



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT DECEMBER 2000

University of Derby,
High Peak College

SUMMARY

The University of Derby, High Peak College provides satisfactory training in engineering and hospitality. Resources for off-the-job training are good, but employers are not sufficiently involved with training in hospitality and internal verification is poor in engineering. Training in business administration is less than satisfactory, with insufficient assessment in the workplace. Training in hair and beauty is well planned and the progress-review and assessment practices are good. Training in foundation for work is less than satisfactory. There is insufficient work-based assessment and the training lacks flexibility. Equality of opportunity is insufficiently promoted to employers. In most occupational areas, trainees receive inadequate progress reviews and individual training plans are not used effectively. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is less than satisfactory. Arrangements for quality assurance are inadequate for work-based training.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	3
Business administration	4
Hospitality	3
Hair & beauty	2
Foundation for work	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	4
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training in most areas
- ◆ very good work placements in foundation for work
- ◆ good systems for assessments and progress reviews in hair and beauty

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient assessment in the workplace in most occupational areas
- ◆ lack of flexibility in foundation for work training
- ◆ poor promotion of equal opportunities to employers
- ◆ inadequate progress reviews for most trainees
- ◆ poor use of individual training plans
- ◆ inadequate co-ordination of on-and off-the-job training
- ◆ inadequate systems for quality assurance

INTRODUCTION

1. High Peak College became part of the University of Derby in August 1998. The youth and adult training division is based at the Buxton campus and administers all the work-based learning programmes. The division is staffed by a head of division, supported by three field officers, a work-placement support officer and two administrators. The staff are responsible for finding and maintaining work placements and for carrying out monitoring visits to trainees on these work placements. Most of the off-the-job training is provided by teaching staff from the relevant schools of the university. Teaching for work-based trainees is integrated with teaching for other university students. In total, there are over 5,000 further education students at the Buxton campus. The contract for work-based learning is with Stockport and High Peak Training And Enterprise Council (TEC). The university also has contracts with the Employment Service for the New Deal in Stockport, Buxton and North Derbyshire. There were no New Deal clients in training at the time of the inspection. There were 123 young people on work-based learning programmes in engineering, business administration, hospitality, health and beauty, retailing and warehousing and foundation for work. Retailing and warehousing did not form part of the inspection, as there were too few trainees in these areas.

2. Derbyshire is a rural area, with some large centres of population, the biggest of which is the city of Derby. The total population of Derbyshire is just over 728,000. The population of the High Peak area is 88,900. Just over 10 per cent of the population works in agriculture. Jobs in property and business provide work for 17 per cent of the local community, with retailing providing work for 13.4 per cent and production for 13.1 per cent. In November 2000, unemployment rates stood at 3.8 per cent in Derbyshire and 2.6 per cent in the High Peak area, compared with the national average of 3.3 per cent. Less than 1 per cent of the population of High Peak, and approximately 4 per cent of the population of Derbyshire, are from minority ethnic groups.

3. In Derbyshire, 64 per cent of 16 year olds are in full-time education and training, with 66 per cent in High Peak. This compares with an average of 69 per cent across England. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers in the High Peak area achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 50 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. The University of Derby revised its self-assessment report immediately before the inspection, as the original report did not take sufficient account of the work-based element of training. The second report was drawn together by the head of the work-based training division, in consultation with heads of further education programmes. A draft report was circulated for additional comments, which were incorporated into the report. The self-assessment report did not follow the guidelines in *Raising the Standard*. Strengths and weaknesses were allocated to inappropriate areas of the report in many instances. Most of the grades in the self-assessment report were inaccurate.

5. Seven inspectors spent a total of 28 days with the university in December 2000. The team worked with a team of Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspectors during this time, sharing information and each other's findings. They jointly inspected the occupational areas of business administration, hospitality and foundation for work. Inspectors interviewed 46 trainees and 35 workplace supervisors and other employers' staff. They visited 32 work placements. Fifteen interviews were conducted with managers at employers providing on-the-job training and 27 with staff from the university. Forty-eight trainees' files and 39 portfolios of evidence were reviewed. Other documents reviewed included contracts with the TEC, external verifiers' reports, health and safety and equal opportunities policies, paperwork relating to quality assurance, minutes of meetings and promotional materials. Inspectors observed and graded nine learning sessions and observed one trainee's assessment.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering		1				1
Business administration			1			1
Hospitality		2				2
Hair & beauty		1				1
Foundation for work		2	2			4
Total	0	6	3	0	0	9

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 3

6. There are 37 trainees in engineering. Of these, seven are working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in engineering manufacturing, 24 are working towards NVQs in vehicle mechanical and electrical systems at level 2, and six are working towards NVQs in vehicle and electrical systems at level 3. Nineteen trainees are foundation modern apprentices, 16 are on other work-based learning for young people and there are two advanced modern apprentices. Thirty of the trainees are employed, in a range of small and medium-sized companies. Several local employers provide on-the-job training. Trainees attend the university on day release for training in specific skills, assessment and training in theory. In engineering manufacturing, training for the level 2 NVQ is provided and assessed within the university. In motor vehicle work, training for NVQs at levels 2 and 3 is given and assessed both on and off the job, and supplemented by evidence of competence gained from the workplace. Most motor vehicle trainees are able to obtain evidence for their level 3 NVQ in the normal course of their work. Retention rates have been low in motor vehicle training, but are improving. Of the 1998-99 intake, 40 per cent left early without a qualification. In 1999-2000, this proportion had decreased to 25 per cent. There are five staff involved in work-based learning. The self-assessment report failed to identify strengths and weaknesses accurately. Inspectors agreed with one strength, regarding trainees' portfolios, and one weakness, regarding internal verification. Other strengths and weaknesses were considered to be more relevant to generic areas or to represent no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified other strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ excellent portfolios of evidence
- ◆ good resources for off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate internal verification in motor vehicle training
- ◆ late introduction of key skills
- ◆ insufficiently demanding targets for trainees

7. Motor vehicle trainees who have no employer or work placement when they join undertake a 19-week full-time training course at the university, during which efforts are made to find them work-placements. A large number of trainees are offered a job by their work-placement provider later in their programme.

Employers are involved in the training programme and give good training, although this is not always effectively planned and fully recorded. Most employers have well-equipped workshops, with good resources. Trainees are visited every six weeks in the workplace by the field officer for monitoring, and have a formal progress review carried out by university staff every three months. Trainees and employers expressed satisfaction with the training. Portfolios are of a high standard. Time is available for trainees to work on portfolios both at the university and at work. At the university, individual learning sessions are available for trainees who need assistance with their portfolios. Records of tasks undertaken are neatly written out and the trainees add details to substantiate their knowledge and understanding of the evidence. In some portfolios, trainees have made innovative use of digital photographs to record particular aspects of evidence. Portfolios are up to date and contain monitoring documents which accurately reflect trainees' progress. Trainees' evidence has been cross-referenced to the appropriate units of the NVQ.

8. Resources in engineering are good. The university's workshops are well equipped and there are enough well-qualified staff to give the training. In the motor vehicle department, trainees work on both modern and older vehicles, and the department has up-to-date diagnostic equipment and other specialist equipment. The practical training focuses on equipment and processes which are not available at the trainees' places of work. There is a well-equipped department for the engineering manufacturing foundation course, with additional resources for electrical appreciation, robotics and welding. There are appropriate classrooms which are used for training in theory, for study and for portfolio-building.

9. In motor vehicle training, there is no detailed sampling plan for internal verification which covers all units of the NVQ and all trainees. There are no records of some observations. There is little internal verification of any observed assessments which take place in the workplace. Portfolios are all sampled at the end of the programme, which can result in insufficient time for trainees to remedy any problems or for staff to correct any poor assessment practices. Assessors are not given written feedback on their assessment procedures. There is insufficient assessment through workplace observation.

10. Key skills were introduced to the training at a late stage, and some trainees have had to cover key skills at the end of their programme. There were further delays when the university changed to a new awarding body and trainees were waiting for new paperwork and standards. Trainees have missed many opportunities for gathering evidence for key skills both at work and at the university. Some modern apprentices left the programme after achieving their NVQ, without ever having started their key skills. Key skills are now covered more appropriately.

11. Trainees are expected to obtain their NVQ in the length of time the university plans that they will be on the programme. There is little opportunity for more able trainees to achieve the NVQ more quickly. At progress reviews and monitoring visits, the university's staff do not set targets for the trainees or discuss in detail

the progress the trainee is making towards the NVQ. Trainees who can achieve their qualifications more quickly are not encouraged to do so, nor are they given support to enable them to do so from those involved in the process of training and assessment.

Business administration

Grade 4

12. There are six foundation modern apprentices and eight advanced modern apprentices, working towards level 2 and level 3 NVQs in business administration respectively. There are also two trainees completing an advanced general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in business and finance, which the university no longer offers as part of the work-based learning. Three members of staff recruit trainees onto the programmes, provide induction and arrange suitable work placements. They also visit trainees in the workplace every three months to monitor their progress. Trainees are recruited onto the programme when a suitable job or work placement is secured. Employers are spread over a wide rural area and cover a broad range of occupations, including a medical centre, a firm of solicitors and computer hardware technicians. All trainees attend day-release training every week at the Buxton campus for NVQ and key skills assessment and training. In addition, they take information-technology courses as part of their key skills training. Training and assessment are provided by a team from the university's business and technology unit. Sixty-four per cent of trainees are employed. The self-assessment report identified strengths and weaknesses which were more appropriate to the generic areas or were no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified two strengths and two weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned off-the-job training
- ◆ good achievement and retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient assessment in the workplace
- ◆ lack of involvement by employers in NVQ training

13. The day-release training is well structured. The day is divided into a computer training session, NVQ training and portfolio development and a key skills session. There is a clear and detailed syllabus for each term, which identifies the NVQ units to be achieved and the theory sessions to be provided. Trainers have written individual learning packs for each of the NVQ units to support the trainees in developing their portfolios. They have also produced key skills workbooks which are used in the weekly sessions on key skills development. These workbooks and learning packs are well presented and cover all the required material appropriately.

Trainees who completed programmes in 1999-2000 did not have key skills integrated into the NVQs but they have been introduced this year. It is not yet clear how evidence from the workplace will be introduced into the key skills portfolios. The trainees' progress reviews do not lead to detailed action plans and give no opportunity for the trainees to comment. Trainees have good access to computers and training materials are of a high standard. However, one of the groups has only one trainer to 22 trainees, and works in a computer area which is extremely noisy. The area used for office training is not a realistic working environment. The GNVQ students attend the university on a weekly day-release basis and are in their second year of training. They are receiving satisfactory training and their assignments are written to incorporate key skills.

14. Over the past three years, 84 per cent of trainees who started training have achieved NVQs at level 2 and all of these trainees have gained a nationally recognised information-technology qualification. The one trainee who transferred to a modern apprenticeship achieved both an NVQ at level 3 in business administration and an NVQ at level 2 in information and business technology.

15. Trainees are encouraged to gather evidence in the workplace for their portfolios, but assessment in the workplace is inadequate. Many trainees have not been visited by an assessor and have completed a level 2 NVQ without any observation in the workplace. One trainee was visited by a trainer and given observation reports for all nine of her NVQ units. Too much reliance is placed on the work produced at the university to generate evidence for portfolios. There is little evidence from work-based assessments and portfolios generally lack individuality. From September 2000, a member of the training team has been allocated three hours each week to carry out assessments in the workplace. Some trainees have not yet been visited. The system of internal verification has been reviewed and revised recently. The new system has been improved to ensure that the process of verification operates throughout the production of portfolios rather than only at the end.

16. Employers show little awareness of the qualifications towards which their trainees are working. Some employers would welcome details of the training schedule in order to plan other training in the workplace, but this is not given to them. The business administration NVQs have a list of optional units from which a trainee must select at least one. Ideally, this unit should suit the individual's workplace and be agreed on with the employer, so that the trainee can gather evidence. This is not happening, even when trainees have many opportunities to gather evidence at work. Employers do not have sufficient understanding of the qualifications to be able to offer additional training or experience to improve the trainees' overall learning experience.

Hospitality

Grade 3

17. There are 18 trainees in hospitality, taking NVQs in food preparation and cookery at levels 2 and 3. Six trainees are on a modern apprenticeship programme, 11 are national trainees and one trainee is on a further training option. Ninety per cent of trainees are employed. They work in hotels and catering establishments, spread over a large geographical area. Training is carried out both on and off the job. Trainees attend university on day release one or two days each week during term time and attend classes with other part-time students. The off-the-job training facilities include two production kitchens, two training kitchens, a pastry kitchen, a larder and three restaurants. All assessment is carried out in the university. Some witness testimony from the workplace is used. The university has staff who understand the hospitality industry, and who are suitably qualified to carry out assessment and internal verification. Trainees are offered additional support for identified training needs. Trainees are visited in the workplace every six weeks by a field officer. The retention rate over the past three years has risen from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. The achievement rate, based on past years when recruitment was low, has been between 40 and 45 per cent. This year, the number of trainees recruited has increased significantly and the current retention rate is high. The self-assessment report identified several strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and considered that some of the weaknesses were being dealt with by appropriate action plans. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ excellent off-the-job training resources
- ◆ good work placements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment

18. The trainees benefit from excellent training facilities within the university. The kitchens provide a realistic working environment and there are good opportunities for trainees to be assessed there. The training is well planned and the standard of the training is good. Trainees are given constructive feedback from training sessions and appropriate advice on planning for the next session. Trainees move between the different kitchens, including a classroom-training kitchen, to gain the experience required for different units of their qualification. Trainees are taught to work in a safe, hygienic and professional manner and they learn to work to deadlines by providing a service in three restaurants. There is a good range of learning materials, including recipe sheets and detailed, well-illustrated handouts. There is also a well-equipped learning centre where trainees can use books, periodicals, computer packages and the Internet to help them with their theory work.

19. Trainees work in good work placements, which provide suitable experience. The work placements have high standards of customer care and are frequently monitored by the university's field officers to ensure that health and safety requirements are met. Many of the employers have in-house training programmes and offer trainees useful qualifications which complement their NVQ training. Employers are supportive of trainees in terms of providing appropriate equipment and in arranging work rotas to ensure that trainees can attend off-the-job training sessions.

20. There is no work-based assessment. Individual training plans are, in most cases, planned around the start and end dates of the university's year and do not recognise that trainees can progress at different rates. In some workplaces, there are qualified assessors and staff who have expressed an interest in assessing but the university has not responded to this. Employers provide some witness testimony. In some workplaces, trainees carry out tasks which require them to show advanced skills but there is no mechanism to use this as evidence of their competence. There are poor links between the training which takes place within the workplace and that given by the university. Some trainees have structured training schedules and others are taught as opportunities arise in their day-to-day work. The university is not fully aware of these learning opportunities. Visits to the workplace are carried out every six weeks by a field officer, who talks with both the trainee and the employer. These visits are adequately recorded on a tick-box sheet and there is some reference to the progress review undertaken by the trainer each term. The field officer is not occupationally competent to assess in the workplace.

Hair & beauty

Grade 2

21. There are 17 hairdressing and beauty therapy trainees, of whom seven are advanced modern apprentices and ten are foundation modern apprentices. Fifteen are working towards level 2 NVQs in hairdressing, one towards a level 3 in hairdressing and one towards a level 2 in beauty therapy. Most trainees attend off-the-job training once a week. The rest of their time is spent in their salons, where they receive on-the-job training. The programme is managed and taught by a team of two programme co-ordinators, three trainer/assessors, two facilitators, and a field officer who visits the trainees in their salons to carry out progress reviews every six weeks. Trainees are also visited in their workplace, at least every four weeks, by a trainer/assessor, who carries out work-based assessments. Trainees are given additional learning support. The self-assessment report was accurate in identifying internal verification procedures as a strength. Other strengths were found to be no more than normal practice or were more appropriate to generic areas. Inspectors identified three other strengths. One of the weaknesses identified in the report has been rectified. Other weaknesses were more appropriate to generic areas. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned off the job training
- ◆ flexible training programme
- ◆ highly effective work-based assessments and progress reviews
- ◆ thorough procedures for internal verification

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor conditions in training salons
- ◆ poor retention rates

22. Off-the-job training is well planned, with a suitable balance of demonstrations and practical workshops. The theory sessions take into account the individual learning needs of trainees. Two well-equipped training salons are used, each containing an adequate range of portable equipment. The salons' reception area has retail facilities and there is an appointments system, both of which are used for training and assessing reception skills. The salons are busy, with a good range of clients for trainees to practice on. Trainers, employers and cutting specialists give interesting demonstrations as part of the practical workshops and manufacturers sometimes hold seminars in the use of their products, which reinforce trainees' learning and keep staff updated on new developments and techniques. Some innovative training methods are used, which link theory to practical skills effectively. Group sizes are small and there is both an assessor and a facilitator in attendance. The facilitator provides appropriate individual support to trainees as required. Trainees' progress towards achieving their qualifications is shown on a chart in the salon area and they receive a certificate for each unit of the NVQ they achieve, which improves their motivation. Key skills are fully integrated with the coursework and trainees are given workbooks which encourage them to gather evidence from their regular activities in the salon, such as the handling of stock.

23. The programme is flexible and meets the needs of individual trainees well. For example, some trainees do not attend the university for off-the-job training, as their salons provide training sessions which include both practical skills and theory. Others attend the university less frequently than one day every week. In such instances, the university's assessors make more frequent visits to ensure satisfactory training is being given and to check on trainees' progress. Additional support is provided for trainees who require it. The type of support varies according to individual needs, and includes extra practical training and help with written work or with key skills. This is provided either as part of the off-the-job training, or through additional on-the-job training. Specialist support is provided to trainees with dyslexia or those who need help with reading and writing. All assessors are undertaking key skills trainers and assessors' training. Two members of staff are working towards qualifications in teaching basic skills and have received training in dyslexia awareness. Trainees are encouraged to participate in national hairdressing competitions and opportunities for practice are offered through practical workshops. Additional courses are available free of charge to

trainees and include barbering, Indian head massage, fashion and photographic work, long-hair workshops, aromatherapy and make-up and manicure. However, there is a low take-up of these opportunities by trainees.

24. Trainees are visited by their assessors at least every four weeks and by the field worker at least every six weeks. Opportunities for assessment are planned with the trainees and employers are told when assessments will happen. The university's assessors work flexibly with employers to use on-the-job training sessions for assessment purposes. Following each assessment, a detailed action plan is drawn up to identify progress, highlight areas for development and set targets for the next progress review. Employers are aware of their trainees' progress and provide extra training with clients or models in the salons. They provide good on-the-job training, but, in general, it lacks structure and is not well co-ordinated with the off-the-job training. More time has now been allocated to the university's assessors for visits to the salons, to improve the links between on- and off-the-job training.

25. Internal verification is well planned and co-ordinated. A co-ordinator ensures that internal verification covers assessments by all assessors, across all trainees, all NVQ levels and all NVQ units and elements and that evidence for assessment contains the correct range and quality of evidence. All assessors are monitored on a regular basis, carrying out all types of assessment activity. The system includes both the university's and the work-based assessors. Verbal and written feedback is provided, together with action points where appropriate. The system also includes monthly standardisation meetings where issues relating to assessment are raised and discussed. This helps to ensure consistency in assessments and assessment practice between assessors.

26. The salons are in need of some modernisation and refurbishment. Working space is limited and the fixtures and fittings are in need of replacement to bring them up to a commercial standard. The hairdressing salons are situated on the first floor, with no access for wheelchair users. The resource centre is cramped, with limited working space for trainees.

27. Trainees' retention rates are low. During 1998-99, 40 per cent of trainees left early, without achieving their qualifications. During 1999-2000, the proportion was 53 per cent. All of the current year's trainees are still in training. Records are kept of the reasons why trainees leave early. The evaluations, which trainees complete every eight weeks, and the questionnaires issued to early leavers, identify that some trainees would prefer more work-based training and less frequent attendance at the university.

Foundation for work

Grade 4

28. The university offers three programmes within its foundation for work training. There are two youth trainees on a life skills programme, 29 on a vocational access programme and one on an initial training and assessment

programme. Trainees on the vocational access programme work towards wordpower and numberpower qualifications at entry level, level 1 and level 2. Trainees also work towards NVQs in hospitality, retailing and hairdressing at level 1. They undertake work experience for four days each week and attend the university for training and assessment for one day each week. Trainees on the vocational access programme have job-search and personal development training at the university. The aim of the vocational access programme is to prepare trainees for work. Trainees can gain a qualification and have work experience. Support workers provide pastoral support, visiting trainees at their work placements at least once each month. Facilitators give on-the-job coaching in the workplace. Training and assessment staff review trainees' progress at the university every 13 weeks. The initial training and assessment programme lasts for 16 weeks and provides trainees who are unsure about the type of work they want with an opportunity to try out different types of work. The number of trainees referred to the initial training and assessment programme has fallen significantly over the past four years. Life skills training has recently been introduced and is still in the early stages of development. On the vocational access programme in 1997-98, 45 per cent of trainees left early and without qualifications. In 1998-99, 43 per cent left training early. In 1999-2000, 55 per cent left training early. On the initial training and assessment programme, in 1997-98, 15 per cent of leavers gained jobs and 33 per cent continued in training or education. In 1998-99, 37 per cent of leavers gained jobs and 27 per cent continued in training or education. In 1999-2000, 17 per cent of leavers gained jobs and 38 per cent continued in training or education. Inspectors agreed with one strength but none of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Other strengths were judged to be either no more than normal practice or more appropriate to other areas. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ very supportive, well-selected work placements
- ◆ useful additional qualifications offered
- ◆ good planning and teaching of basic skills

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment
- ◆ poor recording of basic skills assessment
- ◆ lack of flexibility in training
- ◆ insufficient initial assessment
- ◆ weak internal verification

29. Staff select work placements well and meet most trainees' career aspirations as well as their specific learning requirements. Trainees gain confidence in the workplace and some obtain jobs with their work-placement provider at the end of their training. Trainees have good opportunities to improve their work-related

skills in preparation for employment. Employers take good account of trainees' needs and abilities when planning their work schedules. Many trainees are offered more than one work placement, until they find the most appropriate type of work for them.

30. Useful additional qualifications are offered to trainees, including qualifications in the use of computers, food hygiene and additional basic skills. These help to motivate trainees and contribute towards their personal development. Trainees understand that the additional qualifications will help them to gain employment. They value the opportunity of additional training, including one-to-one coaching and assessment.

31. Teaching of basic skills at the university is particularly good. Comprehensive planning and evaluation contribute to the good teaching. Individual coaching is provided by support staff who are present during all teaching sessions. Trainees are encouraged to help each other. Achievements are well celebrated. All staff maintain a good rapport with trainees. Teaching takes trainees' social needs and problems into account. It is also relaxed in style and includes an effective combination of humour and discipline. Trainers and support staff use plain language and give clear instructions to trainees. Trainees are accompanied by support workers and field officers in their work placements, who support the development of trainees' work-related skills.

32. Trainees are assessed in the workplace for the level 1 NVQ in retailing and hospitality. Other than this, there is no assessment in the workplace. Trainees working towards basic skills qualifications carry out many tasks in the workplace which could be assessed but this does not happen. Employers are not sufficiently involved in NVQ and basic skills training and assessment. Some workplace supervisors would like to gain assessors' qualifications and become more familiar with the trainees' qualifications and more involved in their training.

33. The recording of the results of basic skills assessment is poor. The records lack detail about the method and results of assessment and do not show individual trainees' performance. Assessment practice is satisfactory but the recording does not reflect this. Internal verification is limited to the scrutiny of completed portfolios. Some trainees do not obtain their qualification because internal verification identifies a problem with their work only after they have completed their training and left the course. Assessment practice is not observed as part of the process of internal verification.

34. There is a lack of flexibility in the training. Most trainees start their training at the beginning of the academic year, even when they have been referred for training much earlier. Training for NVQs is not available to all trainees and is restricted to a few occupational areas. There are insufficient arrangements made for those trainees who are not in work placements. Some trainees work at home for part of the week and are given work to do at home by staff. This work is unsupervised and trainees do not have access to the university's resources or training support at home. During the summer, trainees are required to attend work placements for five

days each week. Trainees who are cannot do this are sometimes withdrawn from training by the university's staff or withdraw themselves and some of these trainees do not re-enter training. Some trainees have to wait for several weeks before suitable work placements are identified and they are not always able to work in the occupation of their choice.

35. Initial assessment is limited to testing of basic skills. Trainees do not take part in a comprehensive initial assessment when they start their training. There is no initial assessment of the trainees' ability to cope with employment and many trainees leave their work placements at an early stage. When this happens, there is no systematic assessment to identify the nature of the problem and prevent it happening again. The university gathers information about trainees from schools, the careers service, support agencies and from providers of previous training. This information is not used to develop an individual scheme of training.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 4

36. The university has an equal opportunities policy, which is reviewed annually. It applies to staff, trainees, work-placement providers and employers. Detailed information is maintained on gender, ethnicity and disability in the local area. Equal opportunities is referred to in the students' handbook and in the university's charter, which is issued to all trainees at induction. An equal opportunities committee meets at least once each term. It works to the national guidelines for good practice in equal opportunities in higher education. Its remit includes equal opportunities monitoring, training and learning, admissions, guidance and the recruitment and development of staff. It is also responsible for the annual review of the equal opportunities policy, promoting disability awareness and co-ordinating the self-assessment of equal opportunities practice by each school. The university encourages the employment of people with disabilities and advertises its vacancies accordingly. There are no trainees from minority ethnic groups. Fifty-nine per cent of trainees are men and 41 per cent are women. Twenty-four per cent of trainees have a disability. Inspectors agreed with one weaknesses and one strength identified in the self-assessment report. Other strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report were not significant or represented no more than normal practice. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive information on equal opportunities for trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor promotion of equal opportunities to employers and trainees
- ◆ little promotion of training to under-represented groups

37. The university has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. It covers legal requirements and harassment and victimisation. It states the objectives of the policy and the action needed to achieve these objectives. There is also a detailed booklet covering the rights and responsibilities of students, which is updated each year. This booklet is issued to all trainees and incorporates the students' charter, the equal opportunities statement and policy, and procedures for complaints and appeals. There is also a section on services for students with disabilities. A separate policy document outlines the procedures for the fair selection and recruitment of staff and an employees' handbook includes the university's equal opportunities statement. There is a formal complaints and grievance procedure which is monitored centrally. The university has paperwork showing that complaints of bullying and racial discrimination have been investigated but it is not clear how the complaints were finally resolved.

38. There is insufficient promotion of equal opportunities to employers and trainees. Employers and work-placement providers are issued with a handbook, which includes the equal opportunities statement and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Many employers and trainees are unaware of the implications of the university's equal opportunities policy for their own practices. Compliance with the policy is not a specific requirement in the university's contract with employers. Some larger employers have their own equal opportunities policies, which apply to all staff, including trainees. Many smaller employers have no policy and consider equal opportunities to be irrelevant to them. There is no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Trainees have little awareness of the equal opportunities policy. Equal opportunities training is given during their induction, but there is no subsequent reinforcement of equal opportunities issues to help them remember any information they are given. Neither trainees nor employers are questioned about equal opportunities during the university's monitoring visits to the workplace. Trainees report that they feel protected against discrimination and harassment, although few are aware of the detail of the complaints and grievance procedure.

39. Promotional materials, such as the prospectus and programme brochures for work-based learning, do not include the university's equal opportunities statement. The prospectus includes positive images, which avoid gender stereotyping. It includes people of different ethnic origins and of varying physical abilities, in a range of occupations and learning environments. There is reference within the text to the university's disability statement and, in a section on learners' support, to the fact that an inclusive approach to learning is promoted. Promotional material for individual programmes does not contain these same positive statements.

40. Access to university premises varies. Some areas are inaccessible to wheelchair users. The premises, generally, are in need of improvement although some adaptations have been made. The first-floor hairdressing and beauty salons are particularly inaccessible. There are plans for a possible relocation of the entire campus, which include plans for improved access and facilities for people with disabilities.

41. There is insufficient promotion of training to under-represented groups. Data are collected on participation in training by gender, ethnicity and disability which meet the TEC's contractual requirements. There is, however, no monitoring of this data or subsequent action-planning to tackle, for example, the small number of women in engineering. There are no plans to increase the recruitment of trainees with physical disabilities, who form only a small proportion of those with a disability.

Trainee support

Grade 4

42. Potential trainees are referred to the university by their employers, the careers service and schools. Trainees who are not already employed are given help in finding either a work placement or employment by field officers. Trainees are assessed in basic skills. Key skills assessments are being introduced. Some trainees also undergo an assessment to establish their prior learning. There are no occupational assessments. Trainees are advised of the most appropriate programme. Support is given in drawing up an individual training plan. All staff are trained in interviewing and assessing trainees and the university has carried out market research to ensure that reception staff and those dealing with enquires provide potential trainees with accurate information about training programmes. Trainees are given an induction into the university, which includes information on the qualifications, the NVQ appeals procedures and health and safety. Each trainee is given a students' handbook, which contains details of the support and counselling services available within the university. A trainer at the college carries out termly course reviews in the university and gives guidance on portfolio-building and the collection and use of evidence. Specialist textbooks are available for trainees to borrow. Trainees are visited in the workplace every six weeks by a field officer, who assists trainees with welfare and pastoral problems. The careers service advises on work placements and jobs and there is a university counselling service, a nurse on the Buxton campus and a network of specialist support agencies which the university uses. The self-assessment report identified some strengths with which inspectors agreed and two weaknesses, with which they did not agree. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good additional learning support
- ◆ wide range of pastoral support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor progress review process in most areas
- ◆ ineffective use of individual training plans
- ◆ lack of recording of additional support
- ◆ inconsistent induction

43. The results of initial assessments of basic skills and key skills are used effectively by the university to identify trainees' additional support needs. Lecturers, trainers and support officers help trainees with reading, writing and spelling problems. Staff are trained to give this support and can give appropriate help to trainees with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Within each occupational area, staff give help with portfolio-building and cross-referencing evidence. They use a good range of resources to help trainees build their theoretical understanding, including reference materials, videos and computer-based learning packages. Trainees are given useful feedback on the progress they make.

44. The university gives effective pastoral support and encourages trainees to use the good range of support services it provides. Each trainee is assigned a field officer and foundation for work trainees are also assigned a support worker to accompany them to their workplaces. Trainees appreciate the support they receive from the field officers in the workplace. Trainees are well supported when they experience unexpected problems and emergencies. The university provides a bus service for trainees, which is of great benefit for trainees who have to travel long distances to their off-the-job training. Trainees are able to stay overnight on the campus if this makes it easier for them to attend the university for off-the-job training.

45. The progress-review process is inconsistent. In some occupational areas, the progress-review is carried out by the trainer, and in others, by the field officer. Progress reviews do not concentrate on the trainee's progress sufficiently. Some trainees do not know which qualification they are working towards. Action plans contain insufficient detail and are of little value to trainees. In some occupational areas, there is a lack of formal planning and recording of on- and off-the-job training. In most areas, the progress review does not cover on-the-job training. The records of progress reviews do not always show whether trainees are receiving additional support, nor do they show whether those trainees who are receiving support are making better progress as a result. Employers and trainees do not always receive a copy of the progress-review records.

46. Individual training plans are drawn up at the start of the programme but little reference is made to them during the training or progress reviews. Targets are not reviewed and trainees are not set short-term goals. Target dates in the plans do not reflect individual trainees' potential or the impact of their on-the-job training on the amount of time they need to complete their qualification. Trainees' progress is assumed to be determined by the university's timetable.

47. Trainees receive an induction which varies in content and length depending on their occupational area. Some trainees have a brief induction which concentrates mainly on filling in forms which the TEC requires. There is no standard induction pack. Topics covered at induction include the general facilities at the university, information on the trainee's occupational area, an outline of the training programme, and health and safety. There is little reference to equal opportunities. Trainees do not remember the details of their induction. Induction is mainly carried out within the framework of the university's timetable. Trainees who join courses after the usual start times have a less comprehensive induction.

Management of training

Grade 4

48. In August 1998, High Peak College merged with the University of Derby. Since then, the youth and adult training department has been placed within the centre for access and lifelong learning. The department is managed by a divisional head with a staff of three field officers, a work-placement support officer and two administrators. This team co-ordinates the youth and adult training across the university. NVQ training and assessment is provided by the teaching staff in the relevant schools of the university. There has been a fall in the number of trainees recruited over the past three years. The university achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1996. All staff have job descriptions. The staff-appraisal system identifies individual training and development needs. There is a programme of team meetings which ensures that the team meets regularly with university tutors and programme co-ordinators. The self-assessment report identified strengths and weaknesses which were no more than normal practice or were more appropriate to other sections of the report. Two additional strengths and three weaknesses were identified during the inspection. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive staff-development programme
- ◆ good use of data in making management decisions

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and-off-the-job training
- ◆ lack of clarity in management arrangements

49. There are good opportunities for staff training and development. The university has an annual staff-appraisal system which is used as the basis for a staff-development programme. Training meets the needs of staff effectively as well as the strategic and operational aims of the organisation. Staff have access to a wide range of courses through the university's staff-development programme, which is updated annually. Training courses include those which keep staff up to date with new developments in their area of work, as well as courses to give staff additional skills which will benefit trainees. In addition to the training available from the university, staff attend training events organised by the TEC.

50. A wide range of data are gathered to assist in the university's strategic and operational planning. The youth and adult training team participates in the review process for courses and meets regularly with programme co-ordinators to discuss trainees' progress. The department has regular team meetings, which are minuted and contain action points. The assistant dean is consulted on any procedural changes and consults with other managers on issues arising from team meetings. Staff have introduced training in two new occupational areas as a result of their analysis of local labour-market trends.

51. The youth and adult training team have established effective communication links with many external organisations including a volunteers' bureau, a unit for young offenders, social services and staff from two careers services. The department encourages employers to visit the university's site and held an event recently to allow employers from all occupational areas to meet teaching and administrative staff.

52. Field officers visit trainees in their workplaces to carry out progress-reviews. They do not, however, link their monitoring of the trainees' overall progress with trainees' specific progress towards attaining qualifications. Reviews mainly concentrate on pastoral issues relating to trainees' progress. Employers often have little knowledge of the off-the-job training at the university or of the specific framework the trainee is working towards. When employers provide additional training in the workplace, this is not effectively linked with off-the-job training. Training staff also carry out termly progress-reviews with trainees but they fail to involve employers in these reviews.

53. The youth and adult training department operates across four university schools, each of which has its own approach to the integration of work-based trainees. This makes the overall management of work-based training difficult as these are complicated structures for communication. There are no systematic arrangements for sharing good practice in work-based training across the schools. When problems are identified, it is difficult for the training department's staff to

make effective changes, particularly in areas outside their control, such as assessment and internal verification.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

54. The university is developing new systems for quality assurance. Its existing systems and procedures do not extend to work-based learning. Each school within the university has a quality assurance manager, and undertakes evaluation of its courses twice each year. The dean of quality development has overall responsibility for quality assurance, and individual schools are responsible for quality assurance in their own area. The head of the work-based training division is a member of working groups which consider quality assurance issues. The requirements of the TEC and the awarding bodies are being met. Formal feedback is requested from trainees and employers. The self-assessment failed to identify all of the weaknesses in this area, and some of the identified strengths represented no more than normal practice or were more appropriate to other areas of the report. Inspectors identified additional weaknesses and another strength. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good use of trainees and employers' feedback

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of an established system for quality assurance
- ◆ poor understanding among staff for arrangements for quality assurance
- ◆ insufficient action-planning
- ◆ inaccurate self-assessment

55. Feedback is sought from trainees and employers. Over 2,500 questionnaires have been sent out and 25 per cent were returned. Trainees receive questionnaires three times each year, and employers twice. The information from the questionnaires is used during course reviews. Trainees are asked to evaluate the university's facilities, the quality of training and the support they receive. Trainees are also asked to complete a questionnaire when they leave the university. The analysis of the data from these questionnaires is circulated to the careers service and the youth training team and is used to improve the training courses.

56. There are insufficient procedures to assure the quality of work-based training. Since the merger of the college and the university, a working party has developed new procedures and standards for quality assurance, which were issued in July 2000. These are currently being implemented in the various schools of the university, but this has not yet had any impact on assuring the quality of the work-

based learning. Existing arrangements for quality assurance are not rigorously applied to work-based training, and there are many variations in the use of standard procedures across the schools. The present system does not have adequate procedures to cover initial assessment or trainees' progress reviews.

57. Staff have a poor understanding of arrangements for quality assurance. Many staff do not know which procedures and systems they should be following for work-based training in their own area of work. Staff's perception of quality assurance is confined largely to monitoring procedures and fulfilling the requirements of the contract with the TEC, rather than extending to making changes to improve the quality of the training.

58. Procedures are audited annually and changes are discussed by staff in the work-based training team. However, these discussions do not result in a clear action plan for improvement. The current auditing system does not specify that action plans should be developed to encourage change and improvement. There are no structured opportunities to share good practice between different schools or occupational areas. Self-assessment of work-based learning has only recently been undertaken and actions arising from this process have not yet had an impact on the quality of trainees' experience.

59. The university's first self-assessment report concentrated on its direct training and failed to evaluate the work-based element of trainees' experience. A second report was produced, which was more comprehensive but which did not follow the guidelines in *Raising the Standard*. It did not give an adequate description of the way in which training is provided and did not give sufficient information about the local context in which the university operates. Many of identified strengths and weaknesses were repeated several times in the report or located in an inappropriate area. Most of the strengths and weaknesses related to aspects of the generic areas and few related directly to the occupational areas.

60. The standard of internal verification varies between occupational areas. Work is taking place on improvements to the systems for internal verification, but this has not yet led to better practices in all occupational areas.