

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr J Allen  
Principal  
Lincoln College  
Monks Road  
Lincoln  
Lincolnshire  
LN2 5HQ

Dear Mr Allen

**Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: employability - the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained employment**

This survey evaluates providers' response to initiatives launched on 1 August 2011 to use Skills Funding Agency funds flexibly to support people on benefits.

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and participants, during my visit on the 14 October 2011 and 13 March 2012 to look at your work in employability provision.

The visits provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, participants and employers; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of four learning sessions.

**Key findings**

- The college has a good strategic commitment to developing a range of employment programmes to help participants to improve their skills knowledge and job prospects. It has recruited additional staff with specialist knowledge and experience. The college has also set up a training centre in the city centre dedicated to working with unemployed people which is providing a good range of courses to help participants to find employment.
- The college has developed good links with Jobcentre Plus and local employers to establish sector-based work academies. Successful courses have been designed in conjunction with employers to prepare unemployed

participants for work experience which lead to guaranteed job interviews for those who complete their course.

- Participants taking part in employability courses with the college enjoy the training. They value the improvements they make in developing their skills and knowledge. Many of those interviewed said that their confidence levels had greatly improved as a result of attending these courses. They found the tutors very helpful, knowledgeable and supportive, and they worked well with the other participants. However, the individual learning plans reviewed did not contain sufficient information on the agreed action to help participants overcome any identified barriers to employment.
- Effective partnership working has enabled the college to gain good information about local employment opportunities and skills requirements. Senior college managers are represented on key boards and committees that represent business sectors in the area. This enables them to feed back labour market intelligence to allow the college to respond promptly to the needs of existing employers and to those of any new businesses moving into the area.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- ensuring that the individual participants' learning plans contain clear details on the agreed planned action to address any identified barriers to work and providing a copy to participants
- expanding the role of the job coaches to include ongoing contact and support for people who have managed to gain employment to monitor their progress and help them to sustain the employment.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop employability provision at Lincoln College.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to the Skills Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

**John Grimmer**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**