

Commercial in Confidence



Hadlow College

ASSESSMENT SERVICES
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1. Assessment Information

Assessment Type	INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Assessor's Name	ALISTAIR HUDSON
Visit Date	28/01/2019 – 30/01/2019 (2.5 DAYS)
Client ID	C25355
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Continuous Improvement Check Year 1 due by	30/01/2020
Continuous Improvement Check Year 2 due by	30/01/2021
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2. Organisation – Background, Introduction and Overview

Hadlow College is a land-based further and higher education college, which started out over a hundred years ago as the Kent Horticultural Institute and the Kent Farm Institute. With a mission to deliver 'Innovation, Experience, Excellence', the College's main campus is in Hadlow, with much smaller campuses in Mottingham and Greenwich in south London and Canterbury. The curriculum primarily covers land-based subjects including agriculture, conservation and wildlife management, animal management, fisheries management, equine studies, outdoor pursuits, floristry, horticulture, garden design, landscape management and sustainability. The College operates as part of the Hadlow Group, in which its principal partner is West Kent and Ashford College, though the two Colleges remain separate legal entities ahead of a full merger proposed for later in 2019. The Group also contains the Hadlow Rural Community School, opened under the free schools initiative. Broadly speaking, the curriculum themes are: vocational further education (FE); apprenticeship training; and a portfolio of higher education (HE) provision. There is also some private provision of short Royal Horticultural Society courses. Many students are residential, with purpose-built accommodation available at Hadlow.

At the core of the learning portfolio is an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service that is intrinsic to enabling learners to realise their learning, work, career and life goals, and is an ongoing theme from pre-recruitment to completion, progression and beyond. The College previously ensured external quality assurance of its Careers provision through the Quality in Careers Standard. The decision was taken to adopt the **matrix** Standard to quality assure the full range of IAG across the College, including in the curriculum. The Hadlow College IAG service is truly an embedded feature within the wider learner journey, with all staff able to explain their defined role in enabling students to progress with their goals. At the core of the IAG offer is a central suite of services that reaches out to support students across all campuses. These central teams are a highly valued service by both staff and students. Importantly all the staff here play a key role in ensuring a package of support to the 200 residential based students, creating a safe and positive living and learning environment. The main teams are:

Admissions – this team plays a pivotal role in exploring pre-entry information across FE, HE and private courses and, in partnership with colleagues across the curriculum, ensures student enrolment is smooth running. A separate Admissions team has a similar function for apprenticeships

Careers Services – providing a suite of careers advice and guidance opportunities on a one to one and group basis, as well as supporting curriculum staff with their careers education needs

Student Support Services and Residential Support Team – A range of support services including health and welfare, Safeguarding, group tutorial and enrichment programmes, finance and Learner Voice activities

Additional Learning Support (ALS) – a team which provides individualised support for students with a range of additional support needs. Support provided covers the spectrum from occasional advice or counselling sessions to full-time one to one support

Learning Resource Centre (LRC) – Providing library services, including books, journals and e-resources, as well as support for students to develop study and information literacy skills

Beyond these central services is an integrated IAG experience delivered by curriculum staff and apprenticeship assessors within a tutorial framework that includes Safeguarding, the Prevent Duty, health and well being and career pathways. These staff are also students' first point of contact for a range of IAG-related issues.

The College has robust quality assurance procedures, and obtained a grade 1 Ofsted rating at its last full inspection in 2010 for the whole college, and a further grade 1 for its residential care provision for under 18s in 2017. Although the College has not previously held accreditation against the **matrix** Standard, senior management are very familiar with the Standard from their work across the Hadlow Group, and have effectively been using **matrix** as an outcome based framework for some time. The decision to opt for whole organisation accreditation is reflective of staff understanding that IAG is a key feature of the Hadlow College student experience, and their confidence in its robust delivery, that in turn leads to student outcomes and the realisation of the College's Key Performance Indicators. The assessment was brought to life by a workforce which is passionate about its sector and its students. The overall impression of this Assessment is of one holistic service that comprises many parts, all of which unite to achieve learner outcomes.

3. Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- Support for students with a wide range of sometimes complex needs is a major feature of the College. ALS staff work seamlessly with curriculum colleagues to embed this support in classes and wider College life. Support is provided for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and, importantly, for those who do not (under the terms of the Equality and Inclusion Act). Local authority partners confirmed that the College is considered locally to have excellent, joined up provision for those with additional needs, leading to good outcomes and progression. One student described how intensive support with English had transformed his college experience and how he was now in line for merits and distinctions. The Princess Christian's Farm (a joint venture with Kent County Council) gives students with learning difficulties and disabilities the opportunity to work on a real commercial farm producing horticulture, meat and eggs. Topics as wide-ranging as LGBT, young carers, drug and alcohol abuse, care leavers and rehabilitation from criminal convictions were described enthusiastically and knowledgeably by Student Support staff. Students who do several level 1 courses in a row, often due to a learning difficulty or disability, have to have their pathways signed off by senior management to ensure an element of progression. (1.3)
- Robust Learner Voice methodologies mean that students feel listened to, with several solid examples of real change brought about. Careers consultants confirmed that they had moved the Careers Hub to the main College building to make it more accessible, based on student input and with corresponding increases in usage seen as a result. Student representatives spoke of their dialogue with fellow students and how they represent their views in their frequent interactions with the College Principal. Examples of their views being taken into account range from better equipment and wider access to assignment support to cheaper beer in the students' union! LRC staff confirmed how they source new books based on input from students. Preparations are also well underway for this February's FE student conference. Taken together, these initiatives and their impact show that Hadlow is a listening college that values the student voice. (1.7)
- College staff make the most of partnership working to enhance their service to students. The College works seamlessly with schools (including its own free school) and the local authority to ensure its service is promoted to all those who might benefit. The result is that the College is extremely well known in the local area and wider region, with most students confirming they had known of its existence from a young age. Curriculum staff make the most of their memberships of a range of professional bodies to keep up to date on the latest developments in agriculture, horticulture, equine and other sectors and disseminate this information to students as robust Labour Market Information (LMI). Employer relationships across the sector have been nurtured over many years, providing further opportunities for LMI, and for student work experience, apprenticeships and job progressions.

Particularly good use is made of memberships of external organisations such as the Kent Wildlife Trust, with dissertation students given the opportunity to present at conferences. Keeping in touch with former students and making the most of the businesses they have developed is also a strength. For example, an alumni Facebook page is used to promote work opportunities for current students. (1.8)

- The College uses its expertise in the land-based disciplines to provide current and accurate careers information to students, delivered by a combination of the central careers service and curriculum staff. All curriculum staff and apprentice assessors come from the sectors they teach, and are thereby able to give expert first-hand advice on available career options. Curriculum staff confirmed that their continuous professional development revolves around maintaining their industry skills, with each staff member spending at least three days a year in industry. Apprenticeship assessors draw industry information from employer visits which is then disseminated to curriculum colleagues. In addition to making the most of staff's expert knowledge, students are encouraged to use national resources such as those of the various specialist bodies such as Lantra or the National Careers Service for bigger picture information. Wider development of careers and employability is embedded, and has recently been strengthened, in group and individual tutorials. (2.2, 2.4)
- Values of impartiality were displayed across the range of college staff interviewed. 'Pre-IAG' for potential students is particularly thorough, with taster days and other interactions aimed at introducing young people to 'what land-based is all about'. Several staff described their philosophy of 'Hadlow may not be the right place for them', with signposting within the Hadlow Group and beyond. FE students wishing to progress to HE described how they were guided to consider the full range of options beyond Hadlow's own HE provision. As one senior member of staff said: '*Our only target is a successful destination*', and this is reflected in destination data showing 95% of students progressing to work or further study. A lot of IAG work also goes into ensuring students go onto a course at the right level for them, summed up by several staff as '*right learner, right course, at the right level*', with, for apprenticeships, the addition of the '*right employer*'. (3.3)

4. Areas for Development

Areas for development are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is; or to give insight to practice seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and areas for development. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in anyway lacking. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments.

- Several apprentices mentioned that they had experienced staffing issues during their time at Hadlow College. As one apprentice said: *'The assessors have often seemed very busy'*. The College is aware of this staff turnover issue, which has now largely been resolved. The College may wish to prioritise the continued adequate staffing of the apprenticeship team. This is particularly relevant to facilitate the transition from frameworks to standards, and the increased profile given to IAG in standards and end point assessment preparation. At the same time, a change to the assessor job title could be considered as they will no longer be assessing, but have a role closer to a coach or apprenticeship champion. (2.1)
- The College wants all staff in areas such as Careers and Admissions to be IAG-qualified. Whilst the vast majority are indeed qualified or working towards a qualification, at least one newer member of staff stated that she had not started any qualification. Addressing this training goal would maintain consistency of delivery and help to cement the service's reputation for quality. (2.4)
- College staff and management are aware of the Gatsby framework and the need to incorporate the eight benchmarks fully into their careers provision. The College is encouraged to prioritise further development in this area. For example, benchmark one calls for a stable careers programme 'that is known and understood by pupils, parents teachers and employers'. This is normally interpreted as a description of the careers service in accessible language via a link from the home page of the College website. While the website promotes Student Support, the careers advice and guidance entitlement could be more prominent. (4.5, 4.8)
- The Hadlow Group contains a number of member organisations, most notably West Kent and Ashford College. Several senior staff already have group-wide responsibilities, and it is important in maintaining Hadlow College's undoubted reputation and quality IAG provision that it should maintain its own good practices while incorporating them into the much larger partner college. This will be particularly important if the proposed merger between group members, planned for just a few months' time, goes ahead. Even if the legal merger does not take place, increased joint working will undoubtedly benefit the other Group members. (4.8)

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals <http://matrixstandard.com/continuous-improvement-checks/>. These may include the Areas for Development above.

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation.

5. Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- Visit to the Hadlow campus
- One-to-one interviews with two Vice Principals (2)
- One-to-one and small group interviews with key managers and staff delivering the service and covering all campuses (33)
- One-to-one interviews with external partners in person and by telephone (3)
- Small group interviews with a diverse and representative sample of students (23)
- A review of planning, delivery and evaluation documentation, technology platforms and a campus tour

6. Detailed Findings

1. Leadership and Management

The way in which the organisation is led and managed to develop an effective service

Staff demonstrated that they are well led and empowered to provide a service that supports the College's overall aims and objectives relating to success, retention and achievement. Managers and staff were able to clearly explain their own role in supporting the College's aims and objectives and wider mission with clear two-way communication channels, including with the Principal, ensuring clarity. Each individual service also has constantly reviewed and updated measurable aims and objectives which link to the wider College strategic aims. Importantly the staff across all areas of the College were clearly able to explain and demonstrate how quality IAG is pivotal to realising these measurables by helping students to decide if the College and the land-based sector is right for them, to choose the right course at the right level, stay on course and move forward with their aspirations. The role of cross-college IAG is key to the wider College's strategic aims of performing better than the national average for the sector of 93.5% retention, 95.2% overall pass rate and 89% achievement rate, as well as 67% achievement for apprenticeships. These aims and objectives are further split by provision type and by categories such as High Needs, EHCP and Care Leavers.

Leadership and direction is highly effective at team and senior management levels, with staff confirming that senior management are accessible and supportive. The various strands that make up the College's IAG service also have a high-profile role in the wider College structure, with robust steer and support provided from the Principal and College-wide senior leadership team. Each service has a detailed annual Self-Assessment Review (SAR), a Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP). These are clear and impact focused. The College Governors also have a strong leadership role, for example by signing off the organisational SAR.

Values of professional integrity, making a difference and equality and diversity were showcased, with a particular emphasis on enabling those students who face the most barriers to achieve. These values feed through into results obtained, with positive destinations for High Needs Learners standing at 99%, several percentage points above the figure for other learners. The Haddie Hadlow character (a cat-dog) is the College's Equality and Diversity Champion with a Facebook page to promote all EDI issues, in which the College includes socio-economic background as well as the nine protected characteristics. Robust processes are in place to identify learners' special needs or learning difficulties at application and induction stages and relevant adjustments made and support provided. Much work had been done to make the College a welcoming environment for all, with initiatives such as the inclusion of a chill out room.

During the assessment staff showed that they keep abreast of the latest legislation and other changes affecting their sector and IAG. Staff were able to describe their compliance with recent GDPR legislation and regulation or good practice in areas such as Prevent, Safeguarding and British Values. These issues are given prominence, in accessible language, in the Student Guide. Student Support staff also demonstrated up to date knowledge on student finance legislation relating to FE, HE and Disabled students' Allowances. This dynamic adoption of relevant legislation is particularly important in the case of residential students, many of whom are under 18, and is reflected in the recent grade 1 Ofsted outcome for this provision.

In addition, curriculum staff demonstrated detailed knowledge of legislation highly relevant to Hadlow College's courses such as Health & Safety and biosecurity.

Outcome based practices are robust, with good use made of the Electronic Individual Learning Plan (eILP) system to record targets and progress. Staff from across the College were able to cite examples of intended IAG outcomes and these included: feeling safe and respected; independence of thought and action; independent learning; career management skills; increased confidence and sociability; written communication and academic confidence.

Marketing resources, both paper and digital, are of a good standard across all aspects of College life, and bring to life the IAG offer in a blended approach which is highly accessible. Staff were able to provide examples of their work promoting the College to as wide a range of young people as possible, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, through a wide range of promotional events, websites and social media and co-working with the County Council. The various IAG services are promoted to existing students through a range of high-quality paper-based and online materials, always with the aim of reaching as many students as possible, especially those who may be harder to reach due to disabilities or those from a disadvantaged background. Students who have made little use of the central IAG services are nonetheless aware of their existence and what they do. The College website provides links to a host of Student Support information directly from the home page, and the look and feel created around IAG services give them a central role in College life.

In planning the direction of travel for the College, the leadership team is highly attentive to the voice of staff and learners. The Assessment provided many examples to highlight how the College is a responsive and a listening organisation. Students also confirmed that they have input into the design and development of their own IAG service through Learner Voice activities, as detailed in 'Strengths' above. Staff are empowered to suggest service developments and confirmed that they are consulted by management, with both Principal's presentations and Principal's Q&A sessions featuring strongly.

The College recognises the importance of networking and partnership working to the strengthening of its IAG service and thereby the achievement of its aims and objectives. As a specialist college, Hadlow makes the most of its links to employers, alumni and industry organisations to further entrench its position as a centre of excellence. Through effective partnerships at county council level, the College has developed a high profile in the community, and is viewed by partners as an exemplar of good practice on Not in education Employment or Training (NEET) reduction, supported transition, and ongoing work with vulnerable learners.

2. Resources

The assets invested and applied in providing an effective service

A robust business planning process is based upon ensuring that IAG resources across the College are sufficient to provide a high-quality service and meet the needs of students. Resources are sufficient to allow for complex IAG interventions with staff having the capacity to offer intensive one to one interventions based on learner needs. ALS in particular is a resource-intensive service, yet the objective of timely support being in place is met, including for those students who need one to one support. A personalised service is offered to learners, and innovative use is made of technology, especially online IAG resources and social media, which enables resources to reach further. Premises are also sufficient for IAG delivery, and confidentiality is scheduled into premises planning, with students confirming interview rooms are available to discuss a wide range of personal issues in confidence.

The provision of current, accurate and quality-assured information is a 'Strength' of the College's IAG provision, largely thanks to the joined-up approach between central IAG staff such as the LRC and Careers and the sector experts from the curriculum. The LRC has a high profile within the College and clearly demonstrated how, through use of digital and paper-based information, their support is making a measurable difference. The LRC is well equipped with books, eBooks, databases and journals, with staff highlighting how the support from LRC staff, coupled with library cataloguing resources, equips them with their IAG needs in a highly competent manner. Staff and managers described how the latest information is cascaded throughout the College. Careers staff and others are competent in making effective use of quality assured websites including the National Careers Service and the National Apprenticeship Service. Labour market intelligence is also sourced from employers and specialist industry bodies. In house resources are well written with blended content to ensure accessibility to differing learning styles, with quality assurance carried out on all materials at senior management level.

A review of job descriptions highlighted that these are current, with key accountabilities that are regularly reviewed. The delivery of IAG is transparent and a clear priority across student-facing role specifications. Job descriptions link through to departmental and the wider College's strategic aims. Most of the central IAG staff interviewed have an IAG qualification, with the aim to have all such staff qualified. The delivery of IAG is transparent and given a high profile across all role specifications, as part of the holistic approach to student support.

Staff confirmed that they have varied opportunities for CPD, and were able to cite examples of internal and external courses and conferences attended. Curriculum staff make full use of the minimum three days they spend in industry each year. All staff confirmed they were happy with the CPD available, with weekly CPD sessions on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, and that the training has led to increased staff confidence and competence. Recent examples were also given of career progression, either with greater responsibilities within existing roles or promotion within the College. Staff were able to provide examples of training improving individual and team performance, and meeting team, department and College objectives, with an emphasis on being fully up to speed with legislation and IAG practice.

New staff, including those who had undertaken internal transfers were able to describe the effective induction processes they had undertaken, including a two-day group induction, shadowing colleagues, introductions to the wider College and opportunities to learn their roles and have support of colleagues when interacting with students. This enables them to play an effective part in the team from an early stage. It also ensures consistency of approach when dealing with student queries. As one member of staff said: *'My induction was very good. We have to give the right answers to everyone and I've had the support to do so from day one'*.

3. Service Delivery

The way in which the service is delivered effectively

A clearly defined IAG offer transcends the Further and Higher Education and apprenticeship curriculum. Students confirmed that this is widely understood and is very well described in the 'College Life' sections of the Student Guide. This well promoted document is broad and includes support around accessing technology resources, the student voice and wider personal development topics such as being 'An Independent learner in the 21st Century'. The IAG offer is also described on the College website, with most of the IAG services grouped under 'Student Support', and examples of the sort of issues the different services may be able to help with.

A calendar of 'Activities, Events and Enrichment' exists for the wider College with a suite of IAG activities across the three academic terms, grouped under five key themes with further links to Student Support Services in areas such as Finance and Sexual Health. A wide range of enrichment activities are programmed, such as Sport Enrichment and Cultural Enrichment and Personal Development, with impact measures such as improved retention.

Service delivery is effective and all staff were able to explain how their approach to IAG adds value to the College's objectives for achievement, retention and progression. By offering IAG with a flexible, joined-up approach depending on each student's individual circumstances, staff are enabling learners to develop their own goals and achieve their personal and progression objectives, thereby contributing to the overall organisational aims and objectives. Service delivery is constantly developing. Alongside ongoing central and curriculum staff support, there is an ever-increasing emphasis on developmental activities such as the 'Globetrotting' programme of events related to different cultures worldwide, charity work and 'Chill and Chat' wellbeing activities. All these activities are aimed at improving wellbeing, cultural awareness and ultimately employability and team working skills.

Service delivery is impartial and objective with a real emphasis on learner personalisation. Care is taken to ensure that at taster days, enrolment and induction (internally grouped under pre-IAG) all staff firmly demonstrate their impartiality and spend quality time exploring all options through a person centred, skilled helper approach. This comes naturally to Hadlow College staff of all levels where the ethos is very much centred on the individual's best interests.

The College promotes a culture where individual decisions are student-led. Staff view their job as presenting the options, or how to find them, and ensuring that the student has realistically taken into account all the implications of their choices. Realistic goals are also encouraged, with a supportive Fitness to Study programme which encourages students to take ownership of issues, with whatever support is needed, and manage their situation, thereby enabling them to stay on course and achieve.

The ProMonitor system is working well as a tool to capture and log agreed student actions, and curriculum staff confirmed its use to flag up causes for concern related to any student, enabling a holistic approach to providing required support and interventions. The LRC also promotes digital inclusion through the provision of plentiful computers, printers and other ICT necessities.

Twitter, Facebook and Instagram feeds are frequently updated with topics such as promoting #TimeToTalkDay to encourage students to seek any support they may need. There are further closed Facebook pages for groups of students such as ALS service users, all with the aim of using technology to promote participation and inclusion.

Thanks to the College's extensive range of partnerships already mentioned, staff are able to signpost students to appropriate external provision. Examples given included specialist educational psychologists, the Virtual School for Looked After Children, local authority children's and homelessness services, as well as specialist charities for issues such as drug or alcohol abuse. Partners confirmed the seamless signposting of students from the College, always with the aim of meeting the student's needs.

When commenting upon the one to one support accessed from the range of College IAG services, young people and adults were overwhelmingly positive and explained:

'They give us loads of employability support, with CVs and cover letters and also advising us the best way to achieve what we want to do in the future';

'My tutor is so knowledgeable, a real expert, so I have such confidence in her and her advice';

'I've really grown as a person during my time her and learnt so many skills through living independently on site';

'My apprenticeship gives me the skills I need to get on at work. I have a 5-year plan to get into management'.

4. Continuous Quality Improvement

The way in which the service provided is reviewed and improved on an ongoing basis

The College, and each of its component parts that provide IAG, embrace continuous quality improvement. Management information datasets are frequently updated and are effective in showing progress in the achievement of the College's and each service's aims and objectives. These are overseen by the Group Vice Principal for Quality Standards and Performance, and ultimately by the College Governors via a governance structure of meetings and committees. Strategic documents track areas such as recruitment and retention, with subsets of data for various demographic groups. Overall data shows retention at 92%, pass rate at 90.6% and achievement at 83.3%, all slightly below the national benchmarks. Ongoing quality improvements should see further improvements to datasets, as already seen in apprenticeships, where achievement rates have increased from 53.6% to 80.3% over the past three years, now standing at a particularly impressive 13% above the national benchmark. The College is particularly pleased with its 95% overall rate of positive progression, which it puts down to robust student IAG, a service seen by all from the Principal down as a key element for the achievement of wider College aims and objectives. The College also participates in the Graduate Outcomes survey to track students' HE destinations and identify where improvements may be needed.

The monitoring and evaluation of client outcomes occurs naturally during most curriculum and central IAG interventions. Changes brought about as a result of IAG are captured in the various review documents along the learner journey, all grouped together in the eILP. Prominence given to IAG interventions, any additional needs and the student's longer-term goals, including targets the students set for themselves. A review of eILPs confirmed how curriculum staff highlight the achieved soft outcomes to help celebrate learner progress and soft skill development.

Feedback is regularly and systematically sought from students through student surveys and feedback forms at pre-determined points along the student journey. Informal feedback at all points along the student journey is also robust thanks to the staff/student relationships that are established. Learner Voice forums meet termly and are specifically designed to cover both Curriculum and the various support services. Learner Voice methodologies instil confidence in students that their views count, as discussed in 'Strengths' above. As well as its own data monitoring, the College participates in the external FE Choices survey, and the HE National Student Survey, and analyses results from each to identify improvements.

Staff were able to describe in some depth their ongoing evaluation of partnerships. Employer partnerships are vital for work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, yet several curriculum areas do not offer apprenticeships due to a concern around the lack of suitable employer partners. The College used to offer veterinary nursing, but stopped it as the partnership was not working to the College's requirements, and it is now launching provision again via another provider. Feedback from partners highlights how the College adds value to networks and responds to regional land-based, educational and other economic needs.

Quality assurance of IAG is realised through a combined approach of working towards **matrix** Standard Accreditation and embedding the Common Inspection Framework across the entire FE provision. These formal quality processes result in the production of documents such as a detailed SAR and QIAP at a College-wide level, and these are reflected in departmental SARs and QIAPs. The contribution of IAG-related services to the QIAPs is explicit. For example, a current action relates to further embedding Prevent and British Values so that students can talk confidently about the issues as they relate to the local area and their sector. These live documents are regularly reviewed through the College governance structure. A Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) policy more closely mapped to the Gatsby Good Career Guidance benchmarks is now planned. Across HE provision, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and its Quality Code inform curriculum and IAG support service design.

Staff were able to describe in some detail their ongoing appraisals, and how their objectives link to wider College objectives and the QIAP. Regular review meetings are held at a team and individual level. Staff were effusive in describing the support available to them both formally in review meetings and also informally, particularly from colleagues in a team-working culture.

As already mentioned, technology is an intrinsic element of service improvement methodologies. Social media is increasingly used for marketing and information sharing. Marketing materials and IAG resources have moved significantly online, as a response to staff and student demand. Technology enables follow up with students in need of greater support, through proactive and joined up use of ProMonitor. Use of data analytics assesses ways that students are accessing information.

A culture of striving for excellence and continuous improvement permeates this provider of Further and Higher Education and apprenticeships. It embraces the 'plan, do, review' methodology with constant reviews of changes through the well defined quality improvement structure, and new improvement targets set.

7. Conclusion

Throughout this accreditation review against the **matrix** Standard, Hadlow College has demonstrated its commitment to providing high quality support for its students to enable them to maximise their student journey and to leave with qualifications and the skills to succeed, as well as giving them the necessary knowledge to progress into their chosen career. Support is student-centred, with the whole-college scope of the assessment demonstrating a holistic approach to IAG involving central IAG services and curriculum staff.

Its quality IAG provision should stand it in good stead if the proposed merger activity proceeds as planned. Following the merger, a Transition Review will need to take place within six months to combine the **matrix** accreditations of the two colleges.

NB: Continued accreditation is subject to annual Continuous Improvement Checks at twelve and twenty-four months following assessment and three-yearly on-site accreditation reviews. If checks/reviews are not undertaken in a timely way this will have an impact upon your organisation's accreditation.

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

- Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
- Throughout the period of accreditation satisfy Assessment Services Ltd that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
- Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
- Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrix@assessmentsservices.com .
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
- Inform Assessment Services Ltd of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
- Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause Assessment Services Ltd and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
- Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
- Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by Assessment Services Ltd and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to being a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
- Be aware that Assessment Services Ltd reserves the right to remove any accreditation and/or certification previously applied if payment is not received for services provided.

Whilst accredited the organisation will be signed up for IAGonline - a community website for all **matrix** holders. Once signed up, any employee of the organisation can join the community and access regular posts and join specialist interest groups for support and discussion.

	
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