



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 2000

# Furness College

## SUMMARY

Furness College offers good training in foundation for work and hair and beauty. The motor vehicle engineering programme is satisfactory. Although equality of opportunity is covered during trainees' induction, there is no follow-up action to strengthen trainees' awareness of the importance of equal opportunities. There are insufficient checks on employers' monitoring and understanding of equal opportunities. Trainees receive good pastoral support and have access to a wide range of support services in the colleges. Other aspects of trainee support, however, are unsatisfactory. There are no systematic arrangements for the initial assessment of trainees or for the accreditation of trainees' prior learning and experience. The frequency of trainees' progress reviews is not monitored closely. Key skills are not fully integrated with the content of programmes. There are some excellent relationships with external organisations. However, the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is underdeveloped. Health and safety checks of employers' premises have not been systematically recorded. Quality assurance measures are unsatisfactory, although significant changes have been introduced since the most recent self-assessment process.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	3
Hair & beauty	2
Foundation for work	2

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	4
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	4

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ effectiveness of self-assessment in leading to improvements in working practices
- ◆ excellent external partnerships
- ◆ responsiveness to feedback from trainees
- ◆ college's success in promoting training in the region
- ◆ good-quality off-the-job training sessions

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of systematic arrangements for initial assessment
- ◆ unsatisfactory process for trainees' progress reviews
- ◆ late introduction of key skills training in all occupational areas
- ◆ ineffective management-information systems
- ◆ lack of rigour in internal verification practices
- ◆ no written or standardised key training processes
- ◆ inadequate monitoring of TEC contracts

## INTRODUCTION

1. Furness College was established in 1901 as a college of science, technology and arts. It currently employs 437 academic and support staff. The college operates from three sites in the town of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Within the college, a separate team is responsible for the management of government-funded, work-based training programmes. The team is headed by a business development manager who reports to the director of curriculum. A unit team leader manages training and is supported by a New Deal personal adviser/work-placement officer and a health and safety officer. Staff from appropriate faculties within the college carry out off-the-job training, assessment and internal verification activities.
2. About 65 per cent of the college's work is funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). In the current academic year, there have been over 6,100 enrolments on full- and part-time courses. Around 8 per cent of the college's provision consists of higher education courses, provided in partnership with the college's associate university, Central Lancashire. Around 7 per cent of the college's work relates to contracts with the local training and enterprise council (TEC), Enterprise Cumbria.
3. At the time of the inspection, 122 trainees were in government-funded work-based training programmes. Thirty-nine trainees are endorsed as having special learning needs. Eighty-one trainees are employed. In addition, the college is a member of a consortium for delivery of the New Deal in Cumbria and has six clients on the employment option. Training is available in a range of occupational sectors. The occupational areas of engineering, hair and beauty and foundation for work were inspected. Trainee numbers were very small in some occupational sectors, such as construction, business administration, and hospitality, and were not inspected. The number of excluded trainees totals 15. Currently, 24 clients are on the full-time education and training option of the New Deal.
4. The district of Barrow-in-Furness has a population of 71,000 and is situated at the end of the Furness Peninsula in southwest Cumbria. It is further than any other town in Cumbria from the nearest international airport. The naval shipyard at Barrow has been a major provider of employment. Jobs in the shipyard have reduced from over 14,000 pre-1990 to around 4,500 in 1997. The employment rate in Barrow is 59.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 78.1 per cent. Currently, Barrow has the fourth highest unemployment rate in the Northwest. Barrow has the lowest proportion of employees in micro-businesses in Cumbria, at 6.4 per cent, and a business formation rate of 3.2 per cent which is below the national average.
5. Barrow is the 55<sup>th</sup> most deprived district in England and is one of 20 districts that experienced significant economic decline between 1991 and 1996. The mortality

rate in Barrow is 15 per cent above the national average. The proportion of persons in the local population from minority ethnic groups is less than 1 per cent.

6. While staying-on rates post-16 in Barrow have improved significantly over the last few years, they remain below both the national average and the average for Cumbria. In Barrow, 37 per cent stay on at school or enter sixth-form colleges. Twenty-eight per cent of school leavers enter further education colleges, while 20 per cent gain a job or begin work-based training programmes. Nine per cent of young people become unemployed and the destinations of the remaining 6 per cent are unknown. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was around 37 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

7. Since the FEFC inspection in 1996, Furness College has undergone three self-assessment cycles. It is the college's eventual aim that one self-assessment process, report and action plan will meet the requirements of both FEFC and Training Standards Council (TSC) inspectorates. However, it was felt necessary to produce separate reports for this inspection. The process has involved all relevant staff, working in teams, and supported by the 'quality unit'. Personnel from the college management team and appropriate managers and staff have attended self-assessment training sessions held by Enterprise Cumbria. They have also attended other related training and seminar events outside the county. Each programme and unit team has produced its own self-assessment report following guidelines based on *Raising the Standard*. Each area report was by a panel comprising the principal or vice principal, another member of the college management team, academic board members, governors and other colleagues. The most recent report was submitted to Enterprise Cumbria in November 1999. At the time of the inspection, a team from the FEFC was also carrying out its own inspection of the college's provision.

8. A team of five TSC inspectors spent a total of 15 days at the college in January 2000. Inspectors visited 12 employers, and interviewed 33 trainees and 12 workplace supervisors. They also interviewed 24 teaching, management and training support staff. They looked at 23 trainees' portfolios, 32 trainees' files, assessment records of trainees' progress reviews and external verifiers' reports. Inspectors observed two assessment and six training sessions.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering			1			1
Hair and Beauty	2		1			3
Foundation for Work	1	1				2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering

### Grade 3

9. There are 45 trainees on motor vehicle NVQ programmes, comprising 29 modern apprentices, nine national trainees and seven on other youth training programmes. In addition, there are three New Deal clients working towards an NVQ. All modern apprentices and other trainees are employed. All 29 modern apprentice trainees are working towards NVQs at level 3, nine national trainees are working towards NVQs at level 2, and of the seven other trainees, six are working towards NVQs at level 2 and one towards an NVQ at level 1. The motor vehicle

team provides day-release and off-the-job training at the Channelside campus, where the premises are purpose-built and have been equipped to meet the needs of industry and NVQ standards. Trainees attend college for one day per week for off-the-job training and theory sessions. College staff are responsible for carrying out assessment and internal verification and for supervising trainees' portfolio building. They are qualified as assessors and have appropriate vocational qualifications. Training staff are vocationally qualified as trainers and assessors. Two staff are qualified to accredit trainees' prior learning and experience. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that identified in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ well-written course policies and procedures
- ◆ effective introduction to NVQ programmes for trainees
- ◆ strengthening of workshop resources through good links with employers

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ little assessment to enable trainees to obtain NVQ units progressively
- ◆ trainees' poor management of portfolios
- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates

10. Course teams have well-written policies and procedures for the management of the NVQ programmes. Schemes of work, lesson plans and off-the-job training plans are detailed and well developed. Staff work as a team and have a formal meeting once a term. There is daily informal contact between staff in the staff room. Meetings are minuted and action plans developed from the minutes. The course team identifies good practice within the motor vehicle area and shares this with all other motor vehicle staff. Recent procedures have been established whereby the director of teaching and learning is kept informed of good practice in an occupational area. It is the responsibility of the 'good practice co-ordinator' in the college to disseminate details of good practice throughout the college.

11. Trainees are recruited to the motor vehicle programme through the careers service and some apply directly to the college. Some trainees join the programme after completing a full-time motor vehicle course leading to an NVQ at level 1. Other trainees learnt about the programme at school when they were on a link course with the college. The college staff are successful in finding work placements for trainees. Some trainees, through previous work taster programmes and personal connections within the motor vehicle industry, obtain placements on their own initiative. Applicants for the training programme are interviewed, undergo initial assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills, and take a test to ascertain their aptitude for motor vehicle work.

12. The motor vehicle section of the college has developed strong links with local employers. Employers are invited to motor vehicle team meetings and are encouraged to help with the planning of training. Local firms have given, or have

sold at nominal sums, resources to the college and these have helped to ensure that the trainees use up-to-date equipment. The motor vehicle workshops are adequately resourced, well maintained and kept in a clean condition. There are high maintenance standards within the department. On completion of off-the-job training in a workshop, trainees and trainers devote the last 15 minutes of the activity to a question-and-answer session on the exercise carried out. This reinforces the practical learning earlier in the session.

13. NVQ assessment is mainly carried out through use of job cards and witness testimony from the employer or his nominee. Witness testimonies are signed and held in the trainees' files. Assessments are not carried out on a continuous basis. Trainees' achievement of NVQ units is not recorded in their portfolios or in the records of the motor vehicle department. Reviews of trainees' progress are usually carried out every 13 weeks. During the reviews, trainees' individual training plans are not updated to show details of their progress. They are unclear about their short-term and medium-term targets and they are not aware of the extent of their progress and attainment.

14. Trainees lack skills in building well-presented portfolios. Portfolios consist of job cards and witness testimonies of trainees' achievement of requisite NVQ competencies but these are not substantiated by sufficient evidence. At college, all trainees are expected to work at the same pace. Insufficient account is taken of the needs and aptitude of the individual trainees. NVQ training in the workplace is not planned systematically. Opportunities for work-based assessment are missed, and links between on- and off-the-job training are weak.

15. Employers do not fully understand the purpose of the individual training plan. The college keeps its own version of an individual training plan in the trainees' files. This is insufficiently detailed and it is not updated in the light of trainees' progress and changes to the training programme.

16. Internal verification is recorded in course team files and meets the requirements of awarding bodies and their external verifiers. Internal verification is not carried out progressively and only takes place towards the end of the level 3 NVQ programme. Dates when internal verification took place are not always recorded systematically. Some members of staff were unsure of the scope of internal verification.

17. The self-assessment report highlighted that trainees' achievement and retention rates were below the national average and the evidence supplied confirmed this. Trainees on the modern apprenticeship programme are not subject to continuous assessment. Most of their assessment, and its internal verification, take place towards the end of the trainees' final year. Similarly, assessment for NVQ level 2 is carried out at the same time. Trainees are not, therefore, credited with NVQ units until they are near the end of their programmes. Key skills are not fully integrated with the content of the motor vehicle programme. Trainees miss opportunities to gather evidence of their attainment of key skills in the workplace. They only gather evidence of their competency in key skills towards the end of their programme and

it is derived from their performance in practical exercises and theory work during off-the-job training. In the past three years, the trainees' achievement rates have declined. In 1996-97, all trainees achieved their NVQs. In 1997-98, the achievement rate fell to 75 per cent and in 1998-99 it decreased further to 44 per cent.

### **Hair & beauty**

### **Grade 2**

18. There are 21 trainees on hairdressing programmes. Eighteen trainees are working towards an NVQ in hairdressing at level 2 and three are working towards NVQ at level 3. There are seven modern apprentices, five national trainees and nine on other youth training programmes. They attend off-the-job training at the college on one day a week and the rest of their time is spent in salon placements. Trainees initially apply to join programmes directly, or are referred by employers. They learn about the programmes through careers conventions and the careers service. After completing an application form, trainees are interviewed by a hair and beauty tutor and matched to local salon vacancies or found a salon placement by the college. An initial assessment of the applicant's basic skills is carried out and an individual training plan is agreed. An induction programme follows. All trainees are employed. The programme is managed and carried out by a programme manager and three trainer/assessors. The trainer/assessors also visit the trainees in their salon placements to carry out quarterly progress reviews. Trainees also receive a tutorial session in the college each term. The off-the-job training consists of both practical and theory sessions with key skills training in information technology and guidance on building portfolios. Assessment takes place mainly at the college. Inspectors agreed with the grade in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good progression for most trainees
- ◆ realistic working environment in college
- ◆ trainees' career prospects enhanced through acquisition of additional qualifications
- ◆ good and varied off-the-job training sessions
- ◆ high standard of trainees' portfolios

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ missed opportunities for workplace assessment
- ◆ failure to keep employers systematically updated about trainees' progress
- ◆ trainees' poor retention rates

19. Trainees attend off-the-job training on one day each week. The programme is well planned and includes theory sessions, information technology key skills training, practical workshops, demonstrations and guidance on building portfolios. The

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*This is an example of good practice in ensuring that key skills training is an integral part of programmes. Some trainers are qualified to teach not only hairdressing but key skills as well. They provide training in the key skill of information technology within a clear occupational context. The trainees recognise the relevance of their training in this key skill and are motivated to succeed.*

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*The NVQ level 3 trainees offer coaching in practical skills to NVQ level 2 trainees in an integrated practical session. They also contribute to theory sessions and gain level 3 units in presentation and assessment skills.*

information technology sessions are carefully planned and carried out by the hairdressing trainers qualified in information technology who give the trainees hairdressing-related assignments. The evidence which trainees produce meets both the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) qualification and information technology key skills level 1 requirements. The theory sessions are well planned. Trainees carry out a varied range of activities, which they find motivating, stimulating and demanding. Trainees take a keen interest in their training and work with enthusiasm. Both staff and trainees are able to keep up to date with new products and changing techniques by attendance at manufacturers' seminars. Manufacturers' technical seminars are also included to ensure that both staff and trainees are kept up to date with new products and changing techniques.

20. The college's salon provides trainees with a realistic working environment where they can develop their skills and have them assessed through work on clients. Clients book appointments through a central reception facility and are allocated on arrival to trainees, according to their assessment needs. Trainees work on reception on a rota basis, where they are assessed in their reception skills. Some salon equipment needs to be replaced. The college plans to relocate its hairdressing facilities to new premises in the near future.

21. On four days each week, trainees attend their salon placements, where employers provide on-the-job training. Some salon placements are good and offer planned on-the-job training ranging from supervised work on clients to more structured training sessions. Employers report that they are not frequently updated on their trainees' progress and rely mainly on trainees' own accounts of progress made at the college.

22. There are missed opportunities for assessment in the workplace, especially where trainees participate in training sessions or have their own clientele in their salons. Although employers and trainees are occasionally requested to complete client consultation sheets relating to prescribed activities in their salons, they are not used as a form of evidence for the purposes of NVQ assessment. The college has encouraged salon owners to become qualified assessors and has offered assessor training. It has also established a salon owners' review group which meets regularly to discuss programmes. Employers are invited to attend meetings of the group where their trainees' progress can be discussed informally. Only four employers attend regularly. There is one salon with a qualified work-based assessor who currently does not assess trainees.

23. Trainees make good progress on their programmes. All agree on an individual training plan that allows one year for achievement of an NVQ at level 1, two years for level 2 and a further year for level 3. Most trainees achieve their level 1 qualification within their first 10 months and level 2 within 20 months. Some have transferred to modern apprenticeship programmes during their second year and progressed work for NVQ level 3 over a further 12 months.

24. Trainees begin working on clients within the first month of training and are assessed against NVQ standards. Trainees are unfamiliar with their individual

training plans. They do not possess a copy and the plans are not referred to during progress reviews. Together with their assessors, trainees monitor their progress through all aspects of their programmes including practical activities and theory work assignments. They are aware of the extent of their progress towards their qualifications and are familiar with the NVQ assessment process. Trainees' progress is discussed at both quarterly reviews in their salons, which involves their employers, and also at the termly individual tutorial sessions in college. Decisions taken at progress reviews are not recorded with consistent thoroughness. Some records of progress reviews include clear targets for the achievement of NVQ units while others are more general and less detailed.

25. Many trainees undertake work for additional qualifications relevant to the industry. These include basic information technology and NVQ units in men's hairdressing, shaving, facial massage, beauty therapy and customer service. One third year trainee is undertaking the full NVQ at level 2 in beauty therapy simultaneously with the NVQ at level 3 in hairdressing. Trainees also participate in local fashion shows and competition work, their participation in which generates evidence which they include in their portfolios.

26. First-year trainees are on either national traineeship or modern apprenticeship programmes. The second and third year trainees are on a combination of modern apprenticeship and other youth programmes where there is no key skills requirement. All trainees are encouraged to undertake information technology training. More recently, training in communication and application of number has been introduced into the programme. As yet, methods of assessing trainees' key skills through their occupational tasks are not fully developed. There is little cross-referencing of evidence gathered for the purposes of NVQ assessment to key skills specifications. Trainees are encouraged to use the key skills of communication and application of number when completing the client consultation sheets. Trainees ask clients questions and record replies; they also calculate percentages and ratios related to the use of chemicals.

27. The standard of trainees' practical work is appropriate for the NVQ level. Portfolios of evidence are well constructed. They contain good evidence, well referenced to the NVQ specifications. Until recently, internal verification has been carried out sporadically. New schedules for internal verification have been introduced with the aim of making the internal verification process more rigorous. Internal assessment is now carried out more regularly and the samples of work in portfolios that the verifiers check have been increased. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these new arrangements.

28. In recent years, the number of trainees starting programmes has increased. The number of early leavers has fallen over the past two years. In 1998-99, 45 per cent of trainees left the programme early, compared with 20 per cent during 1999-2000. During 1997-98, 53 per cent of trainees who completed their programmes achieved their qualifications, compared with 84 per cent in 1998-99.

## Foundation for work

## Grade 2

29. Most trainees are referred from the careers service although some come after being on the school link programme run by the college or local training providers. Many trainees have behavioural problems. At the time of inspection, there were 41 trainees following the work skills course. The work skill programme consists of work experience and vocational training and lasts up to two years. Most trainees start in September but they can start at any time. Most trainees are working towards numberpower and wordpower qualifications at entry level and level 1. Eight trainees are working towards an NVQ in distributive operations at level 1 and one trainee is working towards an NVQ in brickwork at level 1. Trainees may also work towards an NVQ in motor vehicle maintenance at level 1. All trainees work towards the basic food hygiene certificate and develop computer literacy and information technology and life skills. Trainees have the opportunity to work towards other qualifications. Vocational modules are offered in areas such as hairdressing, care, plumbing, painting and decorating, and computers and there is a health and safety module. In the first year, the trainees' placement is usually between one to three days each week. In the second year, it may be for up to four days each week. All but one of the 14 second-year trainees are on placement. Six of the first-year trainees have a placement. There is a wide range of employers in terms of size and occupational area. The team leader's post for this programme area is currently vacant. The trainers are all vocationally qualified. They are all qualified assessors but have no qualifications in teaching basic skills. There is a designated room for the teaching of life skills. Training also takes place in specialist workshops. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths and with one of the weaknesses stated in the self-assessment report. They found both strength and weaknesses the college had not identified and agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good off-the-job training sessions
- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ opportunities for trainees to increase their employability by working towards additional qualifications
- ◆ planning of training to meet trainees' individual needs
- ◆ trainees' success in obtaining jobs

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ some trainees' slow progress
- ◆ trainees' poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ missed opportunities for workplace assessment

30. Off-the-job training sessions are taken by tutors with a variety of occupational experience who engage trainees in imaginative and varied activities. Trainees develop a wide range of skills through projects and assignments. Trainees participate fully in the sessions and complete a learning log at the end of them. The session plans are detailed and specify how activities relate to NVQ units and the methods of assessment to be used. Tutors are regularly observed and assessed against set criteria and they are given feedback on their performance. Assessments are carried out well. The report of the external verifier for the wordpower and numberpower awards makes special reference to the imaginative and wide-ranging assessment activities. In one session, trainees demonstrated their ability to meet the requirements of a unit in numberpower through the use of key skills in information technology which were, in themselves, a valuable form of life skill. Vocational tutors are now involved in the design of wordpower and numberpower exercises.

31. All trainees have work placements arranged for them which meet their stated preferences. If trainees request a change of placement, they are responded to quickly and effectively. The placements are organisations with a commitment to training. At all the placements, the workplace supervisors have knowledge and understanding of the NVQ process and, where relevant, knowledge of the NVQ standards the trainee is working towards. Some supervisors are qualified assessors. One supervisor, in particular, ensures that the training at the workplace is relevant to the training provided in the college. The placements meet trainees' needs and placement staff support trainees who encounter problems. Employers are extremely happy with communications and arrangements with the college over placements. They are invited to a yearly meeting of placement providers at the college. All trainers are responsible for finding new placement providers.

32. Trainees work towards a wide range of qualifications. They develop general and specific occupational skills and carry out relevant and appropriate assignments. They have a wide choice of occupational modules, some of which lead to certification. Trainees can cover all the options on offer or concentrate on a few. Some trainees who are ready for the workplace take up a work placement at which point off-the-job training relevant to their work-based tasks is arranged for them. Emphasis is placed on the development of team working skills and life skills. Outside speakers take sessions on such issues as family planning, drug abuse, youth justice and career planning. Trainees speak very positively about their programme and are able easily to identify the skills they feel they are developing.

33. The outcomes of the trainees' initial interviews and tests are taken into account when drawing up their initial training programme. In addition, any previous knowledge of the trainees gained, for example, through the schools link programme, is taken into account. The trainees' performance in initial tests determines whether they work towards the wordpower or numberpower qualification at entry level or level 1. One trainee with a grade D in GSCE mathematics was given the opportunity to attend classes to improve her grade, in order to meet the entry requirements for her preferred occupation. Trainees take up placements when they are ready for them. In the first year, the time trainees spend at a placement can vary considerably. Although there is a structured timetable for the work skills

programme, the trainees can pick and mix particular modules to reflect their preferences and needs. All aspects of the trainees' needs are taken into account during their training. There are individual and group tutorials during which trainees can discuss any issues that may affect their programme. Parents are regularly invited to discuss trainees' progress and staff visit a trainee's home if necessary. Trainees' achievements are entered in a national record of achievement.

34. Trainees take up to two years to achieve their wordpower or numberpower qualification. During the first year they develop and practise skills and some assessment is carried out. In the second year, they develop portfolio-building skills and undertake more assessed work. Little assessment in the workplace takes place. There are plans, however, to introduce more work-based assessment. Trainees miss opportunities to collect evidence in the workplace for their numberpower and wordpower portfolios. Some trainees make slow progress towards achievement of their wordpower and numberpower awards. They rarely know the level they are working towards or the extent of coverage of their units. Some trainees who spend several months working towards achievement of these awards do not ultimately obtain them. They are offered full-time employment at their work placement and are then unable to attend college to complete work for wordpower and numberpower awards.

35. The proportion of early leavers is high at 74 per cent although retention rates have risen over the last three years. The percentage of those leaving with NVQs has remained steady over the last two years, at 25 per cent. This proportion does not include those who achieved qualifications such as numberpower and wordpower. There is no systematic analysis of data on early leavers. Trainers report that trainees leave for a variety of reasons.

36. Employers are not given a written training plan for trainees on work placements. College staff, however, discuss the trainees' needs with employers before the trainees take up their placements. Workplace supervisors understand the arrangements for assessment for the NVQ in distributive operations at level 1 and how they can support this process. Some workplace supervisors are qualified assessors but their expertise has not been utilised by the college.

37. Trainees are visited regularly at the workplace. Workplace supervisors take part in the trainees' progress reviews. There is no set procedure for the reviews. Recording of reviews is often superficial, and, in some cases, unclear. Trainees sign a record of their review but keep no copy of it. During the reviews trainees are set few clear targets and their progress towards reaching targets set previously is not reviewed.

38. Most trainees are unable to recall what was in their individual training plans and are uncertain what the purpose of the plans was. Many plans contain little more than a statement of the qualifications to be achieved and the dates by which they must be obtained.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

### Grade 3

39. The college has a published policy, which is stated in the student and staff handbooks. There is a college charter, a copy of which is issued to all trainees at induction. The promotion of equal opportunities is a feature of the college's strategic plan and in the services that it provides. The college encourages employment of people with disabilities and advertises all vacancies accordingly. Currently, less than 1 per cent of staff have a disclosed disability and less than 1 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Thirty-seven per cent of the total staff are male and 63 per cent are female. Sixty-five per cent of all managers are male and 35 per cent are female. There are no trainees from minority ethnic groups. Sixty-nine per cent of TEC-funded trainees are male and 31 per cent are female. On engineering programmes, all trainees are male. On hairdressing programmes, all trainees are female. On the foundation for work programme, 70 per cent of trainees are male and 30 per cent are female. Eleven per cent of trainees have disabilities. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses stated in the self-assessment report but they found others the college had not identified. They agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive and well-written equal opportunities policy and procedures
- ◆ effective equal opportunities panel
- ◆ systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of the college charter

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no systematic monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ no action to strengthen trainees and employers' understanding of equal opportunities
- ◆ no promotion of equality of opportunity in some marketing literature

40. Furness college has a well-written equal opportunities policy, which encompasses all aspects of equality of opportunity, for both college staff and students. This is summarised in a statement, which appears in the staff and student handbooks, and an abbreviated version is given to trainees during induction. The procedures cover how to recognise and deal with the incidence of discrimination, harassment, physical or sexual abuse, disability and gender stereotyping. The complaints procedure and recording system are also used to good effect. The student charter also includes a statement of the college's commitment to guarantee all students and trainees' equality of opportunity. All college students were sent an evaluation form on which to provide feedback on the colleges services. This form referred back to the promises made in the charter and asked students to comment on the level of support they were receiving and whether these promises were being

kept. The feedback was analysed and improvements were made to college services as a result.

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*Trainees who are on foundation for work programmes working towards an NVQ in distributive operations at level 1, have been given a checklist and background understanding of equal opportunities issues which they may come across in the retail trade. When dealing with customers, trainees are able to recognise the various barriers, which the general public may face when they are shopping. They learn, for example, how to deal with elderly disabled people.*

41. The college staff, at all levels, demonstrate a strong commitment to upholding equal opportunities and care is taken to treat all trainees as equal. The college promotes equality of opportunity through its staffing arrangements by employing female staff in occupational areas where men have been in the majority, and vice versa. For example, there are two female tutors in the construction programme area, a female motor vehicle lecturer and a male tutor on the early years childcare programme. Although funding for training in equal opportunities is available to staff through staff development, few staff members have received such training and in key areas such as student services, no staff have received any. Having said that, 20 key front line staff have attended an internal session on inclusive learning and widening participation. The Furness College bulletin has an equal opportunities section, which contains interesting information presented in a reader-friendly style.

42. There is an equal opportunities panel group, which meets regularly and is chaired by the college principal. The group membership includes representatives from student support, senior management, student services, the outreach manager, the team leader for resources, construction and social care lecturers, two student representatives and the equal opportunities co-ordinator. The newly appointed co-ordinator has recently collected feedback from relevant staff on the current position of equal opportunities within the college. 'Milestones' have now been developed for each area to work towards although action to achieve them has yet to be fully implemented. An action plan has been developed for the monitoring and improvement of the promotion of equal opportunities in the college. Although monitoring is taking place, it is not systematic and has not led to any improvements. The effectiveness of this monitoring has not been reviewed. There are no systematic arrangements for collecting and analysing data relating to equal opportunities, in order to identify trends that may be taken into account when planning improvements in the promotion of equality of opportunity.

43. When trainees attend off-the-job training sessions at the college, they receive the same extent of help and support in relation to equal opportunities as full-time students. There are, however, no procedures to ensure that equality of opportunity is upheld for trainees in the workplace. There is no monitoring of the employers' equal opportunity policies to make sure that they are in existence and are adequately comprehensive. There is no attempt to check the employers' understanding of equal opportunities or their responsibility to the trainee in this respect. They do not necessarily receive a copy of the college's policy and procedures. Similarly, although equal opportunities awareness is included in the trainees' induction, there are no systematic arrangements for strengthening it during the remainder of the trainees' programme. Some trainees, particularly those who have been on the programme for some time, have a poor understanding of issues related to equal opportunities.

44. The college produces marketing literature in the form of information leaflets and course brochures, aimed at potential students and trainees. Neither refer to the

college's arrangements for promoting equal opportunities. A small number of leaflets contain the statement that the college is an equal opportunity employer. The glossy brochure promoting, for example, hairdressing courses and the modern apprenticeship and national traineeship schemes, contains photographs of young people that reinforce gender stereotyping. The publicity material does little to counter the popular but erroneous notion that hairdressing is a profession for women and construction work is only for men. Although marketing and teaching staff are committed to upholding open access to training programmes and welcome applications from men and women for any occupational area, there is no systematic monitoring of the extent to which inclusivity is promoted through all aspects of provision, including the college's marketing literature.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 4**

45. The college charter contains a statement of commitment to supporting trainees and this is prominently displayed at the entrance to the college and in the students' handbook. Trainees are referred to training programmes from a variety of sources, primarily through the local careers advisory service. There is a schools liaison officer who offers objective advice to school leavers. All prospective trainees are offered an interview with an admissions officer to assist them in choosing an occupational area. College staff interview trainees as part of the initial process. On their first attendance day at college, trainees undergo a full day of induction to the college. A basic skills test in numeracy and literacy is given to all trainees at this time. Trainees with learning difficulties receive additional support. On the first day of their course, trainees undergo a further induction associated with their relevant discipline. Trainees are found a suitable work placement provided they are not already employed. Trainees receive off-the-job training in college by occupationally qualified trainers, who also carry out assessments. Periodically, trainees have their progress reviewed by their trainer. Trainees have access to all the support services in the college. They can use the college's learning centre and consult the college's counsellors and careers guidance personnel. Inspectors identified weaknesses in this generic area that the college had failed to identify and they awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good support for trainees with learning difficulties
- ◆ accessibility of a wide range of support services in college to trainees
- ◆ comprehensive induction to college for most trainees

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of clarity over delegation of responsibility for trainee support
- ◆ insufficiently comprehensive initial assessment
- ◆ ineffective use of individual training plans

- ◆ unsatisfactory process for reviewing trainees' progress
- ◆ little monitoring of trainees' induction to the workplace

46. The college offers a comprehensive range of additional support facilities for trainees with learning difficulties. The trainees themselves, or their course tutor, identify that they need additional support. The trainee is then referred to the additional support team, which is part of the student services unit. The college offers mathematics, English and study skills workshops. The college also has specialist staff and equipment for those trainees whose learning may be affected by physical disabilities. There are two laptop computers for use by trainees with dyslexia and a personal computer, which incorporates a Braille facility. Course information and teaching materials are adapted by staff to help trainees who face barriers to learning such as dyslexia, poor vision and hearing impairment.

47. In addition to providing extra support for learning, the student services unit also includes the student support facility. Student support staff are available throughout the whole year to help trainees' with their problems or concerns. Contact with the support facility is by self-referral or through the trainees' course tutor. There is also a qualified student counsellor, a qualified mental health worker and a college chaplain, to provide help and guidance with problems of a personal nature. A foundation trainee, who had not submitted her time sheet and, therefore, had not been paid her training allowance, contacted the student support staff on the last day of term before Christmas. The trainee was given an emergency allocation from the college hardship fund to be repaid at a later date. She also received counselling and advice on her responsibility for submitting time sheets on time and her financial situation was discussed with her.

48. Trainees on all programmes receive regular tutorials. Course tutors meet trainees in a group or on a one-to-one basis. In tutorials support is given to trainees who may be experiencing difficulties with their programme of study. There are guidelines for conducting tutorials. Some tutors are more effective than others in responding to trainees' needs and trainees find that some tutorials are not particularly useful. The relationships between course tutors, specialist support staff and the trainees are excellent and staff are committed to the welfare of their trainees.

49. Although the range of support services available to the trainees is well publicised, on notice boards, in information leaflets and during induction, the college does not record, specifically, the numbers or names of the trainees who use them. The records refer to whole course groups only. Thus it is difficult for the college to monitor the extent to which trainees use the services, particularly when trainees are at their workplace rather than college.

50. Most trainees receive an induction on their first day at college. This is in two parts. The first is an introduction into the college, the college facilities and the various college policies and procedures. Induction covers health and safety information, equal opportunities awareness and grievance and appeals procedures.

The trainees are provided with a student diary and handbook, which contains summaries of these policies and procedures. There is an induction checklist of all the topics which have been covered with each trainee. The second part of the induction is carried out by the course tutors and introduces the trainees to the structure and content of their chosen NVQ programme. Trainees who start their programmes at the beginning of the college year remember their induction as a valuable introduction to the college and the course. Trainees who enrol at other times in the college year, often find the induction process less satisfactory and they receive a condensed version of the full induction programme from the course tutor on a one-to-one basis. In some cases, the one-to-one session lasts for only 20 minutes. Many trainees do not receive the induction until they are well into the training programme. One hairdressing trainee did not receive any induction until she had been on the programme for three months. Trainees who received their induction late do not regard it as valuable or memorable.

51. The college business development manager has overall responsibility for the TEC contract. The programme course trainers carry out reviews of trainees' progress, assessments and visits to the trainees in the workplace. The contract manager has no managerial authority over the course tutors although most of the responsibility for trainee support lies with them. There are no systematic arrangements for ensuring assessments and progress reviews are carried out according to contractual requirements or that they are sufficiently rigorous. Neither is there any system to enable trainers to inform the manager of any significant trainee support issues. The retention rates on the TEC-funded programmes are poor. There is no monitoring of the extent to which course tutors liaise with employers or visit trainees in the workplace. While they are given guidance on support for all college students, staff who teach on training programmes are not given guidance on what is expected of them in providing support specifically for trainees.

52. Four clients are currently following the New Deal employment option. The provision of support for clients is managed effectively by the New Deal co-ordinator.

53. Although trainees receive carefully planned induction into the college, there is no formal procedure for inducting trainees to the workplace. Many trainees receive only a brief induction by the employer. Some are inducted by the course tutors and others have no induction to the workplace at all. The induction process is not recorded or monitored. The manager is not aware whether induction to the workplace has been carried out or if it has been effective.

54. There is a process of initial assessment, which trainees undergo during the college induction or at the start of their programme. The basic skills tests are used to assess trainees' numeracy and communication skills. The results of these tests are taken into account in trainees' individual training plans and are used as a means of identifying trainees' needs for additional learning support. The assessments are conducted and marked by the course tutors. The motor vehicle section carries out an assessment of trainees' occupational skills during induction. The effectiveness of

the initial assessment process is not monitored and the manager is not informed of trainees' results or needs for additional support. There is no systematic assessment of trainees' key skills. The college is piloting key skills assessment, using computer software, with full-time students, but this does not extend to TEC-funded trainees. There is little accreditation of trainees' prior learning. The college has a procedure for the accreditation of prior learning. Where this has been used, for example, with motor vehicle trainees, accreditation documents have not been completed properly and trainees' prior experience has not been recorded. One hairdressing trainee worked for a considerable time, before joining the programme, as a weekend employee in a hairdressing salon. This experience was not taken into account in the preparation of her training plan.

55. The course trainers prepare individual training plans. In some cases, trainees are given an 'individual participation plan', which is a TEC document that preceded the current individual training plan. The use, and methods, of recording individual training plans have not been standardised across occupational areas. In hairdressing, for example, the plans are kept in a separate folder and held by the trainers. The trainees do not have a copy of their plan and some could not remember what was in it. The plans are used as working documents, however, and are updated during trainees' progress reviews, when appropriate. In the motor vehicle section, individual participation plans are kept in each trainee's file but are not updated to record changes to the training programme or achievements. Trainees on foundation programmes have little understanding of their individual participation plan.

56. Course trainers carry out reviews of trainees' progress. In some instances, and in some occupational areas, the reviews are not carried out effectively or often enough. Some trainees receive their reviews in the workplace. For others they take place in college when they attend for day-release training. In some instances, the record of the review is signed by the employer but some employers are not involved in progress reviews at all. The amount of detail in the records of reviews varies considerably and some records are perfunctory and superficial. The records relating to two reviews of the progress of a hairdressing trainee have been signed by the trainer and employer even though the trainee in question was not present during reviews. The review process is not consistent or systematic across all occupational areas. There are no set procedures for carrying out reviews and no arrangements for monitoring their content and frequency.

57. The college management has identified many of the weaknesses in the management and recording of trainee support. Action plans to rectify these have been developed, as part of the self-assessment process.

### **Management of training**

### **Grade 4**

58. The college is managed through the college management team, comprising the principal, vice principal and five directors, supported by middle managers including programme and unit team leaders. A business development manager is responsible

for the co-ordination of TEC-funded work-based training and the New Deal. Off-the-job training sessions take place in the appropriate curriculum area, each of which has a programme team leader and course trainers. Each programme team leader reports directly to faculty heads who are members of the college management team. At the beginning of each TEC contract year, the business development manager disseminates contract targets to the occupational curriculum trainers. The personnel unit of the college is ultimately responsible for all staff recruitment, selection and training, although the faculty heads have primary influence on the choice of staff. The college was recognised as an Investor in People in December 1998. A computerised management-information system is used to provide data required under the terms of the contracts. There is a clear management structure. Formal policies and procedures are communicated to staff throughout the organisation by a variety of methods. Inspectors agreed with two of the three strengths stated in the self-assessment report. They found both strengths and weaknesses the college had not identified and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive staff policies and procedures
- ◆ some effective communication channels
- ◆ well-developed relationships with external organisations

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ under-developed management-information systems
- ◆ late integration of key skills with vocational content on all programmes
- ◆ insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ no systematic arrangements for informing employers of college policies, strategies and targets
- ◆ unclear job roles and responsibilities for trainers and assessors

59. Recruitment, selection, induction, training and development of staff are carried out in accordance with the college's staffing policies and procedures. Staffing procedures comply with current legislation and ensure all staff are treated fairly. All staff understand and support the college's staffing. Each member of staff has a personal development plan. This is reviewed every six months.

60. There is a comprehensive staff training and staff development policy. All staff are encouraged to participate in training and development. All training staff are expected to hold nationally recognised training awards. Staff attend both internal and external training courses. In their reports, however, external verifiers have recorded their concern at the length of time some staff have been working towards internal verifier and assessor awards.

61. There are sound meeting arrangements for staff. Senior management meetings are held regularly. Staff have quarterly performance review meetings with

Enterprise Cumbria's staff. In most cases, internal and external lines of communication are clear. A variety of methods are used to disseminate information within the organisation. Senior management use electronic communications methods to keep staff informed of key issues in the college. The principal issues a weekly bulletin to all staff. The college has an internet web site and issues a publication called the Furness College News.

62. Staff maintain good contacts with external partners. The college plays an important role in the local training infrastructure. The board of governors includes key representatives from public and private organisations in the area. The college plays an important part in developing education and training opportunities with local partners such as schools, the careers service and the Employment Service. Senior management also takes part in regional and national activities and events related to the development of training and lifelong learning. Through its collaboration with employers on special projects, the college has been able to widen the range of work placements available to trainees. There is an innovative technology centre for updating the skills of local small business employees. The college plays a key role in the community through its involvement in community regeneration projects.

63. Management-information systems are ineffective. There is no standardised process for monitoring trainees' progress systematically. Each trainer has his or her own system for monitoring trainees' progress. Trainers provide the business manager with little feedback to facilitate the monitoring of progress towards achievement of TEC targets. Each trainer maintains a separate, and different, trainee tracking system for his or her occupational area. There is little systematic feedback given to the business development manager in order to monitor overall progress of trainees against TEC-profiled targets. The business development manager does not have an effective management control system for reviewing achievements of contractual targets or monitoring the performance of the training co-ordinators and identifying trainees who are encountering slow progress. There are two computerised management-information systems. One has been installed for the purpose of making the monthly TEC claims. This system is not used effectively as an aid to management. The other system maintains records on all those studying within the college. There is no system whereby separate computerised records are maintained on the progress and achievements of TEC-funded trainees.

64. Managers do not take full responsibility for co-ordinating both on- and off-the-job training. At the beginning of a trainee's programme, the college does not check that an employer can provide the trainee with activities that will enable him or her to develop the full range of competencies for the NVQ. Work experience is not systematically planned or co-ordinated with off-the-job training in college. Some employers, particularly in motor vehicle and hairdressing, are committed to training and work closely with the college to develop trainees' training and development plans. However, in many instances, the college does not plan on-the-job learning carefully to enable trainees to derive maximum benefit from their work experience and make faster progress towards their qualification. Work-based learning objectives do not necessarily link to those for the off-the-job training sessions, or they are not identified at all. Opportunities for assessment in the workplace are not

effectively planned in all occupational areas. Recent measures have been taken to involve employers more in the NVQ process and in key skills training. College staff now make more visits to employers, particularly since October 1999 in some programmes.

65. Employers are not aware of the policies, strategies and targets of the college. There is no information pack for employers or work-placement providers. Recently, some employers have received a copy of the college's equal opportunities policy. Employers are not always made aware of any planned off-the-job assessments of their trainees. Trainees' progress reviews are frequently unsigned by employers. Assessment plans do not have a space for employers' signatures. Contact between college trainers and employers has increased in recent months.

66. The college has been slow in introducing key skills training in all programmes. In some instances, key skills training has only become part of programmes when they are nearly over. It is only fairly recently that the college has acted with a sense of urgency to ensure that key skills training is introduced into programmes. The lack of key skills training has had an adverse effect on some trainees' rate of progress towards completing their modern apprenticeships. Some trainees have completed work for their level 3 NVQ several months before attending workshops on key skills. In several occupational areas, key skills training has not been an integral part of programmes and trainees have missed valuable opportunities to gather evidence of their attainment in key skills through all their training tasks and activities.

#### **GOOD PRACTICE**

*This is an example of how trainees are able to develop key skills through their particular specialist areas of work. The college has excellent links with employers. It has been able to establish valuable liaison with large multi-national companies in the area, which have leading-edge working practices. Some trainees such as those on electrical installation programmes have been able to join employees of these companies on in-house courses that enable them to develop key skills through their particular vocational specialism.*

67. The role of trainer/assessor is not clearly defined. Trainees are usually visited in the workplace every 13 weeks for a review of their progress. During their progress reviews, trainees are not always set clear targets or given action plans for improving their performance. Little attention is given to whether or not trainees are going to meet the target dates specified in their individual training plans. Trainers and managers took no specific action over some trainees who had failed to reach their performance milestones by several months. Trainers do not plan regular workplace assessments with trainees. Many opportunities for work-based assessment are missed. Little assessment through observation of trainees' performance is carried out. Trainers do not encourage trainees to draw on their previous experience and on-the-job learning in their work towards attainment of their NVQ. There has recently been some evaluation of the role of the trainer/assessor and the different working practices between different occupational sectors. The role of the business development manager is not clear. The lines of communication with the programme team leaders, who are ultimately responsible for training, are also unclear.

## **Quality assurance**

## **Grade 4**

68. Quality assurance is directed by the vice-principal through the 'quality unit', which consists of a project manager and a 'quality officer'. The college has a quality assurance system which covers all its activities and provision. There are policies, procedures, documents and work instructions for quality assurance and

these are set out in a quality assurance manual. It is the college's stated aim that the central focus of the quality assurance system should be the learning experience of the trainee or student. Evidence about the quality of provision is collected from a variety of sources including questionnaires, course reviews and evaluations. There are records of focus groups, programme area meetings, course review meetings, and lesson/assessment observations. Quality is a standard agenda item on all programme area meetings. A good practice co-ordinator analyses all data relevant to teaching and learning, and reports findings to the director of teaching and learning. There is no formal system for the internal audit of the college's policies and procedures. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and many of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report but found both strengths and weaknesses the college had not identified.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ systematic gathering and analysis of feedback from trainees
- ◆ rigorous monitoring of off-the-job training sessions
- ◆ effectiveness of the recent self-assessment process

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no well-established quality assurance systems and procedures for training programmes
- ◆ failure to standardise key training processes across all programme areas
- ◆ lack of rigour in internal verification practices
- ◆ little analysis of trainees' retention and achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate monitoring of TEC contracts

69. In August 1999, senior management devised a strategy for improving the quality of provision and this has had a far-reaching impact on every member of staff within the college. Difficult steps were taken in relation to staff changes to implement the new quality strategy. There has been significant investment of staff time, effort and resources in the new system. The first stage was a review of the current quality assurance system. Recommendations to implement a quality control and audit system on the college intranet were implemented swiftly.

70. Every member of staff in each programme area was involved in the self-assessment process. Staff were encouraged to express their views freely and frankly and these were respected and valued by management. Validation panels incorporating senior managers and governors, and some key employers, tested the results of each self-assessment report for each programme area. An objective team of senior managers and external consultants carried out a mock inspection.

71. The new action-planning process has resulted in the involvement of all staff in continuous improvement. Several significant weaknesses have been rigorously addressed since the self-assessment took place. Significant steps have been taken

to standardise and implement improved working practices throughout the curriculum areas and support units of the college. Implementation of the action plan is systematically monitored by the director of teaching and learning in a quality improvement process logged in the widely known 'red file'. Through this system, there are rigorous checks to make sure each action point is carried out. This process does not cover the operation of the TEC contracts. Self-assessment, action planning and the improvement of the quality of provision have been awarded high priority within the college. Both trainees and employers have indicated their satisfaction with the consequent improvements.

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*Since August 1999, significant changes within the organisation have resulted in considerable investment in new technologies to implement a quality control system. The systematic review of quality assurance procedures, working practices and contractual requirements has led to the production of a new quality assurance manual. This is currently being tested and will be transmitted to all staff on the college intranet. This innovative scheme has attracted interest from external bodies.*

72. For several years, the college has routinely collected feedback from trainees through focus group interviews and individual questionnaires. Individual issues are brought to the attention of the programme team leader who responds to the point raised. There is a formal complaints procedure. Rigorous action is taken on complaints raised. The overall results of feedback are systematically analysed to examine trends in each occupational sector. There are no systematic arrangements for gathering feedback from employers. In each occupational area, however, fora for employers have been held regularly at which they can offer their views on provision. Action on employers' comments has led to improvements. Employers have not been fully involved in the assessment or review process. The college has taken action to rectify this weakness and has increased liaison between trainers and the workplace supervisor.

73. There is rigorous monitoring of off-the-job training sessions. There is an excellent process for the systematic sampling of all programme areas and a range of courses. The course trainer is observed and his or her performance is judged against a clear criterion and graded using a system similar to that of the FEFC and TSC inspectorates. The findings from lesson observations are summarised for each programme area. The trainer receives feedback and a grade. The programme team leaders receive feedback on the individual trainer's performance, but are not told the grade. This allows the programme team leader to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each trainer and the support he or she needs. The programme leaders operate the process with sensitivity to ensure that trainers find it positive and helpful rather than threatening or judgmental. A summary of findings from the lesson observations in each area is given to the programme team leader who takes whatever action is necessary.

74. There is a new quality assurance manual, which is the result of the investigation into the current working practices and quality assurance procedures within the college. While this forms the basis of the new quality control and assurance system, shortly to be transmitted across the college by intranet, it is not yet fully established in all programme areas.

75. Key training processes are not clearly specified in writing. From recruitment through trainees' exit from programmes, there is a lack of standardisation of training practices across occupational areas. The college does not monitor the trainee's experience in off-the-job training sessions. Some good practice is now being identified, and staff in curriculum areas are sharing their expertise. Key

training processes are not detailed in flow charts, or set out systematically in writing.

76. Internal auditing arrangements for monitoring compliance with TEC contracts are inadequate. Records of individual training plans, progress reviews and health and safety checks have not been maintained fully in the past year. There is a new health and safety officer, but it is not clear how his activities will be monitored to meet contractual requirements. Individual trainer/assessors are expected to undertake reviews of trainees' progress. There is little feedback to the business development manager on how contractual requirements are met. The trainer/assessors are not completing review forms in a consistent manner, nor is there a quality check to ensure that reviews include both trainees and employers.

77. A recently re-issued internal verification strategy has been implemented. This meets the requirements of awarding bodies and takes into account action points raised by external verifiers. Internal verification forms are standardised and have been distributed to all programme areas. However, at the time of inspection, these forms were not being used systematically across all programmes. Internal verification has been infrequent, and has failed to identify problems with assessment or lack of progress by trainees. There has been little sharing of good practice. There is poor internal verification practice on the motor vehicle programme. Internal verification is not carried out as a regular and continuous process. Internal verification records are poorly maintained. In hairdressing, internal verification has been spasmodic. The new strategy is beginning to be implemented and is leading to improvements. External verifier reports are systematically copied to the principal, the curriculum heads of department and the director of teaching and learning. Some internal verification practice has, in the past, fallen short of the standards required by examining and validation bodies in respect of the amount of assessment sampled, and the recording and monitoring of assessments. The college has not, hitherto, always ensured that internal verifiers are allotted sufficient time to carry out internal verification continuously and rigorously.

78. There is no systematic monitoring and analysis of data on trainees' achievement and retention rates and destinations. The management-information systems do not differentiate between TEC-funded trainees and students on courses funded by the FEFC and other sources. Little action has been taken to use the systems to identify trainees whose performance and attendance give cause for concern. The capabilities of the management-information system are not being utilised fully in order to produce specific data on trainees.