation is available on the college website and from the HR Department.

The review meeting will contain the following elements

- A discussion around the issues raised by the reviewee in their preparation document
- An assessment of performance in relation to criteria appropriate to the job role
- A review of performance against previously agreed targets
- An agreement of appropriate individual targets for the next period
- A discussion which identifies training needs and opportunities.

Standards

The standards used are the Scottish Executives Professional Standards for Further Education and act as headings to inform and guide discussion. They are not intended to be used as a rigid assessment of competency achievement.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuous professional development for all staff is a priority for the College and it plays a significant role in achieving College objectives for quality improvement. An annual programme of CPD opportunities is provided to all staff. This schedule is prepared in response to individual and college needs identified through the Individual Staff Review process or the College self –evaluation system. All relevant documentation can be accessed on the College website.

SELF-EVALUATION REPORTING AND ACTION PLANNING

All staff are involved in the College Self-Evaluation process. Every programme and college support service is monitored annually. This could be through a Block Review meeting, or through a support department meeting which is used to analyse the strength and weaknesses of aspects of the College work. These strengths and weaknesses will be statements related to an element of the HMIE External Review Framework and will be evidence based and evaluative. The self-evaluation process then informs the identification of actions to be included in either departmental or college development plans. An action can be developed either to maintain a strength or to address a weakness.

The self-evaluation exercise results in the production of an annual self-evaluation report and development plan. All relevant documentation can be accessed on the College website.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

LEARNER AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The College uses a variety of methods including focus groups and online surveys to collect Learner Feedback on their learning experience. The Learner Feedback is collected for 3 categories: Curriculum, Facilities and Learner Support. This information is then used to create actions to address issues raised by the students.

Stakeholder satisfaction surveys include:

- Annual staff survey
- Employers surveys
- Post Course Success Ratio Survey

The Quality Department produces a Complaints and Compliments Report bi-annually which is submitted to Senior Management and to the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

All policy documents and guides can be accessed on the College web site www.borderscollege.ac.uk including the Learner Feedback Procedure.

LEARNER INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The Learner Involvement Policy aims to promote a culture of learner involvement. This is achieved through a variety of methods including the creation of a Student Association, involving students in committees, involving learners in surveys, focus groups and consultation events and involving learners in assessment for learning.

The College has a joint Student Experience Working Group with Heriot Watt University which has been created to discuss student issues relating to the imminent campus co-location of the two organisations.

CLASS REPRESENTATION

The students elect a class representative for every full time course. These representatives attend meetings to represent the views of their student group.

PUBLIC INFORMATION RELATING TO QUALITY

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information Regulations introduce a general statutory right of access to all types of 'recorded' information of any age held by Scottish public authorities.

The College is committed to providing a quality experience to all its customers and stakeholders and seeks to achieve this through a culture of openness and transparency. A key element of this commitment is to assist individual members of the public in the exercise of their statutory right to access all types of 'recorded' information held by the College.

The College recognises that the disclosure of information, whether proactively, or in response to specific requests, strengthens accountability and increases public involvement in decision making.

Borders College Publication Scheme can be accessed on the College website:
www.borderscollege.ac.uk

The College produces an Annual Report which includes a summary of financial statement, staff statistics and student success and achievement rates. This is also published on the college website.

The College Strategic Plan for 2007-2010 and the annual Strategic Plan Update – Progress and Priorities are also published on the college website.

It is planned to publish the 4 top level self-evaluation reports on the college website together with the Annual Report on Institution-led Review.