

John Wheatley College

Quality Enhancement Baseline Report December 2008

1. Role of Board Of Management

Members of the Board of Management of John Wheatley College recognise their statutory responsibilities with regard to ensuring a high quality learner experience. It is aware of the guidance issued by the Scottish Funding Council, in circular SFC/33/2008, *Council Guidance to Colleges on Quality* and the Board has considered Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) publication *External Quality Arrangements for Scotland's Colleges*. This was supported by a presentation from HMI M Brown on this document and the methodologies associated with the revised external review model.

The Board's Scheme of Delegation (appendix 1) clearly sets out those areas the College's Board reserves to itself and those delegated to managers. The Board alone is responsible for:

- a) the approval of all policies which relate to College provision including those associated with quality enhancement;
- b) the approval of the Corporate Plan which establishes targets for all areas of the College including quality enhancement (a copy of the Corporate Plan for session 2008/11 is attached as appendix 2); and
- c) the approval of the Board's Annual Quality Report prior to its submission to the Scottish Funding Council. A copy of the annual report for session 2006/07 is attached as appendix 3.

In addition the Scheme of Delegation details the delegations made to the Standing Committees that the Board has charged with oversight of the quality of the learner experience. These are:

- the Academic and General Purposes Committee; and
- the Academic Board.

The Scheme of delegation was last revised at the Board meeting held on 7 October 2008.

In addition the Capital and ICT Committee considers reports which relate to the College Estate and the use of ICT in the learning environment. The Personnel and Staffing Committee reviews both staff attendance and the Continuous Professional Development of staff.

The Board has an overview of the strategic management of quality via considering a range of reports including:

- i) a report by an external consultant on the Evaluation of the Learning Experience. The session 2007/08 report is attached as appendix 4;
- ii) reports on the work of the Joint Quality Review Group. An example is attached as appendix 5;
- iii) reports on other quality related activities such as progress against its Equalities Agenda. Appendix 6 provides an example;
- iv) reports which provide information on progress against College targets. An example is attached as appendix 7; and
- v) the minutes of the Academic and General Purposes Committee, Academic Board and Capital and ICT Committee as a matter of routine.

The Board has also approved a paper setting out its role and that of senior management in the strategic and operational management of the College this is attached as appendix 8.

Board members are also briefed on the a range of strategic matters related to the quality of learning and teaching by reports presented either at the Board or the Academic and General Purposes Committee which relates to the findings of HMle.

2. The Role of Board Standing Committees

a) Academic and General Purposes Committee

The Scheme of Delegation sets out the functions of the Academic and General Purposes Committee. The elements of the delegation specifically related to quality enhancement are those established to:

- i) offer the College guidance on issues related to its development of its Academic Programmes;
- ii) review, on behalf of the Board, the work of the College's Academic Board (it will, in this case, receive routinely the minutes of the Academic Board for information and for comment);
- iii) review the provision made by the College's student support services (including guidance, library and marketing); and
- iv) consider the College's quality statements and associated quality enhancement processes (prior to their reference to the Board of Management) within the SFC/HMle Quality Framework (which applies to colleges).

In addition the Committee considers detailed reports on a range of quality matters including:

- the Self-Evaluation reports of the College's Academic Schools (copies attached as appendix 9 a) and 9b);
- College level analysis of Performance Indicator (PI) data (copy attached as appendix 10);
- internal evaluations of the learner experience (copy attached as appendix 11);and
- HMIE summary reports on the external review of Scotland's Colleges (copy attached as appendix 12).

b) Academic Board

The Academic Board, terms of reference attached as appendix 13, discharges a range of functions on behalf of the Board of Management relating to quality enhancement including the:

- oversight and regulation of assessment procedures and examinations conducted under the auspices of the College; and
- maintenance of the quality of the educational and other provision made by the College and on the requirements of the College in its compliance with the Quality Framework which applies to Scotland's Colleges

In order to discharge these tasks the Academic Board has established two sub-committees, the:

- Quality Enhancement (remit attached as appendix 14); and
- Programme Planning Group (remit attached as appendix 15)

Further more the Audit Committee considers all external quality audit reports for all aspects of College activities. Such a report, relating to the latest British Computer Society annual audit for the European Computer Driving License framework, is attached as appendix 16.

c) Capital and ICT Committee

In addition the Capital and ICT Committee routinely considers reports on a range of quality enhancement matters including:

- the use of ICT to enhance the learner experience;
- quality of the College's estate; and
- self-evaluation reports relating to the provision of ICT services.

d) Personnel and Staffing Committee

The Personnel and Staffing Committee routinely reviews staff attendance as it is the view of the Board that continuity of lecturing staff is one of the means which ensures a high quality experience for learners. In addition this Committee also considers reports on the

Continuous Professional Development programme which is designed to enhance the quality of the learning experience.

It also reviews discussions with the College's Joint Consultative Committee which, on occasions, considers matters related to Quality Improvement and Enhancement.

3. Delegations to College Managers

The roles the Board has established for senior managers, in respect of quality enhancement in the paper which sets out the role of senior managers in the strategic and operational management of the College which is attached as an appendix.

In addition the College structure includes three members of staff with specific responsibilities related to quality enhancement:

- a) Assistant Principal (job description, appendix 17);
- b) Associate Principal- Quality (job description, appendix 18); and
- c) Assistant Associate Principal-Quality (job description, appendix 19)

The Board also establishes other targets for senior managers, including the Assistant Principal, which make specific reference to quality enhancement. Attached as appendix 20, these are published annually in the College's newsletter for the information of all staff.

Quality related duties are included in the job descriptions of all staff, copies are attached for the following posts:

- Associate Principal/Head of School (appendix 21);
- Curriculum Leader (appendix 22);
- Senior Lecturer (appendix 23); and
- Lecturer (appendix 24)

4. Self-evaluation Methodology

The College currently uses the Self-Evaluation methodology associated with the SFC/HMIe Framework which was developed for the previous quality review cycle.

It may, over time, modify or replace this document with its own customised framework which takes more specific account of its particular operational environment.

All curriculum teams are required to produce an annual report using the elements contained with the A section of that model while the Board considers an overall report based on the B elements which is attached as appendix 3. The College self-evaluation report is considered as part of the

Strategic Planning process at a meeting attended by members of the College management teams, learners and officers of the recognised trades unions prior to this document being considered by the Board.

As reported above both academic schools produce annual Self-Evaluation reports which are considered by the Academic and General Purposes Committee. Support staff teams also produce self-evaluation reports which are considered by the appropriate Board Standing Committee. A copy of the Finance Team self-evaluation report for session 2007/08 is attached as appendix 25 for information.

The College routinely reviews all HMIe reports for the College sector (and where appropriate other reports from HMI which impact upon its provision) and disseminates this information to staff in order to further inform the self-evaluation process.

Support staff teams use self-evaluation methodologies based on the SFC/HMIe framework where these are appropriate. Other teams utilise bespoke evaluation tools such as the *Bootstrap Toolkit* devised for the evaluation of ICT services within Scotland's Colleges. In addition the College utilises the Self-Evaluation methodologies specifically devised by the Scottish Libraries and Information Council (SLIC) for use by colleges to evaluate their library services.

The College's approaches to Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement were both graded as Very Good in the July 2005 HMIe Report.

5. Learner Engagement

As required by statute the Board of Management has a student member, at John Wheatley College, this is carried out by the Student Association President. The College offers induction into the role of Board Member to this post holder prior to her/him attending the first Board meeting. The student member of the Board is also a member of the following Board Standing Committees:

- a) Academic and General Purposes Committee;
- b) Capital and ICT Committee; and
- c) Academic Board from session 2008/09.

In addition the Board agreed, in session 2003/04, to co-opt the Vice-President of the Students' Association to the Board and the Standing Committees which the student member attended. The Assistant Principal meets office bearers of the Students' Association a minimum of three times per year. The note of these meetings are considered by the Senior Management Team and the Academic and General Purposes Committee. In addition, by invitation, senior staff attend meetings of the Students' Association Executive Committee.

Members of the Students' Association Executive Committee attend the Strategic Planning events referred to in Section 4 above.

Learners are also represented on both the Health and Safety Committee and the Sustainable Development Committee.

All programme teams have a class representative who is invited to attend meetings. The College has produced a short handbook for learner programme team members (appendix 26) and is currently devising an in-house training programme with the Students' Association. In addition learners participate in the nationally devised training programme offered by SPARQS. The College makes provision to ensure that learner views are obtained when it is not possible for individuals to attend meetings by using a pro forma. Programme teams also use End of Unit surveys to obtain the views of learners and class groups.

The College uses a range of methods to engage learners in order to obtain an overview of the learning experience. These include:

- a) a mid-year review where class groups evaluate their learning experience to date. This activity is led by the class representative using an on-line survey tool designed in collaboration with the Students' Association Executive Committee;
- b) quality review groups where small numbers of learners explore themes related to the learner experience in some depth; and
- c) stratified end of year surveys.

The College response to the comments of learners is fed back to individuals, groups and classes as appropriate. As indicated above, the Board and appropriate Standing Committees also consider reports on these activities.

Programme teams consider College-wide learner engagement activity as part of their self-evaluation process.

Furthermore the external consultant who conducts the Evaluation of the Learner Experience meets with learners in order to take account of their comments when compiling his evidence base.

The Board has a Commendations and Complaints procedure which is also used as a means of Learner Engagement. The Senior Management team routinely considers information on the operation of this procedure and progress towards the resolution of complaints throughout the academic year (in line with advice provided by the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman). The Academic And General Purposes Committee considers an annual report on the Commendations and Complaints procedure.

6. Engagement with External Quality Agencies

As reported above the previous College HMle review was conducted in session 2004/05. Since that event the College has participated in a number of HMle aspect tasks including School/College links work. As a consequence a joint programme with Lochend Community High School was identified as a good practice example and is currently featured on the HMle Showcase for Excellence website. In addition the College has been asked to lead sessions at Sector Leading Innovative Practice events for example on its approach to developing and delivering provision for learners with additional needs.

The College HMle has routinely contributed to the in-house Continuous Professional Development (Quality Day Programme) delivering sessions on a range of topics including use of Performance Indicator data and most recently sessions on the revised quality framework.

Three members of senior College staff are HMle Associate Assessors who have participated in both training and review activities under the previous quality frameworks. Their experiences have contributed to the development and evaluation of the College approach to quality enhancement.

A senior member of College staff was a member of the JQRG and contributed to the development of the recently introduced quality model.

The College has undertaken the audit activity required of it by the Scottish Qualifications Authority to maintain its devolved centre status. In addition routine SQA External Verification activities have endorsed the effectiveness of the College's internal verification process and procedures.

Furthermore, and as mentioned above, the College routinely undergoes annual audit by the British Computer Society in order to deliver their qualifications. The most recent audit graded the College at the highest possible level.

The College holds both Investors in People recognition and Positive About Disabled People accreditation.

7. Public Information

All Board, Standing Committee and quality related documents are placed in the public domain.