



Gloucester College of Arts and
Technology

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published July 2006	Provider reference 130683
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Introduction

Gloucester College of Arts and Technology (GLOSCAT) was last inspected in May 2004. 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 construction work-based learning (WBL), hair and beauty (WBL) and provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities (SLDD) which were 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 work-based learning and curriculum areas were re-inspected on 6 – 7 June 2006. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

WBL area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Construction (WBL)	4	3

Context

The college offers a broad range of apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships, including bricklaying, carpentry, bench joinery, painting and decorating, plumbing, domestic heating and electrical installation. At the time of inspection there were 130 learners on apprenticeship frameworks, of which 43 were on advanced programmes.

Strengths

- *high standard of learners' practical work*
- *very good tracking of learner progress*

Areas for improvement

- *low advanced apprentice framework achievement rates*
- *learning plans do not reflect individual learner progress*

Achievement and standards

Framework achievements have improved year-on-year. In 2004/05 apprenticeship completion rates were broadly satisfactory at 52%. However, in 2004/05 completion rates on advanced apprenticeships were only 36%. At the time of the inspection 43% of learners had achieved to date within the academic year with more due to achieve in the near future. Retention is satisfactory. Learners currently on programme are making good progress. Learners are working to high standards. There are good examples of learners' work.

Quality of provision

Teaching is good. Following the recent introduction of a new, more effective tracking process, tracking of learners' progress is now very good. Learners are aware of their progress and what they need to do to achieve their qualifications. Reviews of progress are good. They focus on checking learners' progress and setting targets for learners to achieve. Up-to-date tracking and assessment plans feed into the review. NVQ assessment is satisfactory. Learning plans for some learners are poor. They lack sufficient detail and do not adequately reflect individual progress. Learners are supported well both at college and in the workplace.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of work-based provision are now satisfactory. The college has made good progress to address previously identified weaknesses. New strategies have resulted in improved framework achievements. There is good team working. Staff are effectively managed, motivated and have a clear direction. Internal verification and resources are satisfactory. Some of the development plans fail to identify responsibilities and clear timescales for completion of identified actions.

Hair and Beauty (WBL)

WBL area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
WBL hairdressing	4	3

Context

The college offers NVQ level two and three apprenticeships in hairdressing. At the time of the re-inspection there were 58 apprentices and 1 advanced apprentice.

Strengths

- *good integration of key skills*
- *good management of hairdressing to raise standards*
- *good individual learning support in the work place*

Areas for improvement

- *inconsistent assessment planning in the work place*
- *tutorial support in college is not sufficiently planned*

Achievement and standards

Apprenticeship framework achievement has improved in hairdressing since the previous inspection. In 2003/04 15% of learners achieved the full framework this improved to 47% in 2004/05. The current year-to-date achievement is 46%.

There is now good key skills integration in work-based learning. This has improved the completion of the learners' individual framework. Key skills are now delivered at the start of the learners' programme. Timely success has also improved with 41% of NVQ level 2 learners achieving within their planned timescale.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. One of the strengths identified from the previous inspection was good use of ILT; this is still strong. The hairdressing client base has improved to support learners achieving their practical assessments and skill development in college. There is still some inconsistent assessment planning in the work place. Not all learners receive sufficient visits and prior achievement is not always recognised. In the last inspection poor

assessment practice in college was identified as a weakness; this has improved. There is also more effective tracking of learners both while at college and in the work place. There is good support for learners in the work place. Tutorial support in college is not always planned. Targets set in the work place are not always reviewed or followed up.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of work-based provision are good. A new head of school has been appointed who works closely with work-based staff. There is much improvement of the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Communication has improved and all staff have a clear understanding of their job roles and responsibilities. Team meetings are well attended. External and Internal verification is satisfactory. Self-assessment is fairly accurate in identifying priorities for improvement.

Curriculum area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
SLDD	4	3

Context

The College offers full and part-time courses at pre-entry and entry level for a range of learners including those with profound and complex learning difficulties. At the time of the re-inspection there were 144 full-time and 25 part-time students enrolled at the college, of whom 98 were aged 16-18 years. Courses are offered at both the Cheltenham and Gloucester sites and in collaboration with a charity and local garden centre.

Strengths

- *broad range of appropriate programmes*
- *good resources and accommodation*
- *good academic and pastoral support for learners*

Areas for improvement

- *limited range of teaching techniques in lessons*
- *insufficient attention to the needs of individual learners*

Achievement and standards

Achievements and standards are satisfactory. The process for initial assessment of learners' individual needs is thorough and leads to the identification of individual targets. However, the quality of targets that result from this assessment is variable. For example, some individual learning plans give clear measurable targets to assess learner progress whilst others contain insufficient detail. The standard of learners' work varies. In the better lessons they gain new knowledge and skills, but in others the more able are not sufficiently challenged. Retention is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are good. Progression onto higher level programmes within the area is good and improving for mainstream areas. Progression onto employment is low.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now satisfactory. Teachers make effective use of half-day and whole day sessions to integrate relevant skills into a coherent project. On occasions staff pay insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners. As a result some lesson activities are inappropriate, learners are passive and unresponsive as they are not fully engaged in classroom activities. Significant changes have been made to provide a more coherent curriculum. These developments are at an early stage. Assessment processes are in place and enable targets to be reviewed periodically. Staff pay good attention to health and safety practices. Accommodation is spacious, clean and well lit. Learners' work is displayed on walls.

Support for learners is good. Regular tutorials enable reviews of progress and the provision of effective personal support. Students speak highly of the support they receive from staff.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the area have improved and are now satisfactory. Effective actions have resulted in significant improvement. There is clear direction for the future. Staff are well motivated and own the self-assessment and quality improvement processes. Communications are good and team working is effective. Quality assurance is good.