



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## University of Central England

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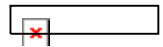
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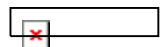
### **Basic information about the institution**



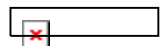
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Name of institution:	University of Central England
Type of institution:	Higher education institution
Vice Chancellor:	Dr Peter Knight
Address of institution:	Perry Barr Birmingham B42 2SU
Telephone number:	0121 331 5000
Fax number:	0121 331 7994
Chair of governors:	Mr Paul Sabapathy
Unique reference number:	133788
Name of reporting inspector:	Stephen Oliver-Watts
Dates of inspection:	1-5 November 2004

### **Part A: Summary**



### **Information about the institution**

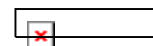


University of Central England is a large university with over 300 courses and 23,000 students. There are nine faculties, one of which - the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design - provides a range of further education (FE) courses. Birmingham Institute of Art and Design has six departments and operates from five campus sites. FE students attend three of the campuses: Gosta Green, the School of Jewellery and the Bournville Centre for Visual Arts. About half of the FE students are on courses leading to a foundation diploma in art and design at Bournville, which aim to prepare them for higher education (HE) courses in art and design. The School of Jewellery offers specialist courses in jewellery making, silversmithing, clock making and gemmology. Courses in fashion,

easily accessible from the centre of Birmingham. The FE provision is funded by the Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council (LSC). According to the 2001 census, the population of Birmingham is approximately 977,000. Minority ethnic groups make up about 30% of the population of Birmingham, and represent about 33% of students at the university. In 2003/04, there were 595 FE enrolments. Of these, 310 were aged 19 or over (52%). Among full-time students, just over two-thirds are aged 16 to 18, whereas over 90% of part-time students are adults. Almost 90 % of FE students are studying at level 3. Some 64% of students are female and 33% of students in the FE provision are from minority ethnic groups. The university aims to provide progression routes to HE and employment. Its mission statement commits the university to develop in accordance with the values of quality, employability, community, lifelong learning, research and partnership.

The generic curriculum area formed by the award-bearing FE courses offered within Birmingham Institute of Art and Design for the purposes of this report have been divided into: the art and design subject area comprising courses leading to awards in photography and foundation studies in art and design; and design crafts including fashion, furniture, horology, gemmology and jewellery making.

### **How effective is the institution?**



The university provides satisfactory courses in art and design and design crafts.

#### ***Key strengths***

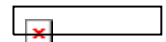
- high pass rates on most courses
  
- outstanding provision in jewellery making
  
- very good standards of students' work
  
- good progression to HE and employment
  
- high-quality specialist resources
  
- good links with community and industry
  
- effective promotion of social inclusion.

### **What should be improved**

- retention rates
- the quality of teaching
- monitoring of the quality of FE programmes
- identification and support of students with additional learning needs.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

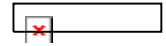
### **Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas**



*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5).*

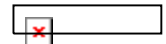
<b>Area</b>	<b>Overall judgements about provision, and comment</b>
Art and design (general)	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The university provides a range of attendance options to enable students to gain the foundation diploma. Pass rates on the full-time foundation diploma are high and improving, though part-time routes have poor retention rates. There are good facilities for specialist subjects and students produce good work in their sketch books. Teaching is unsatisfactory in many theory lessons. There is insufficient management of course performance.
Design crafts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Contributory grade in jewellery making: <b>outstanding.</b> Students in all areas produce good standards of work and progress well, using very good resources. Teaching and achievement are outstanding in jewellery making, but less so in other areas. There is unsatisfactory achievement on some courses, such as fashion and gemmology. There are good links with industry. The management of some curriculum areas is weak, and the recording and verification of assessment is insufficiently developed.

### How well is the institution led and managed?



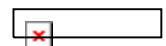
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Overall success rates on FE courses are improving and are above the national averages; 90% of award achievers progress to HE. The standard of students' work is often good. A recent external review of FE provision has been used productively to effect change in curriculum organisation and management, ensuring that courses better meet the needs and expectations of students. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively; opportunities for staff development are good. Retention rates on a number of courses are low and the quality of teaching is below sector averages. Until recently there has been no long-term development plan for FE; the use of performance data to set targets at course level is underdeveloped. There are well-established course reporting procedures. A new process of self-assessment has been introduced to support quality assurance mechanisms and expected outcomes from supporting action plans are sometimes imprecise and are not monitored at sufficiently frequent intervals. The staff appraisal system is not consistently implemented.

### To what extent is the institution educationally and socially inclusive?



The university's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The university works hard with local schools to increase participation by pupils who may not have previously considered entering FE and HE. The university makes no distinction between its provision for FE and HE students, and FE students benefit from the resources and the academic ethos. The foundation art and design course has been redesigned to allow flexible access and increase the participation of adults. Analysis of enrolment data shows that the university has been successful in increasing the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups on FE courses. Participation by students from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased to a third of all enrolments, which is slightly greater than the proportion of minority ethnic people in the West Midlands as a whole. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has more than doubled over the last three years. The university provides good support for these students, but there is insufficient support for students who lack literacy and numeracy skills. The university complies fully with the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and actively promotes diversity training. Its response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) is satisfactory. Access for students with restricted mobility has been improved, particularly at Ruskin Hall. Extensive training on disability, together with a comprehensive handbook, is provided centrally for staff. An equality and diversity committee has recently been established within Birmingham Institute of Art and Design to monitor the institute's responsibilities towards equality and diversity.

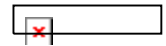
### How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. Students are well informed about the FE courses available at the university. Induction onto full-time courses is good but for part-time students it is sometimes less effective. The on-course curriculum support is generally good, although the large group size on some courses affects the regularity and quality of this support. Tutorials are held regularly and students are kept well informed of their progress. Individual learning plans have been introduced recently and are at a very early stage in their implementation. Most tutors know their students well and are able to refer those that they identify as needing help to appropriate university personnel. Those with disabilities are given very good support. However, there is no formal

students have not had their needs identified or met. The support for literacy is ineffective and there is no support for those who need to improve their numerical skills. FE students have access to the whole of the university's many support and welfare facilities. These are extensive, including counselling and mental health support, advice on financial matters, and childcare facilities. There is an excellent chaplaincy service that covers many faiths. Careers advice and guidance for those intending to continue their studies or wish to go into employment related to their courses is very good. Those who wish to change direction have available to them the university's substantial careers advice and guidance services.

### **Students' views of the institution**



Students' views about the university were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

#### ***What students like about the institution***

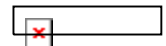
- the practical work that gives them experience of dealing with different materials
  
- supportive tutors
  
- being treated as an adult
  
- the facilities
  
- the access to workshop facilities between 8.00 and 20.00
  
- the good reputation of the university.

#### ***What they feel could be improved***

- parking
  
- the quality of the canteen and cost of food

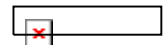
- cost of materials and colour copying
- size of groups which are currently too large
- size of some classrooms which are currently too small
- systems to provide effective support for dyslexic students.

### Other information



The institution inspection report will normally be published 12-working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the institution. Once published, the institution has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The institution's action plan must show what action the institution will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The university senate should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from institutions that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

### Part B: The institution as a whole



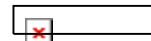
### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	59	35	6
19+ and WBL*	56	28	16
Learning 16-18	71	23	6
19+ and WBL*	60	28	12

*Key: The range of grades includes: Excellent (Grade 1), Very Good (Grade 2), Good (Grade 3), Satisfactory (Grade 4), Unsatisfactory (Grade 5), Poor (Grade 6) and Very Poor (Grade 7).*

*\*work-based learning*

## **Achievement and standards**



1. The university offers FE courses in three main subjects within art and design. Some 60% of the students are working towards the diploma in foundation studies (art and design), either on a full-time or part-time basis (in this report, this course is referred to as the foundation diploma). The remainder are split between fashion and three-dimensional design courses, and the school of jewellery where they study jewellery making, horology, or gemmology. On the foundation diploma course, most of the full-time students are aged 16 to 18, and almost all of the part-time students are adults. In fashion and three-dimensional design, the majority of students are aged 16 to 18, whereas on specialist courses in horology, gemmology and jewellery there are more adult students. Three-quarters of the students are studying at level 3.

2. The university does not return data on the performance of individual students to the LSC, but is required to supply less detailed data to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). However, it was able to provide data on the performance of courses through its planning and systems development department. Inspectors found these data to be accurate and reliable. However, they have not been subject to audit by the LSC.

3. Attendance at the lessons observed was 82% overall, which is better than the national average for visual and performing arts courses, which was 79% in 2002/03. The higher rates of attendance were in design crafts, where attendance averaged 85%. Attendance was satisfactory in all courses.

4. Students achieve good standards of work. In jewellery making, much of the work reaches a professional standard and some is outstanding. Students' jewellery pieces feature both figurative and abstract themes, and demonstrate creative flair and exemplary attention to detail. Students are encouraged to experiment with a wide range of materials, technologies and methods and gain a broad understanding of these. Students on horology and gemmology courses are very well motivated and achieve good standards. In horology, the quality of workmanship achieved by many students is outstanding. Fashion students use a variety of fabrics and have good technical files. They have a sound grasp of design principles and each student develops their own style through project work, which is of a good standard. Much of the work by students on the furniture design course is also of a good standard and students are encouraged to develop their own ideas and experience.

5. Students' work on the foundation diploma course is generally good. They use a wide range of techniques and processes in their practical work and sketch books. Students undertaking the two-year part-time/ route make particularly good use of reflective journals as an extension of project work. Pass rates are high, though retention rates dropped to 83%, below the national average, in 2003/04. The two-year and three-year part-time courses have higher rates of early withdrawal and lower pass rates.

### **16 to 18 year olds**

6. There are 271 full-time students aged 16 to 18, and only 14 who study part-time. Of the full-time students, 76% are on the foundation diploma in art and design course. On this course pass rates are high. They have risen from 78% to 94% over the last three years and are now above the national average for courses of this type. However, over the same period, retention rates have fallen by over 10% and are now slightly below the national average. Students are well motivated and produce work of a very good standard. The quality of their classroom learning was better than that of adult students. Progression to HE from the foundation course is good; 90% move on to higher courses or employment. Many students progress to courses within the university.

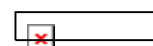


7. Of the remaining students aged 16 to 18, most are on the national diploma in fashion and clothing, where they comprised 60% of the 62 students in 2003/04. On this course, the retention rate was poor in 2001/02, but has since improved and is now satisfactory. However, achievement on this course has declined over the last three years and is considerably below the national average for these courses. Students undertake substantial projects, designing and producing items of clothing inspired by a particular theme, such as Regency England or the styles of the 1920s. They produce work which is of a good standard, with some very good projects. A low number of students aged 16 to 18 are on the national diploma in three-dimensional design, where retention and pass rates have improved over the last three years and are now satisfactory.

### **Adult learners**

8. There are 311 adult students on FE courses at the university, of whom about 40% study full time. Most of these are on the full-time foundation diploma or the national diploma in fashion and clothing. On the foundation diploma, pass rates are good but retention rates are falling and are now below the national average. Adult students form a majority on courses in the School of Jewellery, including horology, gemmology, and jewellery making. They are very well motivated and are inspired to achieve very good standards by the expertise of the staff and the outstanding working environment. Students demonstrate high levels of knowledge of fine metalwork techniques and apply them with confidence. Both the retention and pass rates of the national diploma in design crafts (precious metals and gemstones) are excellent (this course is henceforth referred to as 'jewellery making' in this report). Retention rates have risen over the last three years and are now 80%, whilst pass rates have been 100% for the last two years. Part-time students in gemmology achieve good standards, but about half of them fail to complete the course, and, of those who do, the pass rate was only 46% in 2003/04. Retention and achievement are particularly poor in photography courses where 84% of students withdrew before completing in 2003/04, and there have been no achievements of the qualification over the last three years. Some students enjoy this course but have no interest in achieving the qualification outcome. The university has recognised that this course is not meeting the needs of its students and is taking steps to improve results in the current year.

### **Quality of education and training**



9. Teaching, learning, and attainment were graded by inspectors in 42 lessons. Teaching was satisfactory or better in most lessons, but in over 10% it was unsatisfactory. Overall, the profile of lesson grades shows a lower proportion of good lessons than the average for this subject area. The profile for design crafts was better than that for the foundation diploma course.

10. The better lessons were those where students were carrying out practical work with the assistance of the teacher, or were able to take part in group learning activities. Much of the work in jewellery and horology was of this type. In these situations, teachers effectively challenge and motivate students to produce very good work. Students benefit from access to very good workshop and practical facilities. In a practical lesson on beaten metalwork, the teacher spoke individually to each student and kept an up-to-date written record of their progress. Students worked with enthusiasm and were encouraged to learn from each other's successes and failures. In a well-planned and successful foundation diploma class, students practised capturing and manipulating digital images using good computing and printing facilities. A teacher in a three-dimensional design lesson taught techniques for applying surface patterns to glass, combining creative approaches with sound teaching of the effect of different firing temperatures and health and safety considerations.

11. There were, however, too many lessons where students were not actively engaged in learning. Most theory classes, particularly on the foundation diploma course, were relatively large, and teachers' classroom management skills were not always adequate to ensure that students' attention was kept on the subject. In several lessons, the teacher spoke throughout, without providing the opportunity to discuss or ask questions to establish whether students understood the material. In

some lessons, theory material was delivered without clear links to the students' other course work, and sometimes it was pitched at a level too advanced for some students. A few lessons were poorly planned, without clear objectives or effective reinforcement of key points. There was a significant difference between the teaching grades awarded to part-time and full-time teachers. Although part-time teachers taught 40% of the lessons seen by inspectors, they accounted for 60% of the unsatisfactory lessons and only 17% of the good or better lessons.

12. The university provides resources and specialist equipment that are outstanding in the School of Jewellery and very good at the Gosta Green and Bournville Centres. The School of Jewellery is housed in an award-winning building located in the renowned Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. The Jewellery Industry Innovation Centre provides international technological development in the small metal goods, precious metals and jewellery industries. The School of Jewellery provides industry-standard workshops and equipment for both design craft and horology students. Very good resources in the Gosta Green centre include fashion studios with industrial machinery; wood, metal, and plastic workshops; and lecture theatres. Accommodation is well furnished, clean and professional in appearance. The art and design curriculum is provided at the Bournville Centre where accommodation and teaching resources are very good and students benefit from a wide range of specialist workshops. An art materials shop is available at the Gosta Green centre and a partnership between the School of Jewellery and a local company provides students with precious metals. Students use workshop resources and equipment with skill and respect. Supervised use of workshops is available in students' own time, as well as for timetabled lessons.

13. The library facilities are very good and are available at the three centres used by FE students. Students have access to an extensive range of appropriate texts, journals, videos, DVDs, computer-based resources and slide collections. A good range of periodicals is available, with many catalogues of older periodicals held for research. Library services work closely with students' disability services and students' services to ensure the facilities are meeting the needs of all students. The library offers a range of equipment, software and accommodation for students with visual and aural impairments, restricted mobility and dyslexia. One-to-one support for students with dyslexia takes place in the library at the Bournville Centre. Computer resources are up to date with the latest software available for two-dimensional and three-dimensional design and multimedia subjects. The computers are well used and are situated in the libraries and teaching accommodation. The library is open for much of the day and early evening for lessons and 'drop-in' use. Student surveys indicate high levels of satisfaction with library services.

14. FE courses at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design are taught by designated teams of practical, theoretical, technical and support staff. There are 21 permanently contracted academic staff, 9 visiting lecturers and 9 technicians. In addition, theoretical teaching is provided by specialist staff from the School of Theoretical and Historical Studies. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their subject specialisms and many are practising artists, craftspeople and designers. The staff are encouraged to participate in external examination, external links with knowledge transfer partnerships and with their own research as practising artists and designers. However, a third of staff do not hold a recognised teaching qualification. Technical support staff are well qualified. They have appropriate industrial expertise and are deployed effectively to support learning. There are good opportunities for staff development for both full-time and part-time staff.

15. There is very good attention paid to risk assessment and health and safety issues. A health and safety audit of all centres has been completed recently. The resulting action plans are rigorously monitored by the health and safety committees in each centre and the university's health and safety manager. Recent refurbishment at the Bournville Centre has improved access for students with restricted mobility. The university has completed a Special Educational Needs and Discrimination Act 2001 (SENDA) audit and has been awarded funds from the HEFCE and is implementing a detailed schedule of modifications to buildings.

16. The university has assessment procedures which apply to all its courses, but no specific assessment policy for its FE provision. Each of the departments operates separate arrangements in response to the requirements of awarding bodies. These vary considerably in their effectiveness. However, the student handbook gives clear guidance on how students can expect to be assessed. Each course team has a different but effective way of determining the academic standard of

students on entry to courses. Full-time students are assessed regularly and their work is generally of a high standard. Teachers use a range of strategies to monitor their progress and learning in the classroom and record progress. The major project briefs are clear with assessment criteria that are explained to students. These briefs are not formally internally verified to ensure consistency and conformity with awarding body requirements, though there is informal monitoring by course directors. The work is well marked with comments and corrections giving students plenty of information that helps them to improve. Cross marking and moderation takes place but is not sufficiently systematic. The university identified that a formal facility for the internal verification of national diploma programmes was required from September 2002. External verifiers have reported that there is still insufficient internal verification taking place.

17. The initial assessment of additional learning needs and of students' literacy, numeracy or language needs is weak. Students do not undertake any diagnostic assessments at the start of courses. The university identifies students that may need support from the application form, the initial interview and from written work and tutorials during courses. However, this is not fully effective, and there are examples of students only being identified as needing support late in their courses. Individual learning plans have been introduced for the first time in 2004/05. They are at a very early stage in their development. The historical data on students' backgrounds and qualifications are recorded on most learning plans, and some include information from pastoral tutorials. There has been very little work with students on setting clear, measurable targets to improve their performance or for systematically recording the progress they are making.

18. The breadth of FE provision provides very good opportunities for students to progress from level 3 courses, on to HE and employment. Specialist courses include full-time and part-time modes of attendance at levels 1, 2 and 3, with the majority of provision at level 3. The foundation diploma in art and design successfully attracts a large number of applications each year. Students on this pre-degree course are recruited locally, regionally, nationally and also internationally. Progression rates are good: for example, in 2002/03, 222 of the 247 diploma students progressed to HE, and in 2003/04, 100 students progressed to courses at the University of Central England. For the past 10 years, 100% of horology students have been employed in the watch making, clock repair and restoration trades. There has been an increase in the number of jewellery students who progress to higher national diplomas in jewellery.

19. The university has responded effectively to increase participation by adult learners (especially those with little formal education in art and design), minority ethnic groups, and disaffected young people. For example, the foundation course has a good range of modes of attendance including full-time and part-time, day or evening. The national diploma in fashion has increased its provision and now 39% of its students are from minority ethnic groups. A significant feature of FE provision in Birmingham Institute of Art and Design is the ability to fast track students. This enables those with appropriate academic qualifications and attainment in their first year of a national diploma to progress directly to the first year of Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Master of Arts (MA) programmes. Individual students benefit enormously from this opportunity, however, it can sometimes appear to adversely affect the university's retention and pass rate statistics for FE programmes.

20. The university provides courses that are educationally and socially inclusive. Students benefit from working alongside undergraduates and using HE equipment and resources. Many of the activities offered to the students are in conjunction with the other degree programmes. For example, BA students contribute to the staging of the end-of-year fashion show of national diploma students' final collections. Workshops are shared with HE students and provide FE students with opportunities to experience advanced techniques and practices. Students attending the university benefit from access to international visiting speakers and exhibitions.

21. There are outstanding enrichment opportunities for students. Birmingham Institute of Art and Design staff have extensive local, regional, national and international partnerships that offer students opportunities for contact with industry and employers, field trips and external projects. Recent field trips include visits to Amsterdam, Prague and New York. The university also has very good local partnerships and provides work experience placements for local schools and summer school programmes for disaffected young people.

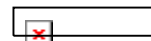
22. Guidance and support are satisfactory. The university runs very specialised FE courses. Students who apply generally do so because they have a very clear progression route in mind. Some of the information supplied to them has been part of the university prospectus, which is difficult for them to use and in some cases is inaccurate. For example, in the university prospectus there are inaccuracies in the entries for the horology courses. Additional documentation specifically for FE students has been introduced which has simpler language and is more informative. Students also find out about the courses through the university web pages, advertisements on local radio, and the close links staff have with local schools. Open days are held regularly. For example, the School of Jewellery has a weekly open day and other departments have one a month. Many fashion students find out about the courses through the university's regular presence at the national BBC Clothes Show Live event. Induction arrangements for full-time students are good. These often include projects that test the students' academic skills and give an indication of some additional support needs they might have. There is some variation in the quality of induction for part-time students. Some lessons have been badly disrupted by being overcrowded.

23. On-course support relies heavily on tutorials with individual students. The approaches used vary between courses. For the first time in 2004/05, students on the foundation course in art and design have all had an individual interview in the first term. In previous years, the large numbers on some courses meant that tutorials were not sufficiently frequent or of consistently high quality. On other courses, these interviews are carried out as part of the general course activity throughout the year. In most cases, staff know their students very well and the pastoral needs of students are frequently identified through these individual interviews. There are limited arrangements on most courses for group tutorials. Although individual learning plans are not yet used to their full potential, students are kept well informed about their progress. Teachers provide very good subject-specific support to the students; however, where lessons are overcrowded, this support is less effective

24. There is no systematic approach to the identification of students' additional learning needs, though the university has recently introduced individual learning plans. Too great a reliance is placed upon students referring themselves and on the expertise of tutors in identifying such needs through the application form and interview. The support that is offered to students who have dyslexia is sometimes ineffective and offered too late. The only students with literacy difficulties that are helped are those that have not achieved a grade C or higher in English at GCSE. These students are referred to a one hour per week literacy support session. They study a curriculum which is not appropriate to their needs, and attendance is low. There are no formal support arrangements for those students who may have poor numeracy skills. Once other additional learning needs have been identified, however, the support available is very good. The disabilities services team offers a wide range of services. A large number of support workers give individual help to students who are hard of hearing or partially sighted. For example, students who require it are provided with help with note taking in lessons or if they are hard of hearing, signers are used. Many students are issued with and use well the specialist equipment such as laptops and video recorders. There are also a significant number of students with mobility problems that are helped to fulfil the requirements of their courses. FE students have access to a very wide number of support functions available at the university. There is a strong counselling and mental health service that is marketed successfully to all students during their induction. Childcare facilities are good. There is an excellent arrangement for healthcare with access to doctors, nurses and sick rooms. Students make good use of the financial advice and university funds available to them. The students union also is able to help students by advising them of the expertise available. The excellent chaplaincy service covers a wide range of faiths and denominations including Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh. There are societies for each of these faiths.

25. Over 90% of FE students progress onto related employment or HE courses. The careers advice and guidance given to these students by their tutors, who are specialists in these fields, is good. The university's careers service is available to students who, during their course or at the end of it, have not decided what they wish to do next.. Students with sufficient self-confidence refer themselves to these careers advisors.

## **Leadership and management**



26. The FE strategy group, a management committee reporting to the vice-chancellor, is well established and is responsible for setting targets and overseeing the performance of FE provision. Overall enrolment and funding targets for 2003/04 were largely met although the previous year, recruitment to part-time programmes was well below target. This was largely due to delays in completing the refurbishment of buildings at the Bournville Centre. Overall, the number of students is increasing and on some full-time programmes, for example, those in fashion, enrolments have increased significantly. Until recently, there has been no long-term development plan for FE in the university. To comply with the funding requirements of the LSC, a three-year plan is now being drafted.

27. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Success rates are above national averages and gradually improving. Most students successfully progress to HE. The quality of learning resources is high; the resulting standard of students' work is generally good. There are good links with employers, particularly in the design crafts area. A more rigorous approach to monitoring attendance is now being taken and has resulted in lower levels of absenteeism. Retention rates on some courses, however, are still unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is below sector averages; good practice is insufficiently shared. There are some wide variations in class sizes: the very large size of some teaching groups is adversely impacting on the availability of support for individual students.

28. The university has well-established quality reporting mechanisms for all its provision. In order to determine how far these were meeting the needs of FE courses and the LSC, an external review of provision was initiated by the FE strategy group during 2003/04. The review concluded that some part-time courses run in two departments were not meeting the needs of students. A number of courses have since been withdrawn and replaced by more appropriate programmes of study. Documentation to support teaching and learning was also judged to be underdeveloped. In addition, the review considered that self-assessment was not embedded in faculty planning with, for example, no observation of teaching and learning. Course and faculty self-assessment reports have since been produced to address the weaknesses identified in the review. The resulting action plans cover many of the issues raised, however, some of the key review dates are not early enough in the year to determine the progress being made and a number of the expected outcomes are not easily measurable. Course reports now make reference to student survey questionnaires but do not include summary data on achievements or targets for the following year. In a number of cases, unsatisfactory pass or retention rates are not sufficiently evaluated in reports. A teaching observation scheme has been introduced this academic year.

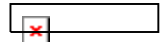
29. The system of individual performance review is not consistently applied. Whilst heads of department and faculty are appraised on an annual basis, other staff are subject to less frequent reviews which are not formally recorded or the terms of reference clearly defined. By contrast, opportunities for staff development are good. Teachers are encouraged to undertake research, and to study for higher degrees. Relevant training and accreditation is provided to all staff who do not possess a teaching qualification. Those teaching on FE programmes benefit from interaction with HE courses.

30. The university is currently in the process of strengthening the mechanisms for promoting equality of opportunity including considering the statistical significance of variations in final marks and ethnicity. Enrolment data are analysed in detail by gender, disability and different ethnic categories. The data show that the university has been successful in promoting social and educational inclusion. The proportion of minority ethnic students on FE courses has increased to a third of all enrolments, a higher figure than that for the West Midlands as a whole. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has more than doubled over the last three years. The university complies fully with the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 and actively promotes diversity training. As part of its response to the SENDA, access for students with restricted mobility has been improved, particularly at the remodelled Ruskin Hall. Extensive training on disability, together with a comprehensive handbook, has been provided for staff.

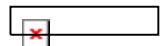
31. A detailed set of statistics, generated through the university's management information system, was made available for the inspection, comprising a range of performance and enrolment

information over the last three years. Data on retention rates and success rates proved to be reliable; however, the calculation used to measure achievements required revision. Some internal reports use achievement data which suggests that achievement is higher than it is because continuing students are assumed to have passed. Enrolment trends, achievements and student survey responses are considered in detail at university board level and department academic monitoring committees. Action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations. Course teams are starting to use management information more systematically. The budget for FE is subsumed within that for the university as a whole and a degree of cross-subsidisation is employed to ensure courses with relatively low numbers of students are maintained, at least in the short term. There are no formal measures of efficiency and effectiveness used to allocate resources; the very large size of some teaching groups in art and design was making classroom management difficult. To the extent that success rates in FE are just above the sector benchmark, the provision can be judged to offer satisfactory value for money.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Art and design (general)



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

##### **Strengths**

- high and improving pass rates on the full time foundation diploma
  
- good standard of students' work in sketch books
  
- good accommodation and learning resources
  
- flexible part-time modes of attendance.

##### **Weaknesses**

- no achievement on photography course
  
- poor retention rates on part-time courses

- poor teaching in the majority of theory lessons
  
- insufficient monitoring and management of course performance.

**Scope of provision**

32. The art and design provision at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design is based at the Bournville Centre for Visual Arts. There is a diploma in foundation studies (art and design) course offering both part-time and full-time modes of study. Part-time provision is available during the day or evening. Currently there are 237 students on the full-time route, of whom 50 are adults and the rest aged between 16 and 18. There are 109 students undertaking the part-time route, 8 of whom are aged 16 to 18. In addition, there are two photography courses with 44 adult students enrolled.

**Achievement and standards**

33. The full-time foundation diploma has achieved good and improved pass rates over the past three years, increasing from 78% to 94%. Retention rates are poor on part-time courses. For example, on the photography course it has reduced over the past three years from 67% to 13%. During that time no student has passed the award. Retention rates for the full-time foundation diploma have declined from 92% to 83% over the past two years. Students' work in sketch books on the foundation course is of good quality. Students undertaking the two-year part-time foundation diploma made particularly good use of reflective journals in their project work. Progression to HE from the foundation course is good, at 90%. Many students progress within the University of Central England.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in Art and design (general), 2002 to 2004**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 6922 certificate in basic photography	1	No. of starts	9	22	30
		% retention	67	32	13
		% pass rate	0	0	0
Diploma in foundation studies one year	3	No. of starts	193	244	254
		% retention	92	83	83
		% pass rate	78	90	94
Diploma in foundation studies two years part time	3	No. of starts	46	46	28
		% retention	50	54	58
		% pass rate	87	96	86
Diploma in foundation studies three years part time	3	No. of starts	41	53	31
		% retention	49	66	53
		% pass rate	100	83	69

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), institution (2004)

**Quality of education and training**

34. Half of the lessons seen were good or better, but a minority of lessons were less than satisfactory. This is significantly below the national average for art and design subjects. During the first term of the full-time foundation course, students undertake a series of two-week modules to introduce them to workshops including fine art, fashion and textiles, visual communication, three-dimensional design, and lens-based media. Attendance was satisfactory at 78%, and the average class size was 20. The majority of lessons are well planned with comprehensive lesson plans and schemes of work.

35. In the best lessons, all students are fully engaged in experimentation work involving a wide range of media and materials. Students are able to integrate contextual theory and practice. For example, in a visual communications lesson, one student was able to develop ideas using computer software based upon direct references to the sculptor Anthony Gormley. Another student made good use of a summer holiday project as reference material for some exciting work amalgamating human movement with images using a data projector. In another lesson, a part-time student explored negative space and linked this to personal ideas about mortality, using effective references from contemporary fashion designers. Drawing is a common theme across all specialist areas. For example, in a three-dimensional design class, students were using wire as a medium to describe observations of workshop equipment. In a fine art lesson, students learn how to produce measured drawings through long sustained study of still life objects using charcoal and emulsion paint. There was extensive use of sketchbooks and observational drawing to record and develop ideas. All students work on a common theme called 're-work' that requires them to develop personal responses to the source material gathered as part of their summer homework. The possibilities of translating this into a range of mediums are then explored.

36. The less successful lessons were those dealing with theory: teaching is unsatisfactory in the majority of these sessions. Teachers sometimes rely upon long expositions and presentations, and fail to check learning. Many students become disengaged, and take little part in the lesson. Where discussion is used, it is focused on a minority of students. There is poor classroom management of large groups. In one lesson, the teacher was not able to get all members of the group to participate in a peer assessment activity. In another case, a 30-minute video was shown and then summed up by the teacher with minimal interaction with students. Some lessons were held in rooms too small for the size of the group. Too many students are not actively engaged in the learning process in these lessons.

37. The Bournville Centre for Visual Arts provides high-quality resources. The buildings are of historical and cultural interest and provide an excellent environment for learning. FE students benefit from being able to use degree-level facilities. There is a wide range of specialist workshops including three-dimensional, fashion and textiles, printmaking, photography and fine art. Studios are light, spacious and well equipped. Classrooms are attractive and well equipped: however, in some cases they are too small for the course groups timetabled into them. There is a new art gallery with a programme of exhibitions by visiting artists. Recent refurbishments have modified the buildings to improve facilities and to enable learners with restricted mobility to gain access. The library at the Bournville Centre is well stocked and is linked to extensive learning resources at the main site of the university.

38. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their vocational areas and in many cases are practising artists and craftspeople. However, many do not hold recognised teaching qualifications. Specialist workshops have technical support staff who maintain the facilities and assist students in developing their skills. In visual communications lessons, technician demonstrators were well deployed; they interacted well with students and gave good practical advice and assistance.

39. Individual learning plans have been recently introduced. They are at an early stage of development and are not yet used effectively to monitor and record students' learning, or set targets for the next stage. However, informal feedback to students on their progress is good. It is provided as an integral part of practical sessions and is constructive and aids personal development. For example, in a fine art lesson, the tutor provided good suggestions regarding possible further contextual references. All students on the foundation course have recently had a pastoral tutorial with their personal tutor. However, there are inconsistencies in the extent to which these have been recorded. Good attempts are being made to identify students who are at risk of disengaging from



education and attendance issues are quickly followed up by letter and telephone.

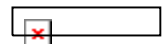
40. The university provides a range of study modes for the foundation diploma, in order to encourage wider participation. It has been successful in recruiting non-traditional learners through part-time routes, in the daytime and evening. All students are interviewed prior to entry onto the foundation programme. Students receive good advice regarding possible pathways. There is a comprehensive handbook that provides thorough information about studying at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design and course requirements. However, not all part-time students were clear about the requirements of the second year of their course. Progression to HE from the foundation course is very good. In 2004, 220 students progressed to HE courses, representing 89% of the cohort. Of these, 100 moved on to one of the wide range of arts undergraduate courses offered by University of Central England.

41. There is no systematic initial assessment of students' learning needs, but in most cases these are identified as part of the admissions and induction process. Good levels of specialist support are available where needs are identified. For example, in one class, two students, one with dyslexia and one with a hearing impairment, are supported by note takers. Another student is being given extra specialist support with her written work.

### ***Leadership and management***

42. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum team meetings are used to share experiences of staff who teach on different aspects of the programme. The views of students and measures to improve retention rates have been discussed, and some improvements made; for example, to the way in which students' absences are quickly followed up. The course leader reports annually on the delivery of the course, but there is insufficient monitoring of teaching or analysis of retention rates and achievement. Newly introduced quality assurance procedures have not had sufficient time to impact on provision. Until this year there has been no effective action to remedy three years of non-achievement on the photography course or the poor retention rates on part-time courses. A formal self-assessment process has been established, but not all teachers are involved in it. Some issues raised by staff, such as the difficulties of teaching large groups of foundation students, have not been addressed.

### **Design crafts**



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Contributory grade for jewellery making (precious metals and gemstones) is **outstanding (grade 1)**

### ***Strengths***

- very high pass rates on national diploma crafts (precious metals and gemstones)
  
- very good standard of students' work
  
- very good teaching on national diploma design crafts (precious metals and gemstones)

- high-quality specialist resources
- good external links.

### ***Weaknesses***

- unsatisfactory achievement on national diploma fashion and diplomas in gemmology
- some dull and uninspiring teaching
- poor recording and verification of assessment
- weak curriculum management in horology.

### ***Scope of provision***

43. Design crafts courses are offered at two campuses. There are 97 FE students at the School of Jewellery. There are 41 students aged 16 to 18 and 56 adult students. Some 36 full-time students are on a national diploma in jewellery making, 27 are on part-time and full-time courses in horology, and there are 34 part-time students studying for gemmology courses. At Gosta Green, most students are on full-time national diplomas: there are 59 students on national diploma fashion and clothing, 13 of whom are adult students; 17 are on national diploma three-dimensional design, 3 of whom are adult students; and 9 students on the part-time course in furniture making, 7 of whom are adult students.

### ***Achievement and standards***

44. Students at the School of Jewellery achieve very good standards, and some of the work is outstanding. Students on national diploma design crafts (precious metals and gemstones) produce outstanding work, the quality of which is, in many cases, of a professional standard. Examples include a set of necklaces and bracelets based on the movement of twigs on water - in part influenced by the work of Andy Goldsworthy - that resolves into a set of castings in silver, in some cases strung with pearls and also resolved as a press pattern onto a hollow silver pendant. The collection is the work of a second-year national diploma student. There have been consistently high retention and pass rates on jewellery-making courses over the last three years. In horology, students work to very good standards, but few achieve their qualification; in 2003/04, only one of the seven students achieved the full target award. However, over many years, all the students have progressed to employment within the jewellery industry. Achievement on the gemmological diplomas is also low: 49% passed in 2003/04. The national diploma in fashion and clothing has improved retention rates, but achievement has declined over the last three years. Students on this course produce a good standard of work. The university offers some adult students the opportunity to fast

track' onto BA programmes after one year. This is good progression for the individuals concerned, but it has adversely affected pass and retention rates on the course. Retention rates and achievement on the national diploma in three-dimensional design and furniture design are satisfactory. Many of the furniture design students progress into the industry or start their own furniture-making businesses.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in design crafts 2002 to 2004***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Business and Technology and Education Council (BTEC) national diploma crafts three-dimensional design	3	No. of starts	6	7	13
		% retention	83	71	77
		% pass rate	60	40	90
BTEC national diploma design crafts precious metal and gemstones	3	No. of starts	15	7	10
		% retention	60	71	80
		% pass rate	89	100	100
BTEC fashion and clothing	3	No. of starts	20	34	35
		% retention	70	59	74
		% pass rate	100	85	61
Preliminary diploma and diploma and gem diamond diploma	2/3	No. of starts	40	22	49
		% retention	48	59	51
		% pass rate	39	38	46

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), institution (2004)

***Quality of education and training***

45. Teaching was good or better in the majority of lessons, a minority were satisfactory and a small minority were unsatisfactory. Grades for learning and attainment were similar to those for teaching. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, though its quality is below the national averages for teaching in the art and design subject area. The overall attendance in lessons was above the national average for this type of course at 86%. Most practical teaching is good, though in some larger groups not all students receive help and attention from the tutor, and some make little progress as a result. Teaching and learning on the national diploma design crafts (precious metals and gemstones) course are very good. All teachers use a variety of methods to communicate ideas and concepts, and often make good use of directed questioning and class discussion. They prepare for teaching very well, give clear lesson outlines and bring a range of materials to demonstrate good practice and techniques. Students are challenged and motivated to learn. In horology, workshop staff are expert in their subject but do not always make adequate use of the very good learning resources available. However, horology students produce high-quality results when completing projects. One student in his final year in horology is developing a construction exercise to produce his own accurate and precise balance spring vibrating tool. Each component is carefully designed, machined and finished to perfection. Examples of work produced by students are on permanent display around the school and appear in professionally presented end-of-year exhibitions alongside the work of HE students. Students' portfolios are well produced and clearly demonstrate their progress in academic and personal skills.

46. Students on the national diploma three-dimensional design and national diploma fashion course gain a broad understanding of methods, materials and technologies that influence work in this area. They are encouraged to develop their own style through project work. Their work is of a very high standard. Displays of previous project work provide excellent examples of the type of product and

quality required. In one lesson, students were experimenting with glass firing collages of found objects, and learning about the effect of different firing temperatures. The historical, theoretical and contextual studies content in fashion and clothing and three-dimensional design are taught by a separate department. Here the size of the classes was large and the style of delivery was more appropriate to undergraduate provision. There was little attempt to relate the subjects under discussion to the students' main area of study. In some cases, the teaching was pitched at a level too high for the prior knowledge of the students. After one lecture on 19th century art movements, fashion students were unable to explain how this knowledge could influence and expand their own work.. In some of the poorer lessons, observed teaching was dull and uninspiring. These lessons were insufficiently planned, lacked variety, and did not sufficiently challenge students.

47. The university's resources are very good. Workshops and studios at the School of Jewellery are excellent. The combination of materials and techniques available to students is exemplary. The Gosta Green resources include fashion studios with industrial machinery, and well-equipped workshops for wood, metal, glass and plastics work. The facilities are well maintained and present a professional image.

48. The staff are well qualified in their subject specialism. Many bring current industrial experience to their teaching, so are able to give students a realistic view of how their skills match the requirements of industry. They are encouraged to participate in updating and professional development activities, including research and study for higher degrees. However, some staff lack teaching qualifications.

49. Assessment in jewellery making is very good. Students' progress is monitored thoroughly. In lessons, learning is regularly checked. Formal monitoring takes place in tutorials where projects are marked and discussed to ensure the student understands the reason for the mark awarded. There is some poor assessment practice in horology. Teachers do not record students' progress in detail, and provide little by way of written feedback. However, students do receive good verbal feedback in most cases. In fashion and three-dimensional design, students are assessed regularly: they are aware of the assessment criteria and what is required to reach the higher grades. Students' individual assessment includes written peer assessment and self-evaluation. Marking of most assignments and projects is good, with clear written feedback and action points for improvement. However, in some cases, the recording of assessment is insufficient. No indication is given as to how the student has fulfilled the learning objectives. There is a lack of consistency and internal verification is underdeveloped.

50. Links with industry are strong. The School of Jewellery benefits from its unique position in the heart of Birmingham's Jewellery quarter, and has strong links with manufacturers, suppliers and retailers that benefit its students. The school regularly hosts international exhibitions and during the 'Brilliantly Birmingham' festival, jewellery-making students exhibit alongside international designers. The fashion and three-dimensional design courses also have good links with local industries. The fashion students organise a fashion show to celebrate their final collections, which is supported by HE students who contribute to the staging of the event. Students are offered field trips and educational visits as part of their course. This is a joint venture with undergraduates, which includes trips to Amsterdam, Prague and New York.

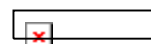
51. Students are encouraged to identify their need for additional support either at interview or on entry to their programme. Support is available and works effectively where it is applied. However, sometimes it is slow; one dyslexic student was not provided with the support he needed until the second half of the term. This significantly affected his early progress on the course. Students who arrive without a GCSE in English at grade C are invited to attend a weekly lesson in the use of English, but there is no support within their main course. The department has taken steps to improve retention rates by providing improved student support. For example, teaching staff now contact students who have been absent for over 3 sessions, to offer assistance and encourage them to return.

### ***Leadership and management***

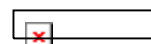
52. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Managers from the two sites work independently of each other but meet regularly in the university's FE forum. Each course has a detailed annual evaluation

report which reviews performance. Staff meetings occur once a term. They are minuted, and include consideration of the feedback given by students. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice between courses. New quality assurance arrangements have been introduced in the current term, but most teachers have not yet received feedback from observations of their teaching, and have not been appraised recently. There is good informal support from the course directors to help teachers adapt their teaching to the needs of FE students, but the university does not offer any specific staff development for this purpose. The physical and human resources applied to FE courses by the university are very good and represent good value for money.

#### Part D: Institution data



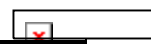
**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	0	16
2	1	2
3	99	82
4/5	0	0
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: provided by the institution in 2004

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	0	0	0
Land-based provision	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0
Engineering, technology and manufacture	0	0	0
Business administration, management and professional	0	0	0
Information and communication technology	0	0	0
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	0	0

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	0	0	0
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	0	0	0
Health, social care and public services	0	0	0
Visual and performing arts and media	285	310	595
Humanities	0	0	0
English, languages and communication	0	0	0
Foundation programmes	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>595</b>

Source: provided by the institution in 2004

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
3	Starters excluding transfers	183	224	244	193	205	177
	Retention rate %	87	81	80	59	59	66
	National average %	79	79	79	78	78	78
	Pass rate %	76	90	93	80	84	77
	National average %	73	73	73	69	69	69

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for institutions of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary institutions or sixth form institutions).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Institutions in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. Institution rates for 2000 to 2003: Institution ISR..

**Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level**

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Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	58	33	9	33
Level 2 (intermediate)	100	0	0	1
Level 1 (foundation)	50	50	0	2
Other sessions	50	17	33	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>42</b>

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