



Learning Development Unit (Quality)



STAFF QUALITY MANUAL 2009 - 2010



Changes in paragraph highlighted in **yellow** from last year (except dates)

Compiled by Learning Development Unit (Quality)

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STAFF QUALITY MANUAL 2009/2010

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This manual is a working guide to the quality assurance processes which operate across College to:

- Monitor the quality of service we provide for learners and prospective learners
- Provide re-assurance that areas of excellent service are being maintained
- Identify and implement measures to improve services that have not yet reached an excellent standard
- Compare the standard of service we offer to that of other providers
- Maintain records of our QA monitoring activities
- Publish evidence of the quality of services and the value for money we provide

1.2 Equality and Diversity/Equal Opportunities

Stafford College is committed to a policy to achieve equality of opportunity for all staff, students and members of the community it serves. In doing so the College will actively work to achieve equality regardless of age, race, skin colour, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation and faith.

1.3 **QUALITY is everyone's responsibility.**

Each one of us employed by the College plays an important part in the drive for continuous quality improvement.

2. MANAGEMENT

2.1 College-wide QA framework and activity

- This is the responsibility of the Quality Manager who is based in the Learning Development Unit (E411A) and line-managed by the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality). (See [Appendix 1](#) for contact details)
- The Quality Manager reports regularly to the Senior Management Team
- Quality reports are seen and discussed by the Academic Standards & Performance Committee of the Corporation and in turn by the full Corporation
- [Appendix 2](#) shows the annual Quality Plan

2.2 Implementation of QA activities at local Faculty and Unit level

- This is the responsibility of the Faculty and Unit Managers
- Each Faculty and Support Unit has a Quality Representative who sits on the Quality Committee chaired by the Quality Manager. Representatives provide a co-ordinating link between the College-wide QA processes and specialised local QA processes. (See [Appendix 3](#) for Quality Committee meetings schedule and [Appendix 1](#) for contact details of the Quality Representatives)

3. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Policies are statements of general intent
- Procedures provide the operational details

Policies and procedures exist at two levels:

3.1 College-wide Policies and Procedures

- The current versions can be viewed or printed via the Staff Intranet
- A hard copy file (the 'Quality File') is held by the management of each Faculty and Unit and one is available for reference in the Earl Street Library

3.2 Faculty and Unit Policies and Procedures

- A listing of titles is available to all on the Staff Intranet
- Hard/electronic copies are available via the relevant Faculty or Unit Manager

4. **SELF ASSESSMENT** (*excluding SURF curriculum provision*)

All staff teams review their work each year in the Self-Assessment cycle. For HE courses the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) and Universities refer to this as the 'Subject Review/Annual Monitoring Cycle' – see section 5 for the procedure for SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation) courses.

Non-HE team Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) are used to compile Faculty and Unit SARs, which in turn contribute to the College SAR, sent annually to the Local Learning & Skills Council (LLSC).

The College SAR is of great importance

- It sums up the progress we have made in achieving our targets
- It identifies our key strengths and areas for improvement
- It proposes actions to overcome those areas for improvement (AFIs)
- The Quality Improvement Plan to overcome AFIs is monitored by the Governors and management of the College
- It is used by the LLSC as a guide to the quality and value for money of the College

4.1 College Self-Assessment Cycle

This is shown in the diagram on the following page. Course and Unit teams use student statistics and various sources of feedback as an aid to producing a course/unit team SAR.

4.1.1 Examples of student statistics relevant to the SAR:

Attendance
Punctuality
Retention)
Achievement) see 'SAR Data' on staff intranet
Success)
Value-added
National average data

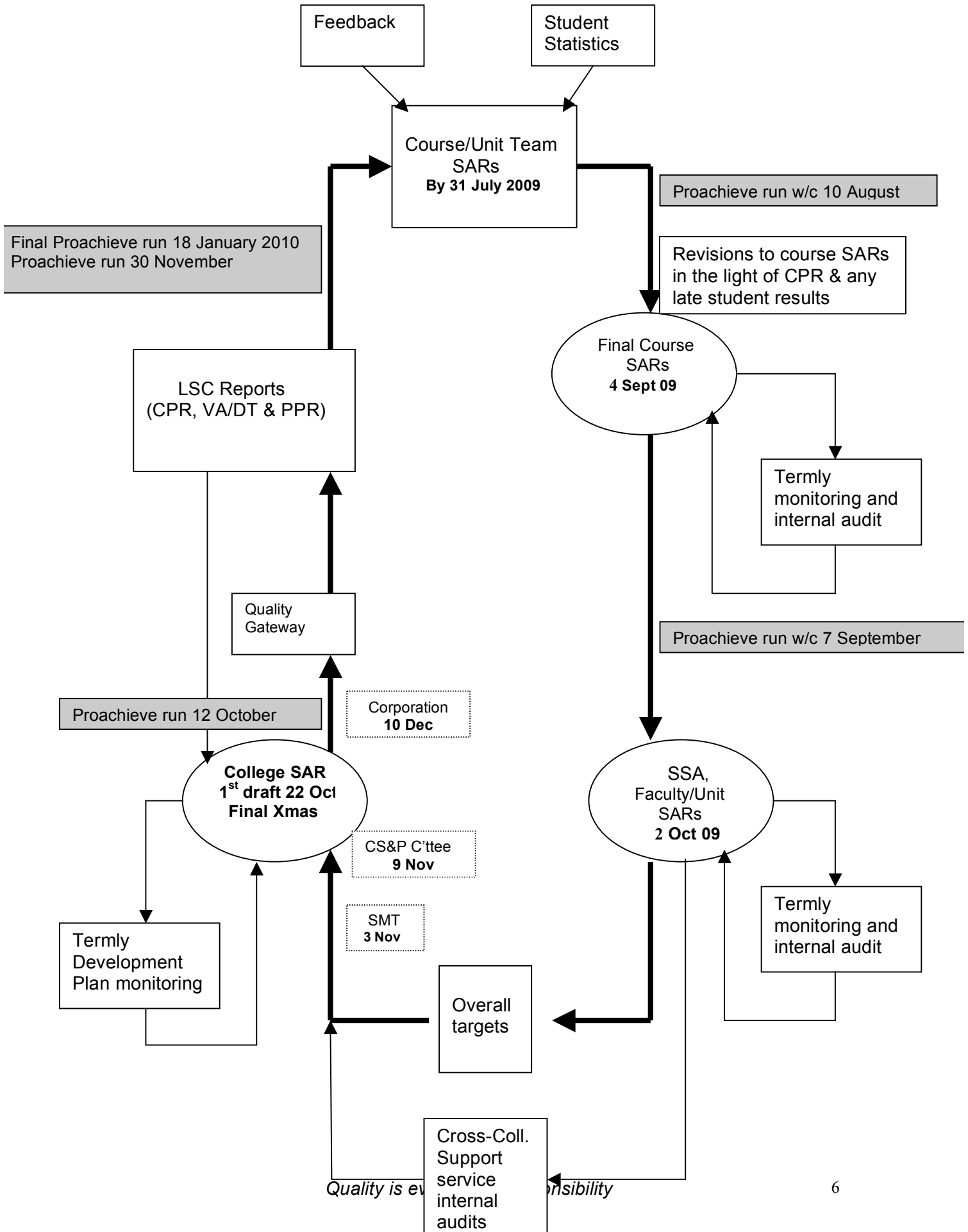
4.1.2 Examples of the sources of feedback relevant to the SAR:

Students)
Employers) Questionnaire results are on the staff computer network
Parents) on the 'p' (pool) drive accessed via 'my computer'
Staff)
External Verifiers/Moderators
Internal audit/inspection
Inspection

Guidance for the SAR Process

Course and Unit team guidance notes and model SARs are on the SAR Pool Drive. Also, the College's Value for Money and Risk Management Policies are on the Staff Intranet.

Stafford College Self-assessment Cycle



4.2 **SAR Procedure for Course Teams**

The SAR and its Quality Improvement Plan evolves continually during the year in the light of experience. The SAR must focus on the 5 Key Questions of the Common Inspection Framework. It is important to take into account relevant feedback and statistics as indicated in section 4.1.

- 4.2.1 An annual SAR review team meeting is held during July to draft the course SAR. Student data for a 3-year trend is obtained from the staff intranet under 'SAR Data'.
- 4.2.2 If necessary, the current year's student results should be confirmed in early September and the SAR adjusted. The Course Team Leader must then e-mail the course SAR to the Faculty Manager by 04 September and then discuss it before agreeing the final version. The SAR for HE courses offered in collaboration with Staffordshire University must be e-mailed to the relevant subject leader at the University and the College Quality Manager by 04 September (the Quality Manager will e-mail a copy to the University's Head of Collaborative Development).
- 4.2.3 The Course Team Leader sends a copy of the completed Course Data Sheet to the Faculty Manager by 04 September, after agreeing the targets. The Data Sheet and SAR are then filed under Self-Assessment in the Course Management File.
- 4.2.4 The Faculty Manager replaces the previous Course Team SAR on the SAR Pool Drive with the revised one by 02 October. The Manager also arranges for the agreed course targets to be entered onto Microsoft Access to contribute to the Area of Learning and Faculty targets.
- 4.2.5 The Course Team holds a SAR monitoring meeting once per term, during December and March.
- 4.2.6 Revised SAR is e-mailed to the Faculty Manager by 11 January and 26 April.
- 4.2.7 The Faculty Manager replaces the previous Course Team SAR on the SAR Pool Drive with the revised one by 18 January and 5 May.
- 4.2.8 At the end of the Autumn and Spring Term, Course Teams should complete the MADE form and send it to their Faculty within 2 weeks of the following term (form in Appendix 4). The MADE Report form should be completed in conjunction with the end of term SAR review and update and the 6 sections used on the MADE Report form to evaluate whether the SAR is still making a difference.
- 4.2.9 The Quality Manager conducts random audits of Course SARs in the Autumn as part of the Course Management File Audit (form in Appendix 5). During 2009/10 it is aimed to introduce an electronic version of the Course Management File as an alternative to a hard copy.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS ON SAR POOL DRIVE

- Course SAR Guidance Notes
- Model Course SAR
- Course SAR template forms

4.3 SAR Procedure for Support Unit Teams (sub- Unit SARs when applicable)

The SAR and its Quality Improvement Plan evolves continually during the year and in the light of experience. The SAR must evaluate the successes with which Unit policies, procedures and Service Level Agreements have implemented. It is important to take into account any relevant feedback and statistics as indicated in section 4.1.

- 4.3.1 An annual SAR review team meeting is held during July.
- 4.3.2 Unit Team Leader e-mails revised unit SAR to Unit Manager by 04 September.
- 4.3.3 Unit Manager replaces the previous Unit Team SAR on the SAR Pool Drive with the revised one by 02 October.
- 4.3.4 The Unit Team holds a SAR monitoring meeting once per term, during December and March.
- 4.3.5 Revised SAR is e-mailed to the Unit Manager by 11 January and 26 April.
- 4.3.6 The Unit Manager replaces the previous Unit SAR on the SAR Pool Drive with the revised one by 18 January and 5 May.
- 4.3.7 Once per term the Unit Manager monitors all unit SARs within his/her sphere of management (MADE form in [Appendix 4](#)).
- 4.3.8 In February the Quality Manager conducts random audits of unit SARs (using form in [Appendix 5](#)).

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS ON SAR POOL DRIVE

- Unit SAR Guidance Notes
- Unit Team SAR template forms
- Last year's Unit SAR

4.4 SAR Procedure for whole Faculty

The Faculty SAR (incorporating relevant Sector Subject Areas) are the responsibility of the Faculty Management Team (Head of Faculty and Faculty Managers). These SARs evolve during the year in the light of experience and any revisions to course team SARs.

- 4.4.1 The Faculty SAR must be updated annually by 02 October and saved on the SAR Pool Drive. The Quality Manager will provide advice during this process.
- 4.4.2 The Faculty SAR template, which contains guidance, is on the SAR Pool drive.
- 4.4.3 The Quality Improvement Plan within the Faculty SAR will be monitored once per term by the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) during January and May (MADE form in [Appendix 4](#)).
- 4.4.4 Once per term the Faculty Management Team will save any revised Faculty SARs to the SAR Pool Drive (the grade and evaluation sections will be revised annually as in 4.4.1 i.e. by 02 October).

4.5 SAR Procedure for whole Support Unit SARs

The SAR and its Quality Improvement Plan evolves continually during the year in the light of experience. The SAR must evaluate the success with which Unit policies, procedures and Service Level Agreements have been implemented. It is important to take into account any relevant feedback and statistics as indicated in section 4.1 and any sub-Unit SARs produced according to section 4.3.

- 4.5.1 The Support Unit SARs must be updated annually by 02 October and saved on the SAR Pool Drive. The Quality Manager will provide advice during this process.
- 4.5.2 The Unit Manager's Line Manager will monitor the SAR Development Plan during January and May (form is in [Appendix 4](#)).
- 4.5.3 Once per term the Unit Manager will save any revised Unit SAR tables to the SAR Pool Drive.

5. ANNUAL MONITORING FOR SURF PROVISION

- 5.1 Stafford College, together with several other Midlands Colleges, is a member of SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation). This is a funding consortium recognised by QAA. SURF therefore operates a common Quality assurance system for the HE courses which are validated by either Staffordshire University or Edexcel.
- 5.2 SURF courses must adhere to the quality procedures described in detail in the SURF Quality Handbook (available from the relevant University Link Tutor or the Quality Manager by e-mail).
- 5.3 SURF course teams conduct an annual 'Subject Review' (in place of the College's annual 'Self-Assessment'). Teams use the 'Annual Monitoring' forms (available from the Quality Manager by e-mail) devised by Staffordshire University and agreed by all SURF member colleges.
- 5.4 The course Annual Monitoring Cycle will follow the same pattern as non-HE Course Self-Assessment:
 - 5.4.1 The monitoring takes place in July with completed Annual Monitoring Reports ready by 14 September (e-mailed to the College Quality Manager for approval before emailing to the relevant SURF Award Link Tutor at the University).
 - 5.4.2 The action plan in the Annual Monitoring Report is monitored and, if necessary, updated once per College term in December and March.

6. INTERNAL VERIFICATION/MODERATION PROCEDURE

- 6.1 All courses leading to a qualification are subject to this College procedure ([QAL/003/000](#) on the Staff Intranet) whether or not they are externally verified/moderated. The purpose of IV/moderation is to standardise quality across course team members. The process covers:
- Assignment/task briefs
 - Assessment practice (for written and practical tasks)
 - Feedback to learners
 - Assessment record keeping
- 6.2 Although full details of the procedure are to be found in document [QAL/003/000](#) on the Staff Intranet, as a minimum course teams must:
- Produce an annual assessment sampling plan (form QAL/003/IV2, [Appendix 6](#))
 - Use a checklist/report form for each assessment sampled (form QAL/003/IV1a or QAL/003/1b in [Appendix 7](#) should be used as template)

The above forms are also in the appendix to the procedure document on the staff intranet.

- 6.3 Staff who are the sole deliverer of a course must consult their Faculty Manager about verification/moderation arrangements to be applied in this case.

7. EXTERNAL VERIFIER /MODERATOR REPORT PROCEDURE

- 7.1 This procedure ([QAL/002/000](#) on the Staff Intranet) applies to **all** externally verified or moderated courses.
- 7.2 a) As soon as an external verifier's or moderator's hard copy report arrives an original must be sent to the Principal's office (some EVs/moderators/Awarding Bodies send reports directly to the Principal).
b) C & G reports – course leaders (CLs) should ask their EV to put the contact name as Paul Baker with his e-mail address so they are received directly by the Quality Manager for circulation
c) Edexcel – Quality will print and circulate the on-line copy to management. CLs should print off their own copy.
- 7.3 A circulation cover sheet (QAL/002/EV1, [Appendix 8](#)) is attached to the report when it reaches the Principal.
- 7.4 The report is circulated in the following order:

Principal, Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality), Quality Manager, Head of Faculty, Faculty Manager, Course Leader.
- 7.5 The Quality Manager maintains a record of all external verification/moderation undertaken, report circulation, need for action, and implementation of action. In addition, a copy of the report is retained in the Learning Development Unit. The Quality Manager will contact the Faculty concerned if there are additional queries regarding the content of the report or to arrange support to help meet any required action points.
- 7.6 When the report reaches the course leader s/he **must** retain a copy of it, including the cover sheet after they have completed their section. If actions have been requested the course leader **must** indicate on the cover sheet the actions that will/have been undertaken.

Any actions, which require development work to be undertaken, must be added to the course SAR Quality Improvement Plan.
- 7.7 Within 2 weeks of receiving the circulated EV/moderator's report, the course leader **must send a copy** of the completed cover sheet **and** any revised Quality Improvement Plan to the Quality Manager.

8. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAs)

- 8.1 These are internal “contracts” which list the minimum standards of service for a particular College function. SLAs are usually between a support service and a curriculum area (Faculty/Unit).
- 8.2 The SLA contains measurable performance indicators, and is an important tool in monitoring the quality of service for self-assessment or internal audit/inspection purposes.
- 8.3 Current SLAs cover the following:

Service	Supplier	Customer
Communication	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Acquisition of Resources	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Induction and User Education Sessions	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Library Stock Management	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Reservation and Inter-library Loans	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Statement of Service	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Student Behaviour	Library and Information Services	Faculties/Curriculum Units
Computerised student data	Student Services	Information Systems Unit
Provision of EMA, LSF and ALG	Student Services	Faculties
Services provided to salaried employees	Finance Unit	Heads of Faculty/Unit (on behalf of their staff)
Services provided to Budget Holders	Finance Unit	Budget Holders
Reprographics	Estates Unit	Heads of Faculty/Unit (on behalf of their staff)
Cleaning services	Estates Unit	Heads of Faculty/Unit (on behalf of their staff)
Maintenance services	Estates Unit	Heads of Faculty/Unit (on behalf of their staff)
Production of publicity material	Marketing Unit	Marketing Group Faculty Representatives
Personnel Services	Personnel Unit	Heads of Faculty/ Unit (on behalf of their staff)
Staff Development Services	Learning Development Unit	Heads of Faculty/Unit (on behalf of their staff)

- 8.4 Support Units must review the appropriateness of their SLAs as part of the annual self-assessment process in July. SLAs remain in force unless the Quality Manager has been notified of a change. Signed copies of new or amended SLAs must be sent to the Quality Manager as soon as they come into force.

- 8.5 Parties to each SLA monitor progress towards the performance indicators at the end of each term as part of SAR termly review and update.
- 8.6 The Quality Manager will arrange for a College-wide audit of SLA performance according to the schedule shown in [Appendix 2](#).

9. TEACHING AND LEARNING OBSERVATIONS

The college has operated a system of teaching observations for some time, using a two-pronged approach consisting of:

1. **Internal Audit/Inspection observations:** these are conducted by the teacher training team as part of the audit process. Typically, up to 20 observations might be carried out in a week.
2. **Continuous observations:** these occur throughout the teaching year, and are conducted by Heads of Faculty and their delegates, who are usually Faculty Managers and Advanced Practitioners (Teaching & Learning Mentors).

Every part of the college curriculum has now been observed at least once, with the overall objective of improving the quality of our teaching and learning.

Following the publication of the 2005 revised Common Inspection Framework, from September 2005 every learning session will be graded on a 4-point scale for teaching/learning. Observers will note key strengths and areas for improvement and will feed back findings, including grades, to observed staff. The grade descriptors are:

Grade 1:	Outstanding
Grade 2:	Good
Grade 3:	Satisfactory
Grade 4:	Inadequate

How will tutorials and workshops be observed?

All learning encounters are liable to be observed – tutorials and workshop sessions are no exception. The revised observation checklist is well suited to traditional group classes, and as the process evolves its effectiveness for other teaching & learning environments will be monitored. Similarly, the college session plan template may not suit all situations – in some workshops it may be preferable to use Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) instead. The main thing is to ensure that the quality of student learning experience is planned and evident from the documentation.

The observation form and observation code of practice is in [Appendix 9](#), and details of Advanced Practitioners in [Appendix 10](#).

10. ELECTRONIC PLAGIARISM CHECKS ON STUDENTS ASSIGNMENTS

This is described in full in procedure [POL/056/000](#), available on the Staff Intranet. Turnitin Staff and Student user guides are also to be found under Quality on the staff intranet.

- 10.1 From 1st September 2008 there will be a phased introduction of electronic submission by email or by uploading to Turnitin - the college's plagiarism detection system. The marker/assessor will inform students of which method to use, and will provide the necessary guidance. The marker/assessor may also request that the student submits a printed copy as well. Heads of Faculty/Unit will inform staff of the start date for particular courses.
- 10.2 From the electronic submission start date handwritten work will only be accepted if electronic submission is not appropriate, e.g. work-based evidence for NVQ and Art & Design portfolios, or in agreed exceptional circumstances.
- 10.3 Staff will use Turnitin either by uploading student submissions themselves or asking students to submit their work directly to Turnitin (via Moodle or via Turnitin's stand alone web address).
- 10.4 If appropriate, staff will allow students to upload work to Turnitin before the submission deadline so that they can generate a pre-submission plagiarism report and, if necessary, edit their work before final submission by the deadline. This facility can also be used as a teaching and learning resource when introducing the principles of using research information.
- 10.5 Turnitin will only form part of the evidence that may be used in disciplining a student under the College's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

11. INTERNAL INSPECTION

This is described in full in procedure [QAL/011/000](#), available on the Staff Intranet.

- 10.1 Each Faculty and Unit, and some cross-College activities, are internally inspected on a 3-year cycle ([Appendix 11](#)).
- 10.2 For curriculum activities the 2005 revised Common Inspection Framework is used in conjunction with the College's Teaching and Learning Observation Checklist/Report form (Appendix 9).

Overall grades, based on the new OFSTED/ALI 4-point reporting scale, are given for the whole Faculty/Unit and any internal curriculum areas/sector subject areas separately inspected:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

In addition, the results of observations of teaching and learning will be summarised and graded for teaching/learning.

- 10.3 For support services/Units internal inspection is based around:
 - Any sections of the 2005 Common Inspection Framework that are applicable
 - The service's Operational Plan
 - Any applicable College-wide and local policies and procedures
 - Service level agreements
 - The Quality Improvement Plan within the service's SAR

An overall grade, based on the new OFSTED/ALI 4-point reporting scale, will be given.

- 10.4 If a Faculty/cross-College activity/Unit/support service receives an overall grade of 4 (inadequate) then a re-inspection will be undertaken within 12 months.

11. COMPLAINTS AND ACCOLADES

Full details of this procedure ([QAL/004/000](#)) are on the Staff Intranet. However, the following points should be noted:

- 11.1 Only members of the Senior Management Team and College Management Team (“Key Persons”) should write directly to complainants on completion of any investigation.
- 11.2 It is important to adhere to all deadlines listed in the procedure (i.e. 7 working days at each stage).
- 11.3 The Key Person **must** retain the official “complaints envelope” until the investigation is complete, and **then return it immediately** to the Quality Manager.
- 11.4 The Quality Manager produces a termly “Complaints and Accolades Report” for discussion with the Corporation. A copy of the report is placed on the staff intranet so that issues and trends can be considered as part of the self-assessment and Quality Improvement Planning cycle at all relevant levels in College.

Please ensure that copies of any external accolades received are sent promptly to the Quality Manager for inclusion in the appropriate report, and for possible display on the “Good News” board in Reception.

12. STAFF GRIEVANCES

The Staff Grievance Procedure (QAL039) is on the staff intranet, and should be used in the case of issues relating to a member of staff’s employment.

13. STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

There are 2 levels of student disciplinary procedure. The 'Faculty and Curriculum Unit Student Disciplinary Procedure' (QAL/035/000) standardises disciplinary action for behaviour, etc which falls short of the 'gross misconduct' covered by the 'College Student Disciplinary Procedure (QAL/005/000). QAL/005/000 allows the College to expel a student following a formal disciplinary hearing and the right of appeal. Behaviour which has exhausted the provisions of the new QAL/035/000 can be referred to QAL/005/000 and could lead to expulsion. It is important that procedures within the new QAL/035/000 are followed consistently across College to be fair to students. All the records required under QAL/035/000 must be kept for 6 years in case they are needed at a formal disciplinary hearing and any subsequent appeal or litigation.

For further details see [QAL/005/000](#) and [QAL/035/000](#) on the Staff Intranet.

14. STUDENT ASSESSMENT APPEALS PROCEDURE

See [QAL/006/000](#) on the Staff Intranet.

15. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CODE OF PRACTICE AND ACTION PLAN

See [QAL/033/000](#) on the Staff Intranet.

16. COLLEGE CHARTER REVIEW AND MONITORING

See [QAL/013/000](#) on the Staff Intranet.

17. MONITORING OF STUDENT INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SERVICES

In March 2004 the College was awarded the “Matrix Quality Mark” of the GAB (Guidance Accreditation Board) for our information, advice and guidance (IAG) services across College.

The Matrix Quality Mark is displayed on College letterheads, publicity materials, enrolment forms and many internal documents (including this one). The certificate and plaque is displayed in Reception.

College adherence to the Matrix Quality Standards is monitored by:

- Faculty and Unit Self-assessment
- Internal audit/inspection
- GAB random audit (with prior notification)
- Unannounced visits by “mystery shoppers” arranged confidentially by the Staffordshire IAG Network, of which the College is a member

Matrix was re-accredited for the whole College on 27 March 2007 (see www.ento.co.uk standards) and is due for re-assessment by 22 March 2010.

18. MANAGEMENT OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND RECORDS

A pink staff development approval form (Pers 70) must be completed prior to attendance at a staff development activity. This is particularly important if fees or expenses are involved. The procedure is described in full in the Staff Handbook, and in the Staff Development Policy ([POL/028/000](#)) and Staff Development Procedure ([QAL/028/000](#)) on the staff intranet.