



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT NOVEMBER 1999

# Berkshire College of Agriculture

## SUMMARY

Berkshire College of Agriculture provides satisfactory training in a wide range of land-based subjects. There are few workplace assessors. Trainees receive insufficient assessment of their performance at work. They produce little evidence for their portfolios of their acquisition of work-based skills. The learning support systems are robust. Resources are good. Although the contract is well managed, some of the parties to it are insufficiently involved in the implementation of training. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity. The college has a range of quality assurance procedures but these do not all cover work-based training sufficiently.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Agriculture	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	2
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good resources for all aspects of training
- ◆ comprehensive equal opportunities policy and supporting procedures
- ◆ well-structured learning support system
- ◆ extensive and standardised procedures and guidelines

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment
- ◆ lack of promotion of equal opportunities in marketing information and literature
- ◆ low priority accorded to work-based training
- ◆ no annual business plan
- ◆ constraining effect of the academic year on training and assessment

## INTRODUCTION

1. Berkshire College of Agriculture is a further education college offering land-based programmes. It is situated 25 miles from central London, between Maidenhead and Henley on Thames. The major towns of Reading, High Wycombe and Slough are all less than 12 miles away. The college has been providing training in agriculture for 50 years. It has expanded to provide training in other subject areas within the land-based sector. The college now also provides training in marine engineering and childcare. The estate includes a commercial farm with a beef herd, commercial breeding ewes, and a large outdoor pig unit. A grade 1 listed house, a retail garden centre and glasshouses, are set in extensive and landscaped grounds. There are equine yards, including a large indoor riding school, as well as a small-animal collection, and farm and marine machinery workshops. There are also extensive resources to help trainees to work on their own, and for information technology. A children's nursery, a golf green-keeping academy and a veterinary practice are also situated on the estate. The college has diverse sources of income. About 52 per cent of its annual income comes from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), and some 44 per cent is from tuition fees and commercial and other activities. The local educational authority provides 1 per cent, and 4 per cent comes from the sole contract with Thames Valley Enterprise, which is the local training and enterprise council (TEC).

2. At the time of inspection, there were 71 trainees; of these, 13 were modern apprentices, six were national trainees and 52 were on other training. There were few trainees on childcare programmes and these were not inspected. The Thames Valley is one of the United Kingdom's major service-sector economies. The main areas of employment are wholesaling, retailing, real estate, renting and business services, and health and social work. In 1996, the proportion of the workforce in the area engaged in the services was 82.5 per cent compared with 75.6 per cent in Great Britain as a whole. This sector continues to expand. There are many small workplaces in the area with fewer than 25 employees. Ninety-four per cent of employers operating locally have small businesses. The proportion of persons from minority ethnic groups in the local population is 6.3 per cent. The highest proportions are in Reading at 15.2 per cent, Slough at 34.7 per cent, and High Wycombe at 16.3 per cent. Seventy-four per cent of year-11 pupils stay on in full-time education; 5.8 per cent go into work-based training and 2.8 per cent are unemployed. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers in the area who gained grade C or above in five subjects in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was 56.8 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In April 1999, the local unemployment rate was 4.4 per cent; 17 per cent of unemployed persons are between the ages of 18 and 24.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. Berkshire College of Agriculture prepared a self-assessment report in May 1999 for an inspection by the FEFC in September 1999. The college reviewed the self-assessment process, and revised its self-assessment report in order to ensure it covered work-based training. The self-assessment report was compiled through a series of consultation exercises with administrative and training staff during July and August. Employers and trainees were not consulted as part of this process. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses stated in the self-assessment report and with the grades for all areas.

4. Three inspectors spent a total of nine days at the college. They met with 31 trainees and fourteen members of staff, and visited 20 employers and work-placement providers, interviewing 17 members of their staff. Inspectors also observed one on-the-job and one off-the-job training session, three reviews of trainees' progress and one assessment. The inspection team looked at a comprehensive range of documentation, including trainees' records of assessment, portfolios of evidence and internal and external verification reports.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Agriculture		1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Agriculture

### Grade 3

5. The training programmes cover a number of areas within the Training Standards Council's classification of agriculture. These are: agriculture, amenity horticulture, animal care, equine studies, floristry, veterinary nursing and service engineering. There are 68 trainees on the training programmes. There are three trainees in agriculture and they are working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 2 in mixed farming. Of these three, one is a national trainee and two are on other training programmes. There are 38 amenity horticulture trainees. Of these, five trainees are modern apprentices, five are national trainees and 28 are on other training programmes. Of the 38 amenity horticulture trainees, 22 are receiving training in sports turf (green-keeping) and nine and four are receiving training in decorative horticulture and hard landscaping, respectively. There are also three trainees working towards an NVQ in amenity horticulture at level 1. There are seven animal care trainees. One is a modern apprentice working towards an NVQ in animal welfare and management at level 3 one is a national trainee, and the

remaining five are on other training programmes. All are working towards an NVQ in caring for animals at level 2. There are seven trainees working towards NVQs in horse care at levels 1, 2 and 3. Of these, three are modern apprentices and four are on other training programmes. There are two veterinary nursing trainees, of whom one is a modern apprentice working towards an NVQ in veterinary nursing at level 3 and one is on other training working towards an NVQ in veterinary nursing at level 2. There are three floristry trainees, of whom one is a modern apprentice and two are on other training programmes. There are eight service (agriculture and horticulture) engineering trainees, of whom one is a modern apprentice and another is a national trainee. The college has had one New Deal client on a full-time training and education programme. At the time of inspection, there were no New Deal clients at the college.

6. All trainees are employed. They are from a wide range of establishments across Berkshire, including farms, private estates, golf courses, shops, kennels, catteries and equine establishments. Most trainees receive off-the-job training on one day a week during term-time. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, and awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good resources for all aspects of training
- ◆ well-planned and carefully structured off-the-job training
- ◆ careful observation of health and safety regulations

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment
- ◆ constraining effect of the academic year on training and assessment
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ lack of competence-based assessment on the equine programme

7. Off-the-job training is good. The college has extensive training facilities across a wide range of programme areas. Sports turf (green-keeping) trainees receive training on the college's own golf course. There is a commercially run horticulture unit and a well-equipped equestrian centre. Workshops and teaching areas are maintained to a high standard. Staff in all programme areas have good industrial experience and relevant occupational qualifications. Most staff have, or are working towards, assessor qualifications. Trainees value the off-the-job training sessions, which involve a combination of occupational training, assessments, portfolio-building and key skills. The sessions are well organised, and full use is made of the college's facilities. Detailed training plans ensure that trainees know what off-the-job training

to expect during the academic year. Staff produce detailed schemes of work. Trainees' achievement rates are only available for the programme area as a whole. There has been significant improvement in trainees' retention and achievement rates over the last three years. The proportion of trainees completing programmes has risen from 15.3 per cent in 1996-97, to 50 per cent in 1998-99.

8. Trainees receive training continuously from employers in the workplace. Workplace training is carried out to a high standard to ensure that trainees meet the needs of their employer. There is insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Some employers say they receive little communication from college staff, and were unaware of what their trainees do when attending off-the-job training. Employers do not always receive copies of training plans used at the college. Training activities at the college are not always relevant to the tasks trainees have to carry out at work.

9. All trainees at the college receive health and safety training. Trainees' understanding of basic health and safety regulations is assessed following induction. A strong culture of safety awareness exists among staff and trainees. Comprehensive procedures and safe working practices for health and safety, for each programme area, complement the health and safety policy.

10. Assessment methods vary considerably across programme areas and they are insufficiently standardised. The assessment methods of service engineering staff and employers are well co-ordinated. The use of a 'skill scan' ensures that college staff are aware of the training and assessment which will be carried out by each employer. An agreement is then drawn up to ensure that each trainee is assessed across the full range of the required NVQ competencies. A skill scan is used in most programme areas, but agreements with individual employers are not always drawn up. Animal care trainees receive no assessment in the workplace. Sports turf trainees at several golf courses are not assessed in the workplace in the first year of their programme. Employers receive inadequate guidance from the college on assessment in the workplace. Many trainees expect to receive assessment only during their off-the-job training. Most animal care employers are unaware of the specifications of the NVQ their trainees are following. In most programme areas, trainees are only assessed through direct observation of their competencies at college. Opportunities are missed to observe the trainees using the same competencies when they carry out actual tasks in the workplace. Equine studies trainees taken on by the college on modern apprenticeships are not assessed for NVQs. Trainees are prepared for examinations. Their training plans identify success in these examinations as one of the trainees' primary goals. The trainees are not subject to assessment of their specific competencies. Some trainees go on to work for NVQs as an additional part of their programme.

11. There are too few work-based assessors. The college is working to rectify this situation by offering training to workplace supervisors to enable them to become assessors. Employers and trainees are largely unaware of the range of methods for gathering evidence of trainees' competence in the workplace. For example, many trainees do not use photographs as a means of recording their work, and employers

and workplace supervisors do not provide witness testimonies of trainees' performance. Floristry and sports turf trainees do use photographic evidence for their portfolios. This good practice in generating evidence is, however, not shared across all programme areas. Some trainees make slow progress in gathering evidence for their portfolios and some pressure is put on them in the later stages of their training to ensure they complete their programme successfully. Some service-engineering employers produce detailed worksheets for trainees and these cover all requisite tasks. Supervisors then sign these when trainees have completed tasks to the required standard.

12. Most trainees are encouraged to begin their programmes in September at the beginning of the college's academic year, when staff and resources are fully available. However, trainees can begin their programme at any time of the year other than September. Those who do so, however, work with their employer on a full-time basis until the following September. It is only then that trainees receive full induction, an introduction to NVQs and off-the-job training on a weekly basis. Trainees say they are demotivated by having to wait until the following September before they can begin their training programmes properly. In the period between joining the programme and the start of the college's academic year in September, the trainees are given little explanation of what their training programme entails and they receive minimal support. Furthermore, during this period, opportunities are missed for assessing the trainees' work and for the trainees themselves to begin to gather evidence of their acquisition of skills. Most trainees are scheduled to complete their programmes in June at the end of the academic year. For many trainees, this completion date is unrealistic. Some trainees are demotivated by having to meet an inflexible deadline and they make slow progress. Other trainees attempt to meet the required deadline but are placed under undue pressure in trying to complete their portfolios by June.

13. Trainees on most modern apprenticeship programmes are working towards attainment in key skills. Trainees are aware of what key skills are, and how they may obtain evidence of their competence in using key skills. On the animal care, equine and sports turf programmes, trainees not only receive little assessment in the workplace, but they also miss opportunities to collect evidence of their acquisition of key skills through work-based tasks. Some equine modern apprenticeship trainees receive virtually no help in developing their key skills. Staff in the college are identifying ways in which key skills may be developed through a wide range of learning activities and tasks and they have produced learning materials on key skills.

## **GENERIC AREAS**

### **Equal opportunities**

### **Grade 3**

14. The college has an equal opportunities policy. There are procedures for supporting trainees with disabilities, and for dealing with harassment, and complaints

and grievances. A senior member of staff has responsibility for the promotion of equal opportunities. Standardised documentation is used for the recruitment, interviewing, induction and initial assessment of trainees. Equal opportunities statements appear on employers and work-providers' contracts. Equal opportunities reviews are undertaken annually with the TEC. Action plans for improving the promotion of equal opportunities are agreed and targets are set. Equality of opportunity is not a standard agenda item at staff meetings. Trainees attending off-the-job training are asked on a weekly basis about equal opportunities issues. The proportion of persons from minority ethnic groups in the area from which trainees are recruited is 6.3 per cent. Currently, one trainee is from a minority ethnic group. There are 22 female and 49 male trainees. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive equal opportunities policy and supporting procedures
- ◆ extensive staff development related to equal opportunities
- ◆ effective marketing to groups under-represented on training programmes

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of promotion of equal opportunities in marketing information and literature
- ◆ lack of promotion of equality of opportunity in the workplace
- ◆ no analysis of equal opportunities data

15. The college's equal opportunities policy is extensive, and covers all aspects of equal opportunities legislation. The policy contains a full statement of the college's commitment to the prevention of discrimination. Clear responsibilities for the promotion of equal opportunities in the organisation are specified in the policy. The policy and statement underpin the college's mission statement. Supporting policies and procedures are reviewed annually. Reports on equal opportunities are presented annually to the corporation board. These do not relate clearly and specifically to work-based training. In 1998-99, the college did not increase the number of trainees from minority ethnic groups. Through consultation with the TEC, the college has drawn up an action plan to increase recruitment from groups under-represented on training programmes. The college now markets its provision to persons in these groups. Advertising has been undertaken in specialist magazines and newspapers.

16. There are effective and extensive staff development activities related to equality opportunities. Staff development has covered a wide range of equal opportunities issues such as gender, ethnicity and discrimination. In addition, staff development helped to raise staff awareness about learning disorders, including asperger syndrome, autism, attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity. Senior managers are vigorous in their promotion of equal opportunities. The staff



handbooks available in hard copy and on the intranet, contain clear details of the equal opportunities policy. Equality opportunities issues are covered fully at trainees' induction.

17. The college's management has developed and implemented an initiative for inclusive learning. The initiative is aimed at helping and opening doors for trainees who lack confidence, are disaffected, or have a difficult personal history. A member of the co-ordinating team sees all trainees on a weekly basis. The trainees are firmly encouraged to discuss any equal opportunities problems they may have. They can also raise such problems during their progress reviews in the workplace. Trainees expressed their appreciation of the bus service the college provides for trainees from all parts of the TEC region.

18. There is little analysis of equal opportunities data to help management evaluate its promotion of equal opportunities. Little action planning for improving the promotion of equal opportunities takes place. The college's course information sheets and literature do not contain statements to the effect that applications are welcomed from persons in minority ethnic groups or people with any learning disability.

19. There is no formal review of trainees' awareness and understanding of equal opportunities issues. A new questionnaire for trainees has been introduced, which has a section on equal opportunities. Trainees are asked to identify any equal opportunity issues that concern them but some trainees have little understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity. The college's contract with employers and work-based providers includes a statement requiring them to ensure equality of opportunity for all trainees. Staff in some workplaces, however, have insufficient understanding of equal opportunities issues. Material of a sexist nature is on display in a number of work placements. In some instances, college staff who visit these placements do not take steps to encourage the placement providers to ensure that trainees work in an environment where equality of opportunity is respected and upheld. There is scope for increasing the number of female trainees on programmes where the trainees are nearly all male, such as those in agriculture and horticulture. Similarly, there is scope for recruiting male trainees to programmes where nearly all the trainees are female, such as the equine programme and the animal care and floristry programmes.

## **Trainee support**

## **Grade 2**

20. Trainees are recruited from the county of Berkshire and the borders of neighbouring counties. Recruitment is through the careers service, careers advice events, promotional literature and recommendations. Trainees attend an advisory interview, and there is an induction programme. Where the college has received prior information that a trainee requires learning support, a member of the study-skills team attends the interview. Initial assessment covers basic skills, key skills and vocational skills. Learning support, where identified, is arranged. Trainees

receive a written report on their progress at the end of each term. Careers guidance is provided through the local careers office. Assessment results indicate that there are six trainees who have no realistic prospect of achieving an approved qualification at NVQ level 2 standard. Five trainees have some prospect of achieving an approved qualification at this level, but require significant additional support and help. Inspectors agreed with the findings in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective initial assessment
- ◆ well-structured learning support systems
- ◆ wide range of resources for the provision of learning support

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ underdeveloped system of accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ no effective target-setting and action-planning during progress reviews

21. The college has a good range of assessment procedures to identify trainees' learning needs, including assessment of basic skills and diagnostic assessment of key skills. The college had developed its own assessment procedures. It has, however, recently purchased a programme that identifies the trainees' key skills level and learning needs more comprehensively. Across all subject areas, all trainees and employers are requested to complete a 'skill scan'. Trainees are required to describe how often they might carry out certain tasks. The skills they say they use are cross-referenced to the specifications of NVQ they intend working towards. Employers are requested to state which skills they will be able to help trainees to develop in the workplace. Findings from the total process are used to form the basis of trainees' individual learning plans. Trainees who are identified as needing learning support are assigned to an experienced member of staff within the study-skills support team. The support tutor provides learning support during visits to off-the-job training sessions and, occasionally, visits to training in the workplace. In the main, trainees receive support by attending learning support sessions in the learning resource centre. A clear record of all sessions is kept giving details of the subject matter covered, and the time and date of when the trainee attended. The learning support tutors work closely with the vocational teams to identify any specific skills that trainees need to develop.

22. The learning resource centre provides a wide range of good resources to aid trainees, including voice-recognition systems, text scanners which can speak back to the trainee, and mind-mapping software to develop understanding of a specific subject. Trainees' attendance record at these sessions is good. There has been a significant increase in the learning support given to trainees since the expansion of the study skills team in the last two years. Forty per cent of those trainees identified

by the careers service as having learning difficulties, have achieved an NVQ in the last year. Resources for additional learning support have been extended to the workplace. Employers' staff provide this through one-to-one sessions. They produce daily worksheets on pink or green paper in order that they may read more easily by dyslexic persons.

23. All trainees receive induction at the start of their course. Induction is usually undertaken by groups of trainees in July, August and September. A less comprehensive induction is available to trainees who join programmes outside these periods.

24. Although there is some identification and recognition of trainees' prior learning, this process has not been extended to all programmes. There are eight trainees who have attended previous full-time programmes at the college. Their prior learning and achievements are not taken into account in training plans. The college has failed to recognise the prior achievements of some trainees who have obtained national certificates or national diplomas, and has placed them on a training programme at an inappropriate level. A sports turf (green-keeping) trainee who has an NVQ in car maintenance at level 2, has not been given credit for prior achievement of the health and safety unit. Training co-ordinators carry out a review of trainees' progress and this occurs in the workplace. Since September, the off-the-job trainer is required to provide details of trainees' progress for the employer. The document for recording the outcomes of trainees' progress reviews include a space where targets relating to the achievement or coverage of NVQ units and elements may be stated. The training co-ordinators, however, fail to set the trainees appropriate targets.

### **Management of training**

### **Grade 3**

25. A manager leads the work-based training at the college. The manager's role is to co-ordinate the on- and off-the-job training, monitor trainees' progress and ensure compliance with the TEC contract. The work-based training team consists of one full-time member of staff responsible for general administration, and three part-time members of staff, two of whom visit trainees in the workplace, and one who is responsible for health and safety. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses, some of which did not relate to this generic area. Inspectors agreed with grade proposed in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good programme of staff development
- ◆ good progress in involving employers in training effectively

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ low priority given to work-based training

- ◆ weak target-setting and performance review across all programme areas

26. There is a good programme of staff development. Staff are appraised every six months. The training needs of staff are identified through the appraisal system. A structured training programme enables staff to achieve the skills they need. The main criterion for selecting new staff is acquisition of vocational skills in the subject area. The college requires staff who have no teaching or training qualification, to obtain one within two years. All staff who carry out training are observed on an annual basis. They receive structured feedback on their work and are given training if they need it. Through its good links with external organisations, the college is able to provide days for staff training on specialist topics such as aspects of equal opportunities and the features of different learning styles. The college has recognised, through the process of self-assessment, the need to improve links with employers. Two new members of staff have been appointed for this purpose. They are required to visit trainees and employers in the workplace, carry out reviews and health and safety checks, identify new and suitable new employers and improve communication between employers, trainees and work providers. Employers say that communications with the college have improved considerably in the last 18 months. Employers have expressed willingness to train staff to carry out assessment in the workplace. The college has recently established a forum for employers to improve its communication with them. Four 'employer communication mornings', when employers are invited to the college, have already taken place. These have been complemented by a communication project to improve communication with employers.

27. The college has been successful in developing a range of programmes. Many college staff have little understanding or awareness of the structure and requirements of work-based training. The training co-ordinator has difficulty in extracting and obtaining information from vocational staff on programmes and trainees. There is insufficient assessment of trainees carrying out work-based tasks in the workplace. Instead, work-based trainees are assessed through marking schemes and tests that do not necessarily relate to specific NVQ competencies. The trainees carry out assignments but they usually receive feedback on their work solely in the form of marks, rather than constructive comments on how they may improve their work. There is a target relating to the number of trainees who commence work-based training, which is set by the TEC. Although there is a global achievement target set with the TEC, there are no individual targets set for the different programme areas. There is insufficient monitoring of trainees' progress towards achievement of the NVQ. Assessors, support staff and employers do not exchange information about trainees' progress and performance. Liaison officers or employers are not shown the action plans for trainees which the off-the-job training assessors have produced.

## Quality assurance

## Grade 3

28. The college has a quality assurance policy. Quality assurance procedures cover all aspects of the college's provision. Action plans and performance targets are set and agreed with the TEC. The college has yet to achieve the Investors in People award, and is due to be assessed for this again in February 2000. Staff teams hold regular meetings when the quality of provision is discussed. A record is kept of these. It is clearly specified who is responsible for implementing improvements, and by when. Internal verification procedures are clearly defined. Inspectors considered some of the strengths stated in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice. They found a number of strengths the college had not identified.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive quality assurance policy
- ◆ good standardised quality assurance procedures and guidelines
- ◆ effective action by senior management on external verifiers' reports

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no annual business plan
- ◆ slow implementation of action plans
- ◆ lack of clearly identified quality assurance arrangements for work-based training

29. Quality assurance procedures are listed and numbered. Revisions to the procedures are not dated. The quality assurance procedures are set out in the staff handbook. They are also easily available to staff on the college's extensive intranet. All the quality assurance procedures are standardised. All staff use the same quality assurance literature, forms and processes. There is no system for ensuring that all employers and workplace supervisors are aware of the college's quality assurance procedures. The views of employers and trainees on the quality of provision are gathered through questionnaires. Trainees are asked to respond to questionnaires three times a year, at entry, to, midway through, and on leaving, their programme. The information contained in employers' responses to questionnaires is not detailed enough to assist the planning of improvements to provision. A senior manager co-ordinates action on the findings of external verifiers' reports. The reports, together with action plans and a timescale for their implementation, are circulated to all programme area managers. Senior managers then monitor progress in carrying out the recommended action.

30. All programme areas review courses and produce annual course appraisals are undertaken across all programme areas and a report. The programme team reviews the report, and an action plan is developed. The action plan identifies strengths and weaknesses, and specifies action to rectify the weaknesses. Action plans

accompany all minutes of meetings. Senior managers monitor progress towards completing the actions. Not all actions are dealt with effectively and on time. For example, the lack of training and assessment in key skills across all programme areas, identified as a weakness twelve months previously, has not been rectified effectively. External verifiers from awarding bodies have recently identified the lack of extensive work-based assessment across all programme areas as a weakness. The college has taken action to provide work-based assessment for floristry, horticulture and sports turf trainees. There is, however, virtually no work-based assessment on agriculture and animal care programmes. There are few work-based assessors in any of the programme areas. Some programme areas have been more effective than others in rectifying identified weaknesses in provision.

31. The work-based training programmes are an integral part of the college's overall provision. The college has, however, no business plan or operating statement. There are no detailed targets for training programmes, other than those required by the TEC. The TEC carries out thorough audits relating to finance, administration, and health and safety. Action is taken quickly and effectively on weaknesses identified through these audits. Following the TEC annual review, action plans for improving provision are drawn up. The plans are in response to findings by the TEC rather than any identification, by the college itself, of ways of improving training.

32. The college's quality assurance procedures are meant to encompass the work-based training programmes. In practice, however, they do not cover some aspects and areas of training. The procedures include effective systems for monitoring and reviewing provision but these do not focus sufficiently on work-based training. The college's curriculum development groups do not address issues specific to work-based training, such as, access, resources, modularisation, accreditation of prior learning, and assessment in the workplace. There are no recruitment or marketing procedures specific to training programmes. Some of the information in work-based training publicity literature was inappropriate, incorrect, or out of date. The quality assurance system does not include arrangements for checking that trainees are on a programme that suits their aptitude and meets their needs. Furthermore, it does not provide a means of making sure that on- and off-the-job training are properly co-ordinated and that trainees are assessed in the workplace. The floristry department has an excellent system for monitoring trainees' progress towards achievement of NVQ units, but this is not shared with staff in other occupational programme areas. For example, some trainees had been on one programme for 15 months and had only been assessed for two NVQ units.