



BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published TBC	Provider reference 130606
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Introduction

Berkshire College of Agriculture was inspected in September 2003. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in Work-Based Learning (WBL) in horticulture, countryside and floristry which was found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory WBL aspect was re-inspected on 10-11 October 2005. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

WBL area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Horticulture, countryside and floristry	4	4

Context

The range of provision remains the same as at the original inspection. There are 17 sportsturf, 14 landscape and seven floristry apprentices and one amenity horticulture advanced apprentice.

Strengths

- *Good off-the-job training*

Areas for improvement

- *Retention and achievement rates on horticulture programmes*
- *Rate of progress of NVQ assessment on all programmes*
- *Assessment and internal verification practice*
- *Target setting and progress monitoring for learners*
- *Effectiveness of management of work-based learning*

Achievement and standards

Achievement rates remain low on horticulture programmes although some learners have now achieved the full apprenticeship framework where none had at the time of the original inspection. Retention and achievement rates for landscape apprentices were significantly worse than for sportsturf and floristry apprentices in 2003/04. Of those recruited in 2004/05, approximately 75% of all horticulture apprentices remain on programme. This represents an

improvement for landscape apprentices, but a decline for sportsturf. Progress towards completion of the NVQ is too slow for most learners. Apprentices are placed in good quality work placements with supportive employers and develop good practical skills.

Quality of provision

Off-the-job training is good and effective use is made of facilities available at college. Assessment is inadequate. NVQ assessment does not start soon enough and takes place insufficiently frequently for learners to make satisfactory progress. Little assessment has been carried out for horticulture apprentices recruited in 2004/05. Plans are in place to assess all apprentices more systematically this year. Assessment of key skills and additional qualifications is now timelier. There is no interim verification of floristry portfolios. Outcomes of action required as a result of final verification are not always recorded before certification. Target setting and progress monitoring through work place reviews, tutorials and assessment is poorly coordinated and does not support learners to make adequate progress.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of work-based learning remain ineffective. There has been some improvement in achievement rates but progress towards making significant and sustained improvement is slow. The college has been unable to recruit sufficient assessors to enable regular and timely NVQ assessment. The management structure remains complex with inconsistent management of all work-based learning across the college.