



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 2000

Guildford College of Further & Higher Education

SUMMARY

Guildford College offers good training in business administration and hairdressing, and trainees benefit from having access to a wide range of up-to-date resources. The college is committed to ensuring that all trainees are treated fairly, although trainees lack understanding and awareness of the issues relating to equality of opportunities. Trainees are given good pastoral support, although they do not receive any initial assessment of either their occupational or key skills. There is insufficient assessment at work in all occupational areas, and employers lack awareness of trainees' progress on some programmes. The management of training is satisfactory, with a well-planned programme of staff development. However, there are weak links between on- and off-the-job training, with little involvement in the process by some employers. The college is thorough in its self-assessment process. Some quality assurance systems, however, have only recently been developed, and others are new. Internal verification practice is poor in construction.

GRADES

| OCCUPATIONAL AREAS | GRADE |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Construction | 3 |
| Engineering | 3 |
| Business administration | 2 |
| Hospitality | 3 |
| Hair & beauty | 2 |
| Foundation for work | 3 |

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and taught off-the-job training programmes
- ◆ good links with employers, community organisations and schools
- ◆ rigorous self-assessment process
- ◆ clearly recorded policies and procedures
- ◆ high level of pastoral and additional support for trainees

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of work-based assessment
- ◆ undeveloped initial assessment of occupational and key skills
- ◆ poorly co-ordinated on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ insufficient formal monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ no accreditation of prior learning

INTRODUCTION

1. Guildford College of Further & Higher Education (Guildford College) has a unit which is responsible for trainees funded by training and enterprise councils (TECs) and for New Deal clients. The unit is part of the customer and external affairs directorate, which has responsibility for marketing, student services, schools and community liaison and administration within the college. The unit is operated by the government-contracts manager, who reports directly to the director of customer and external affairs, who is also a member of the recently formed executive team. Ten staff support the government-contract manager. The college is a large general college of further and higher education. It offers training and education across a diverse range of occupational and academic areas, for approximately 20,000 full- and part-time students. There is also a centre for sixth-form studies. The college operates on two key sites, which are within walking distance of each other. The main college campus at Stoke Park, is located to the north of Guildford town centre in Surrey, 30 miles south west of London, and the other site is at Markenfield. The college also has an outreach centre in the Maybury ward of Woking, and a mobile learning centre that travels out to local areas. Guildford College's government contracts unit has office accommodation situated on the ground floor of the main college building near to the entrance and reception, and work placement areas.

2. Most of the college's work is funded through the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), with approximately 30 per cent of the students aged 35 or over, and 15 per cent aged 20 to 25. At the time of inspection, 230 trainees were in government-funded work-based training, accounting for approximately 1.2 per cent of the total number of students and trainees at the college. This includes 14 New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option, as well as trainees in the occupational areas not inspected. The college contracts with Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Of the TEC-funded trainees, 36 are modern apprentices, 44 are national trainees, and the rest are on other work-based training programmes for young people and adults. The college employs 303 full-time staff, and 172 part-time staff. Staff are organised across 10 schools, and are responsible for most of the off-the-job training and assessment, although other providers carry out a small proportion of the off-the-job training through subcontracting arrangements.

3. Training is available in horticulture, a range of construction crafts, automotive engineering, business administration, hospitality, hairdressing, media and design, and foundation for work. Owing to the small numbers of trainees in horticulture and media and design, these areas were not inspected. Guildford College serves the economically buoyant county of Surrey. The majority of local employment is in distribution, hotels and restaurants, banking, finance and insurance, and public administration, education and health. Over half of Surrey's resident workforce are employed in small companies with less than 50 employees.

4. Unemployment in Surrey is low at 1.1 per cent, with a working population of approximately 543,000, compared with the national average for unemployment of 4.8 per cent. However, despite Surrey's low unemployment rate, almost 20 per cent of those unemployed have been out of work for a long time, and require considerable levels of basic skills training and personal development prior to any vocational training or employment. Eighty-five per cent of the workforce in Surrey have achieved national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 or an equivalent, and 54.1 per cent have achieved level 3 or an equivalent. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 56.6 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. Sixty-nine per cent of year-11 school pupils stay on for further education or training.

5. Approximately 30,000 people in Surrey are from minority ethnic groups. This figure accounts for 3 per cent of the total population, and is below the national average of 6 per cent. The highest proportions of people from minority ethnic groups live in the Epsom and Ewell, and Woking areas. People with a form of disability account for 5 per cent of the county's economically active workforce.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. The college has established a strong culture of self-assessment. It has a self-assessment steering committee, which includes a member of the corporation. In order to involve all staff in the process of self-assessment, smaller groups were established around the college, to report back strengths and weaknesses to the steering committee. In preparation for self-assessment, all of the government contract unit staff were consulted. Information was gathered from staff at all levels and across all schools within the college. Feedback was also sought from employers. The co-ordinating TEC offered advice on the process of self-assessment. At the time of inspection, a team of 15 FEFC inspectors and an auditor were also inspecting the main college.

7. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 35 days at the college in February 2000. Inspectors visited 35 work placements, and interviewed 37 employers or work-based supervisors. They also interviewed 89 trainees, and 19 members of teaching and provider staff. A broad range of documents was examined, including the TEC contracts and audits, trainees' files and portfolios, assessment records, reviews, policies and procedures, and internal and external verification documents. Inspectors also observed 11 training sessions, and six reviews. Where it was appropriate to the Training Standards Council's framework, evidence gathered by the FEFC inspectors was taken into account when grading work-based training.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

| | GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 | GRADE 5 | TOTAL |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Engineering | | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 5 |
| Hospitality | | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Hair & beauty | | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Foundation for work | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Total | 0 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 11 |

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

8. There are 77 trainees on work-based training programmes in carpentry and joinery, electrical installation, painting and decorating and plumbing. In addition there are five New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option. New first-year electrical installation trainees are currently on a course towards a certificate in electrical installation. The college is awaiting accreditation for the appropriate NVQ. Construction was also inspected by the FEFC. Evidence was shared among

inspectors where this was appropriate. Trainees are employed, and attend college on a block-release basis of one week in every five or six, for off-the-job training. Trainees are visited in the workplace every eight weeks to review their progress and to receive any additional support they require. All assessment is carried out at college. The self-assessment report included four strengths which were considered to be no more than normal practice. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given by the college.

| | Modern apprentices | National trainees | Other youth trainees | New Deal |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Carpentry and joinery | 13 | 10 | 9 | 1 |
| Electrical installation | | | 16 | 0 |
| Painting and decorating | | 1 | | 0 |
| Plumbing | 3 | 13 | 7 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 16 | 24 | 32 | 5 |

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of off-the-job training opportunities
- ◆ supportive employers committed to training
- ◆ well-structured and -taught off-the-job training programmes
- ◆ comprehensive system for tracking trainees' progress
- ◆ steadily improving retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no work-based assessment
- ◆ poor portfolios
- ◆ poor integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ no individual targets set for programme achievement
- ◆ some poor safety practices in college carpentry and joinery workshops
- ◆ poor NVQ achievement rates in electrical installation

9. Off-the-job training is well structured. Assessment takes place in the college workshops, and for theory teaching good-quality work-packs are used, which are prepared by college staff. Trainees understand the NVQ process and are aware of the work they have to do to achieve their qualification. Good systems have been developed to monitor their competence. Trainees understand these and are aware of progress towards their NVQ. Progress is reviewed regularly by training advisors

and tutors. Targets set for trainees are not demanding and for the most part relate to full achievement of the qualification.

10. In electrical installation, some trainees' portfolios are poor. They consist mostly of trainees' notes and pre-printed worksheets prepared by college staff, rather than a diverse range of evidence drawn from work. Portfolios are internally verified, although in electrical installation, there is no record of the criteria against which the portfolios have been verified. Internal verification is only undertaken when trainees have completed all NVQ units. This is inadequate, as internal verifiers are unable to check the quality of assessment throughout the NVQ and advise assessors at each stage.

11. Construction achievement rates have shown some improvement, although NVQ achievement rates for the 1998-99 contract year was low at 35 per cent. The achievement rate for the first 10 months of the current contract year is 48 per cent. Achievement for the current year in electrical installation is poor, with only one success from nine trainees leaving. Retention rates are improving. These have increased from 52 per cent in 1996-97 to 61 per cent in 1997-98 and 74 per cent in 1998-99. Six trainees have left early in the current year.

12. Most workplaces are of a good quality, and provide trainees with the wide range of opportunities required to complete an NVQ. Some trainees' carpentry and joinery work is of a very high standard. However, with no assessment of NVQ competence at work, many opportunities for assessment are missed. Individual training plans identify the various methods by which evidence of competence can be achieved, but these options do not include evidence gathered at work. All trainees therefore have to repeat activities naturally carried out at work in the artificial circumstances of the college workshops, for assessment purposes. There is some use of witness testimony of workplace activities. Carpentry and joinery trainees are supplied with a site evidence record book, which they can use to record work activities. The trainees' workplace supervisor countersigns these records. These record books are not used in other areas. Plumbing trainees are able to collect evidence, which is validated by employers and customers' signatures, but little use is made by the trainees of this opportunity. It is quicker and easier for trainees to complete assessments in the college workshop. There are no adequate systems to confirm the signatures supplied with the witness testimonies.

13. Employers are supportive, and committed to training. Many have a genuine desire to be involved in the training and assessment process. Most however, are not aware of the content of programmes, or the possibility of workplace assessment. Trainees' advisors carry out reviews with trainees and communicate regularly with employers and college construction staff. However, they are not vocationally experienced, and can only advise on issues such as trainees' progress. There is little contact between the college's construction staff and employers.

14. The development of key skills training has been slow, and it is poorly integrated with the occupational work. There is no consistency in the teaching and assessment

of key skills between the different construction areas. Trainees work towards level 1 in key skills, regardless of their ability. Information technology key skills are taught and assessed through the computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) qualification. No provision has been made to teach the level 2 key skills required for modern apprentices in construction. The plumbing section has recently invested in a key skills development and assessment pack supplied by the British Plumbing Employers Confederation (BPEC) but this is not yet being used. There has been no monitoring of trainees' key skills in the current year. Carpentry and joinery and painting and decorating trainees achieve key skills through taking a foundation general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in construction and the built environment.

15. Staff are well qualified to teach and assess the programmes offered. The workshops and equipment used by trainees are adequate for the activities taking place. Trainees are aware of the need to wear appropriate personal protective equipment when working. However, trainees in the college's carpentry and joinery workshop do not wear suitable footwear. Signs displayed in the workshop clearly indicate the need for this, but they are ignored by trainees and not enforced by the tutor. When it was highlighted to managers, prompt action to address this was taken by the college. The workshop is untidy, with off-cuts of timber stored around walls.

Engineering

Grade 3

16. Guildford College has 33 trainees on engineering programmes. Thirty-one are on motor vehicle NVQ programmes and two are on an electronic engineering programme. In addition, there is one woman motor vehicle client on the New Deal full-time education and training option. Of the motor vehicle trainees, there are 14 modern apprentices, eight national trainees and nine other work-based trainees. Motor vehicle trainees attend the college on a block-release basis for one week in five, during the college's academic year. During this time, trainees follow a structured timetable covering theory, key skills and practical training. During the four-week period at their work placement, trainees have on-the-job training and work experience. Trainees are placed or employed in a variety of both large and small car dealerships, and private retail motor repair outlets. Trainees collect work-based evidence through job-cards and witness testimonies. A visiting trainee advisor from the college undertakes progress reviews in the workplace. Engineering was also inspected by the FEFC and inspectors shared evidence where appropriate. The college's self-assessment report did not identify all of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective progress reviews
- ◆ improving achievement and retention rates
- ◆ comprehensive off-the-job training programme

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ over-reliance on witness testimonies for work-based evidence
- ◆ no systematic assessment in the workplace
- ◆ college year slows progress

GOOD PRACTICE

One employer in a small garage enterprise produced a diary of the on-the-job training the trainee had received. This was a detailed account of what had taken place, and further training required was noted. This trainee received good one-to-one tuition at work, and was able to develop a good standard of competence in servicing and repairing motor vehicles over an 18-month period.

17. The school of motor vehicle engineering at the college has produced a comprehensive learning programme for off-the-job training. Practical training and theory sessions are well structured and taught during the one-week full-time blocks of off-the-job training. Trainees spend one day in the well-resourced motor vehicle workshop, working on a full range of college, and customers' vehicles. Two further sessions are allocated to associated workshop skills. The work covers the full range of vehicle evidence for the NVQ programme which, in some cases, is difficult to achieve in the trainees' workplace. In addition to training on the vehicles, trainees use a computerised service schedule system and order the required parts by telephone. During the workshop sessions, trainees have access to a motor vehicle interactive computer-aided learning package, which reinforces their theoretical knowledge. A classroom located within the workshop complex enables staff to provide short training sessions during workshop activities. It can be used as a quiet area for trainees to work on their portfolios. There are two dedicated motor vehicle classrooms. The college's computer facilities are used for the motor vehicle theory and key skills classes. All trainees undertake key skills training. All trainees are employed, in a variety of good-quality dealerships and small to medium-sized garages. Trainees receive on-the-job training during their four-week period in the workplace. During this time they collect job-cards, which are signed by their mentor to authenticate the work carried out. This enables the trainees to build up evidence for the NVQ units.

18. Considerable improvements have been made to the achievement rates during the current financial year. Sixteen of the 18 trainees leaving achieved the full NVQ, with only two trainees leaving early without an NVQ. Achievement rates for the previous three years are as follows: in 1996-97, 25 per cent of trainees leaving achieved an NVQ; in 1997-98, 47 per cent achieved an NVQ; and in 1998-99, 62 per cent achieved an NVQ. Over the last three years never less than 95 per cent of the trainees have gained full-time employment at the end of their programme.

19. Trainees receive on-the-job reviews, which are carried out by the training advisor. The training advisor liaises with the motor vehicle tutors and is able to monitor progress and set targets for trainees to achieve by the next off-the-job training block.

20. Motor vehicle tutors are timetabled to carry out visits to trainees, but they do not always assess the trainees' competence. There is an over-reliance upon the use of witness testimonies and trainees' job-cards for assessment. The procedures and documents used for assessment are not always rigorously applied. Trainees have an insufficient understanding of their rights of appeal against the assessment decisions.

Some trainees have difficulty in completing the job-cards and in relating the evidence to the NVQ units. Others leave the writing of their technicians' report on the job-cards until the later stages of the NVQ programme. Some trainees monitor their progress against the NVQ units by using the awarding body's evidence matrix sheets, which are clearly displayed on a wall at work. However, not all trainees and employers share this good practice. In the smaller employers' establishments, the motor vehicle training is primarily dictated by the range of vehicles received into the garage. The college provides the employers with information about the NVQ programme, although not all employers understand the information. Trainees are able to enrol onto the NVQ programme at any time throughout the year, but the academic year programme restricts access to the off-the-job training at college. The key skills college training is assignment-based and is not fully integrated with the occupational training and assessment.

Business administration

Grade 2

21. Guildford College offers training for unemployed adults in information technology and accounting. There are 15 adults on the programme, 13 of whom are on a work-based learning for adults programme and two are clients on the full-time education and training option of the New Deal. The work-based learning for adults programme is offered throughout the year as a seven-week course. The aim of the programme is to help unemployed adults to find employment and to gain the occupational skills needed to meet the needs of the local labour market. Trainees are recruited onto each course through referral from the Employment Service. Trainees spend three days a week improving and updating their information technology skills and half a day a week on job-search activities. During the remainder of the week, trainees are offered the opportunity to practise their skills in the college's information technology open-access workshop. All adults on the course receive structured training designed to prepare them for a computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) qualification. The current seven-week course is the fifth provided by the college during the past year and, for the first time, there are plans to offer work-experience opportunities at the end of the course. Business administration was also inspected by the FEFC and inspectors shared evidence where this was appropriate.

22. Since the preparation of its self-assessment report, the college has ceased to offer courses leading to NVQs in this occupational area. The strengths and weaknesses given in the self-assessment report are no longer relevant and other strengths and weaknesses relating to the current programme have been identified. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and -taught college training programme

- ◆ wide range of resources available
- ◆ high retention and achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient work experience
- ◆ poor rate of job outcomes

23. The information technology training is carefully structured to provide the trainees with the ability and confidence to use up-to-date commercial software packages. They gain the skills to achieve a CLAITS qualification by the end of the seven-week course. Trainees are enthusiastic about the programme and appreciate the commitment and support provided by staff. The tutor has many years of experience of working in a commercial environment and is able to give trainees practical and realistic advice about workplace practices. All trainees have individual help as required and there are opportunities for the more able students to achieve an additional CLAITS qualification in graphical representation.

24. All trainees have access to the Internet and are encouraged by their tutor to visit web sites and retrieve relevant training and job-related information. Trainees use the information technology open-access workshop to practice their skills and the college's learning resource centre is also available to all trainees. Job-search sessions include an introduction to the college's careers officer, and a 'job shop'. Trainees have easy access to careers advice at all times during their programme. The job-search sessions are helpful.

25. Achievement rates are high and 90 per cent of all trainees who start the programme achieve a CLAITS qualification. The achievement of a qualification is not a contractual requirement and is offered to the trainees to increase their motivation and to increase their chances of employment at the end of the course. Most trainees, currently 90 per cent, complete the seven-week course.

26. Over the past year, trainees on the work-based learning programme for adults have not been given opportunities for work experience with local employers. Work experience is not a contractual requirement but the college has recognised that opportunities to practice skills in a real work environment will increase trainees' chances of gaining employment. Two weeks of work experience has now been arranged for most of the trainees at the end of the current six-week course.

27. The proportion of jobs gained by trainees over the past year is low, at 9 per cent, but recent figures received from a survey of local job centres, suggests that this figure will rise to approximately 20 per cent.

Hospitality

Grade 3

28. Guildford College currently has 11 trainees on catering and hospitality programmes. There are four national trainees working towards NVQs at level 2 in food preparation and cooking with key skills, and six trainees on other programmes of work-based training for young people, working towards NVQs, at level 2 in food preparation and cooking. There is also one modern apprentice working towards an NVQ at level 3 in on-licensed premises and key skills. Off-the-job training is on a day-release basis at the college, using the training kitchens for practical sessions and classrooms for theory sessions. Trainees are employed in a range of establishments, including golf clubs, pubs, restaurants, hotels, health farms and contract catering firms. Trainees are allocated a training advisor who undertakes progress reviews with them every eight weeks. These reviews are carried out at work or during the off-the-job training day at the college. At least every other review is at work. All NVQ assessments are carried out by staff at the college. There are no qualified work-based assessors within the trainees' places of work. Some identified strengths in the self-assessment report are considered to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured and -taught off-the-job training
- ◆ flexible off-the-job training arrangements
- ◆ rigorous college assessment procedures
- ◆ highly motivated trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no work-based assessment
- ◆ no integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ little involvement by employers in training
- ◆ poor achievement rates for modern apprentices

29. Guildford College provides good-quality off-the-job training in this occupational area. It is well structured with clear timetables. Practical sessions are carried out in well-equipped kitchens with adequate space and equipment for the number of trainees. Trainees are given plenty of opportunity to practice preparing and cooking menu dishes before going for a final assessment of specific units. During practice sessions, the trainees are encouraged to work in small groups to develop their teamworking skills. Trainees are highly motivated and are able to work with a

limited amount of supervision. All these activities are carried out in a realistic working environment.

30. Following the practical sessions at college, trainees are involved in theory sessions, where a formal evaluation of their practical work takes place. Trainees write up their kitchen evidence diary and receive feedback from the tutor. These diaries form part of the assessment process and portfolio evidence.

31. Groups are integrated during college practical sessions, so that trainees mix with other students of different ages and on different training programmes; but working towards the same qualifications. Trainees enjoy this arrangement and gain a great deal of experience from others in the group. The college offers practical classes on Wednesday mornings and again in the evening, and this helps trainees who are unable to attend their practical training sessions during the day. Trainees are also offered the opportunity to attend additional sessions to catch up, or to achieve units at a faster pace. Trainees' reviews are carried out regularly by the training advisor in the workplace. Employers sign an agreement to take part in resulting action plans. Training advisors, however, are not occupationally qualified.

32. Some trainees are given the opportunity to achieve additional qualifications to enhance their training plans and career opportunities. The modern apprentice is working towards an internationally recognised qualification in hotel and catering management at the same time as the level 3 NVQ. This trainee has also achieved the intermediate food hygiene certificate, a basic wine appreciation course and the CLAIT qualification. Some trainees' progress is held back because they have to work at the pace of the group when they have already covered the menu items in their place of work. Some trainees do not have the opportunity to practice the skills they have learnt at college because the menus at work do not cover the same level or variety of dishes and cooking methods. Employers are very supportive of their trainees and the work of the college. However, they are not formally involved in the development of the training plans or the selection of NVQ units.

33. NVQ achievement rates have fluctuated in recent years but are currently good. In 1997-98, 70 per cent of trainees leaving achieved an NVQ, and in 1998-99, 60 per cent achieved an NVQ. In the current year, 15 (83 per cent) of the 18 trainees leaving achieved an NVQ. The completion rate for modern apprenticeships is poor, however. Six of the 13 modern apprentices left without achieving the full modern apprenticeship. Guildford College has recently introduced a national traineeship programme in hospitality. Key skills training and assessment are not integrated with the vocational training in hospitality, but are left until the end of the programme, when trainees have finished their NVQs. This is inefficient and contributes to the low rate of completion of modern apprenticeships.

34. There is no assessment in the workplace. Witness testimonies are not used. However, a number of individual training plans indicate the use of both witness testimony and work-based assessment. Some trainees use photographs of work they have produced on the job as part of their portfolio of evidence. These are

endorsed by the employer. Assessments are rigorous and fair, and meet with the requirements of the awarding body. Some of the portfolios are of a high quality and easy to follow. Internal verification is recorded in a concise manner and includes the internal verifier's observation reports on assessors' performance and trainees' feedback on their assessors' performance. Trainees receive copies of their assessment records.

Hair & beauty (hairdressing)

Grade 2

GOOD PRACTICE

National trainees each design and produce their own health and safety leaflet. The leaflet is used as key skills evidence and later computerised. It reinforces their health and safety knowledge, while at the same time developing their key skills in both communication and information technology.

35. There are 41 trainees on hairdressing programmes, of whom 40 are working towards NVQs in hairdressing at level 2 and one is at level 3. There are five modern apprentices, 18 national trainees and 18 on other youth training programmes. They attend off-the-job training at the college one day each week and the rest of their time is spent in salon placements. Trainees can apply to join programmes directly through careers conventions, schools liaison, and from the careers service, or are referred by employers. Recruitment and selection is carried out through the college's skills generation unit. An initial assessment of their basic skills levels is made and an individual training plan agreed. All trainees are employed. The programme is managed and taught by a team of four programme leaders and three additional assessors. A training advisor visits the trainees at work to carry out quarterly reviews of their progress. Personal tutors monitor progress and draw up action plans. The off-the-job training consists of practical, theory and separate key skills sessions. 'Catch up' sessions and portfolio-building guidance are also features of the programme. Assessment takes place at college, with some work-based assessment carried out by the tutors. The self-assessment report included some of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. Some additional strengths and weaknesses were identified. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

Trainees are encouraged to participate in the college's annual hair show, and evidence from this is used in their NVQ portfolios. The show is particularly useful for generating evidence for the level 3 NVQ, as it includes work in planning, budgeting, fashion, photography and make-up. The trainees produce promotional posters and an evaluative survey is carried out. The results are analysed, and the activities used as key skills evidence.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible arrangements for training in the college's salon
- ◆ good integration of key skills into vocational training
- ◆ rigorous internal verification system

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ lack of varied client base for assessment at college

36. First-year trainees are on national traineeship programmes, which include key skills training sessions. Second- and third-year trainees are on a mix of modern apprenticeships and other youth training programmes. Programmes are well

planned and include theory sessions, key skills training, practical workshops, demonstrations and portfolio-building guidance. The key skills sessions are well integrated in the national trainees' programme and taught by a qualified tutor who has designed innovative assignments linked to the hairdressing work. Client consultation sheets are also designed to encourage trainees to use key skills. The evidence generated from the assignments is designed to develop trainees' key skills and provide assessment materials. Evidence is adapted to meet the requirements of information technology key skills level 1. Theory sessions are flexibly planned to cover essential knowledge, group and individual tutorials, and action planning, portfolio-building guidance, tests and assignment work.

37. There is a steady supply of clients for trainees to practice their skills on and for assessment in the college's salons. However, although the main salon offers a realistic working environment, the variety of clients is limited. This is especially important for the more advanced trainees, who would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet all assessment requirements. Clients book appointments through a central reception facility and are allocated on arrival to trainees, according to the trainees' assessment needs. Trainees work at the reception desk on a rota basis, where their skills are assessed. The salons are well stocked with a good range of products and commercial equipment, some of which has been recently replaced. The practical sessions include all trainees, regardless of level. Team teaching is a feature. This simulates industrial practice, where junior staff assist their seniors.

38. There are two salons, one of which is used for first-year trainees to practice basic hairdressing skills. They assist other trainees in the second salon and work on clients, subject to availability. This integration means that more junior trainees are encouraged to support those more experienced, simulating industrial practice. Manufacturers' technical seminars and visiting guest stylists' presentations are also included to ensure that both staff and trainees are kept up-to-date with new products and changing techniques. Good use is made of trainees' learning time, as they are encouraged to top-up their practical skills or theory work when they have no model to work on. 'Catch-up' sessions are also available, where trainees receive extra help with their assignment work and portfolios, often on an individual basis.

39. Trainees attend their salon placements for four days each week and employers provide on-the-job training. There are some good-quality salon placements offering planned training ranging from supervised work on clients to more structured training sessions. Employers are not frequently updated on their trainees' progress; apart from quarterly salon reviews, they have to rely on trainees' own account of progress made at the college.

40. There are some missed opportunities for assessment at work. Many trainees participate in training sessions in their salons, have their own client list and undertake a wide variety of activities in their salons. When trainees cannot access suitable models in the college and their salon activities are not assessed, achievement is delayed. All trainees expect to achieve level 2 NVQs within two years and few achieve any earlier. Although employers and trainees are

encouraged to complete witness statements and submit photographic evidence, these work-based activities are not assessed. The college assessors occasionally carry out work-based assessments but no time is made available to assess the trainees in their salons. Some salon owners are qualified assessors but they are not involved in work-based assessment.

41. Many trainees begin work on clients within the first month of training and are assessed against NVQ standards. Although they sign and agree an individual training plan on induction, they do not retain a copy in their portfolios. Target achievement dates are set at a standard 24 months for all units, and plans are not revisited during the programme. Some trainees are unaware of whether they are modern apprentices, national trainees or on other youth training programmes. The training advisor liaises regularly with the assessors about individual trainees' progress but the plans are not referred to.

42. Assessors have at least monthly individual tutorials with each of their trainees. Action plans are agreed and updated with specific target setting to achieve NVQ units. However, these are not systematically used to inform the training advisor for the trainees' in-salon reviews, which tend to be of a more general nature. Employers are unclear about which units have been covered. The on-the-job training is not co-ordinated with the off-the-job training in the college.

43. Portfolios are well constructed with good-quality evidence. Assessments and internal verification are thorough. The number of trainees completing their programmes and achieving their qualifications has increased in the past two years. Of the trainees who started programmes in 1996-97, 54 per cent left without achieving their qualifications. From those starting during 1997-98, 45 per cent left early, but in 1998-99, only 14 per cent of trainees left early. Achievement rates are satisfactory. During 1997-98, 46 per cent of trainees completed their qualifications and during 1998-99, this increased to 54 per cent.

Foundation for work

Grade 3

44. Foundation for work training includes a number of options to cater for the diverse needs of trainees. There are 44 government-funded trainees in this occupational area. Twenty-two are following a work-based youth training programme for 16 to 25 year olds, called 'A Basis for Choice'. One is a New Deal client following the full-time education and training option. Twelve adult trainees are currently enrolled on a pre-vocational programme. Six trainees are following a Life Skills programme as part of the Learning Gateway and three are completing a similar programme called 'Breaking the Cycle'. This area was also inspected by the FEFC. Inspectors shared evidence where appropriate. The trainees on the Life Skills programme are disaffected with education and training. Basis for Choice trainees spend three days each week in work placements and attend college for two days. They agree their individual timetables during an initial induction and select

an occupational area from a choice of nine available options. All have been assessed as needing support with literacy and numeracy. They work on basic skills and vocationally linked studies while in college. Trainees are working towards NVQs at level 1 in their occupational area, and wordpower and numberpower as part of their core studies. The proportion of trainees who joined the Basis for Choice programme in September 1999 and are still on the programme is 87 per cent. Of those joining the programme in 1997, 44 per cent achieved an NVQ at level 1 by September 1999. Of those following wordpower and numberpower programmes, 61 per cent achieved the qualification. Prevocational adult trainees attend the college for 21 hours each week for a period of 20 weeks. This programme is designed for people who are long-term unemployed or who have particular personal development needs. It includes personal development training, job search, information technology training and literacy support and work experience where appropriate. Life Skills trainees attend college for 21 hours each week for 20 weeks. The programme aims to meet needs identified in trainees' individual development plans to support trainees into employment and further training. Since the programme began in November 1999, eight trainees have enrolled, two have left having found employment and one has dropped out. Registers indicate a pattern of irregular attendance. The self-assessment report identified seven strengths. Inspectors considered that some of the strengths were no more than normal practice. Three strengths were confirmed and a further strength was identified. The self-assessment process identified one weakness. This was confirmed and additional weaknesses were identified. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of additional qualifications available
- ◆ highly supportive employers and college staff
- ◆ effective literacy and numeracy teaching in the Basis for Choice programme

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poorly planned and resourced adult training
- ◆ lack of clear or realistic targets for trainees
- ◆ some trainees' individual learning needs are not met

45. The literacy and numeracy training offered to trainees on the Basis for Choice programme is individualised, flexible in content and appropriate to individual needs. Trainees receive an initial assessment of their basic skills. The result of the assessment forms the basis of their individual basic skills learning development plan, linked to the wordpower or numberpower qualification. Learning plans are reviewed and updated regularly, enabling trainees to identify the progress made and areas requiring further practice. Basic skills sessions are planned and well structured. The key skills workshop is attractive and well resourced. It is arranged

to support workshop sessions and group activities. Training staff have developed good learning materials which meet the needs of trainees. A series of occupationally related booklets containing literacy and numeracy tasks and activities enables trainees to develop their basic skills in the context of their chosen vocational option. Trainees set a series of basic skills and vocational skills learning goals before undertaking the assignments and review their progress on completion. Staff are continually expanding the series to include new occupational areas and issues of general interest to trainees. A booklet has recently been produced to support a visit to the Millenium Dome. Trainees are encouraged to use the Internet and other information technology facilities to plan the day. Trainees enjoy their training. The completed work in trainees' portfolios meets the requirements of basic skills awards.

46. A wide range of additional qualifications is available to trainees. In addition to their NVQ, Basis for Choice trainees work towards wordpower and numberpower qualifications. They are encouraged to progress and achieve these qualifications at entry level and level 1. A certificate in employment skills was introduced in September 1999. This training helps trainees to develop job-search techniques, enhance their presentation skills and increase their confidence. Trainees on all programmes are encouraged to take first aid and basic food hygiene certificates where these support their vocational aims. Achievement rates for these qualifications are high. All trainees who have taken the first aid certificate have passed. Basic information technology training is integrated into all programmes and trainees are able to use the extensive college facilities to develop their information technology skills and to gain accreditation through the CLAIT certificate.

47. Most of the Basis for Choice trainees spend three days each week in work placements. Employers provide opportunities for training at work, support trainees who lack confidence and social skills and offer most trainees permanent employment. Training advisors have regular formal and informal contact with training staff in college. The skills generation team meets monthly to plan and discuss the progress of individual trainees. Effective informal communication enables advisors and trainers to deal promptly with problems such as absenteeism.

48. The prevocational training programme for adults aims to help them gain the necessary skills to allow them to find employment. Adults are able to join the programme at four-weekly intervals. They have an initial interview and induction and agree an individual action plan which identifies their training needs and a series of targets or 'milestones' to be achieved. Programme documents specify that the tutor and trainees will review individual progress weekly but reviews are currently held on a monthly basis. A scheme of work outlining the assertiveness, team building and personal development elements of the programme has been developed which identifies weekly activities but does not specify learning outcomes. The job search and wider employment-related aspects of the programme have not been developed to the same extent. Opportunities for adult trainees to secure work experience are limited. In a 12-month period between 1998 and 1999, only six trainees from a total of 36 were placed with employers. Trainees have information

technology tuition for three hours each week and access to computers in their base room for individual work. The base room has few other resources to support the different elements of the programme or the individual needs of the group which has widely differing interests and abilities. Trainees do, however, make use of other college facilities, with encouragement from staff.

49. Trainees in work placements are visited in the workplace every eight weeks in order to review their progress. The review and action-planning process was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. These processes have recently been revised and new procedures are currently being introduced. In many cases, workplace supervisors are insufficiently involved in the review process. Visits, although providing effective pastoral support, are not well recorded. Records of trainees' progress are poor. Employers are less able to support trainees in their NVQ work, on- and off-the-job training are not well co-ordinated and trainees' understanding of the NVQ process is not improved.

50. Some trainees' individual learning needs are not met. Adult trainees have a wide range of literacy and numeracy needs. Group activities do not take sufficient account of the level of reading difficulty of the materials used and the support some trainees require. Opportunities for adults to develop literacy and numeracy skills within the prevocational curriculum have not been sufficiently developed. When specific needs are identified, trainees are referred to the learning support unit where their needs are assessed and reported to tutors and trainees. The learning support unit provides additional support for trainees, who have been identified as having literacy and language support needs. Outdoor projects and assignments, emphasising the use of teamwork, are effective in boosting the confidence of young people on the Life Skills programme. However, the programme is not flexible enough to meet the individual learning needs and vocational aims identified in individual development plans.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

GOOD PRACTICE

The college has recently employed a full-time ombudsman, who reports any complaints to the executive team. This person is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the complaints, and any action taken.

51. Guildford College has a separate equal opportunities policy for staff and students. The student policy covers all college students as well as the TEC-funded trainees. There are also college policies for disability, harassment and complaints, and separate staff and student disciplinary and grievance procedures. All policies are reviewed and updated accordingly by the executive management team on a yearly basis. The trainees are issued with the college handbook, which contains an equal opportunities statement, at the beginning of each academic year. The college has successfully attracted work-based adult and youth trainees with disabilities and from minority ethnic groups to its NVQ programmes for a number of years. The average proportion of trainees with disabilities recruited is 13 per cent and for

minority ethnic trainees it has been 5 per cent over the last three years. Trainees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities during the individual NVQ training programme induction sessions. There is a dedicated college management team, which includes an ombudsman, community liaison co-ordinator and a schools and community manager, who ensure that policy and procedures are implemented. The college's self-assessment report was largely accurate, although additional strengths were identified by inspectors. The grade awarded by inspectors is higher than that given in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good links with community organisations and schools
- ◆ good recruitment of disabled and minority ethnic trainees to most programmes
- ◆ good-quality marketing materials displaying positive images

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor awareness by trainees of equal opportunities issues
- ◆ insufficient formal monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace

52. The college has an effective procedure for monitoring its equal opportunities policies, through the executive management team structure and supporting local community organisations and schools. Good working relationships with minority ethnic groups over the years have enabled it to establish an adult centre in an area of Woking where a high proportion of people from minority ethnic groups live. Some adult training takes place within a mosque at Woking. The college has produced a range of marketing materials which are not only of a high quality, but also project positive images of a full range of people from different cultures. Course literature is produced in several languages, such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujrati, Italian and Spanish. College enrolment forms are published in Urdu. Work with organisations and schools who have disaffected young people has led to the introduction of 'taster' sessions. These have allowed the disaffected young people to gain an insight into the world of work and to be able to develop their social skills.

GOOD PRACTICE

Following the harassment of a trainee during an 'initiation ceremony' in the workplace, the college promptly informed the employer and asked them to take immediate action against the staff responsible. The college followed this up with a formal letter and subsequently checked to see that appropriate action had been taken.

53. The college has a compliments and complaints system, which is explained during induction and the student handbook. Trainees know who to approach, if they have a complaint or required assistance. The college also has a 'yellow card' system, a unique method of using the college's intranet to e-mail a complaint.

54. The percentage of trainees with disabilities on the TEC-funded NVQ training programmes is high, with an average of 13 per cent over the last three years. The college has developed suitable facilities and made building alterations for access by those trainees with limited mobility.

55. Trainees' awareness of equal opportunities is poor across the whole range of

TEC-funded courses. Trainees have some equal opportunities training through handouts and discussion during induction, but this is not reinforced effectively throughout the training programme.

56. College tutors and advisors visit employers regularly to undertake health and safety risk assessments and to review trainees' progress. Informal checks are made on trainees' welfare to ensure that they are protected in the workplace. However, no formal checks are made of employers' equal opportunities records or information, other than to ascertain that employers do in fact have an equal opportunities policy. There are currently twice as many young men on NVQ programmes as there are young women. Two of the 147 youth trainees are from minority ethnic groups and 21 have disabilities. Among the adult trainees the gender ratio is more equal, with 52 men and 45 women. Of these adults, 11 have disabilities and five are from minority ethnic groups. The college has had little success in its attempt to recruit women into occupational areas which traditionally attract men, and vice versa, particularly among the young trainees.

Trainee support

Grade 2

57. Trainees are recruited through the career services, existing employers, and recruitment fairs, a learning express bus which visits schools and through promotional leaflets. As part of the recruitment process all trainees have an induction. Health and safety and equal opportunities are covered as part of the induction. Trainees are issued with a student handbook and a copy of the college's charter. Both of these documents are written in clear and simple language, and provide details regarding all the services that trainees can access. The charter sets out roles and responsibilities, explaining trainees' rights, the quality of service they can expect, what the college expects of them and what they should do if they are unhappy with the service the college offers. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses that were not mentioned in the self-assessment report. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good pastoral support
- ◆ well-resourced learning facilities
- ◆ high levels of additional support for trainees with learning difficulties

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ identified learning support needs not always met
- ◆ undeveloped initial assessment of occupational and key skills

58. All trainees have a personal training advisor and a tutor who provide them with pastoral care in addition to training support. Personal training advisors review the trainees' progress every eight weeks, either at work or during off-the-job training. Good working relationships exist between the trainees, their tutors and their personal training advisors. Trainees who have problems can freely discuss them with either their tutor or personal advisor. Guildford College offers a comprehensive range of additional services for trainees, including help with finding accommodation, and information and advice provided by the college's careers service. Help with job hunting is available through a recruitment agency also on site. A chaplain is available to discuss personal problems, and there is also a free confidential counselling service provided by qualified college staff.

59. Trainees have access to a range of well-resourced learning facilities, which include a new library and resources centre with access to a network of over 50 computers offering a wide range of modern software and access to the Internet. The college has drop-in centres for trainees who need additional help with information technology and maths.

60. The college has a 'learner support unit' which helps trainees to achieve the objectives set out in their individual training plans. Support is provided through either one-to-one tutorials, in addition to the main training programme, or extra help provided through the normal training programme by the tutors. Any additional support is recorded on an 'individual learning programme' document. The college has staff who are qualified to administer assessments for trainees with dyslexia. These systems are comprehensive but some trainees are missed. Some of the documents are incomplete or lack detail such as dates. Some additional support is delayed and, in a few cases, no support is given to help with identified problems.

61. As part of the induction trainees undergo a basic skills test. This test does not cover either the occupational NVQ they will be working towards or their entry level for the key skills. Results of the basic skills test do not always translate into clear additional support needs where trainees have achieved a low score. The results of the basic skills tests are used to determine the best programme, rather than to identify the additional help the trainee needs to achieve the outcomes of the programme. There is little use of accreditation of prior learning by the college across all programmes. One member of staff within the government contract unit currently is qualified to make these assessments

Management of training

Grade 3

62. Training programmes funded by Surrey TEC are managed by the government contracts unit, which is part of the customer and external affairs directorate. The director is a member of the college's executive team and reports directly to the principal. The operational responsibility for the TEC-funded programmes rests with

the government contracts manager who has a team of four training advisors and two administrators. The training advisors are responsible for monitoring and reviewing trainees, maintaining links with employers and liaising with programme managers of the individual vocational schools. Each school is responsible for the training and assessment for their own trainees and monitoring their progress towards qualifications. The college achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1996 and was successfully re-assessed in June 1999. Inspectors agreed with one of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report and identified two further strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ excellent internal communications
- ◆ good programme of staff development linked to strategic plan
- ◆ thorough staff induction programme

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment

63. During the last year, the college has undertaken a major staff restructuring process. The management team and staff put a clear emphasis on the needs of the learner. The management structure encourages an effective exchange of information between managers and staff and allows changes to be made quickly. Regular formal meetings, newsletters, memoranda and e-mails are used to keep staff up-to-date with new developments and staff training events. Formal communication is supplemented by frequent informal contacts between members of the government contracts team and vocational programme managers. Trainees' problems are dealt with quickly and their NVQ progress is effectively monitored.

64. There is a comprehensive staff development programme, which clearly links individual development needs and plans to corporate objectives. Current figures show that 171 staff are enrolled at the college on courses leading to a qualification. Since July 1999, 318 staff have participated in staff development events organised by the staff development co-ordinator. Regular newsletters inform staff of the training and development opportunities on offer. The college has plans to offer assessor qualifications to training advisors in order to improve their understanding of the assessment process.

65. A compulsory staff induction programme is run throughout the year and all new staff are given an induction booklet explaining the purpose and content of the induction process. This modular programme provides a choice of three dates for

each module and every module must be attended within the first six months of employment. Employees at all levels are expected to follow the same induction process to allow new staff to network across schools. The government contracts manager contributes to the induction by providing an overview of the TEC-funded training. New employees are encouraged to give their comments throughout the process, in order to improve the induction programme for future employees.

66. Training advisors are the main link between the college and employers. With one exception, the training advisors are not occupationally experienced or qualified and are therefore unable to link training opportunities in the workplace to the off-the-job training or to carry out workplace assessments. Many employers and workplace supervisors declare a willingness to be involved in the training programmes but have not been provided with the opportunity to do so by college staff. Trainees carry out tasks competently at work but assessments are carried out at college in a simulated working environment. Contact between college staff and employers is minimal and, where it does take place, it is often informal and unplanned.

67. There is an inconsistent approach to work-based assessment throughout the college. Some work-based assessment takes place for motor vehicle trainees but the timing of the assessments is dependent on college timetables and not on the readiness of the trainees to be assessed. In some vocational areas, no workplace assessments are carried out and over-reliance is placed on witness testimonies to provide work evidence. Some workplace supervisors possess assessor qualifications, but their expertise is not used to assess the trainees' competence at work.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

68. Guildford College meets the requirements of the awarding bodies and the TEC. The government contracts unit is an integral part of the college, and follows all of the college's quality assurance systems and procedures. Guildford College uses a computerised management information system to collate all training data for external and internal use. The college has clear policies and procedures relating to quality assurance, and these are reviewed annually. These policies and procedures include a learning strategy and internal verification procedures. The self-assessment report was updated in February 2000, to include action that had been taken since the original report was produced. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths, and the other strength was not considered to be a quality assurance issue. Two additional strengths were identified, and inspectors agreed with all of the weaknesses in the report, and included a further weakness. The grade awarded was the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ rigorous self-assessment process
- ◆ widespread recent action to improve the quality of training programmes
- ◆ well-written quality assurance policy and related procedures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate procedures to gain and record feedback from trainees and employers
- ◆ poor formal quality assurance of training at work
- ◆ some poor internal verification practices

69. All staff at the college have an opportunity to contribute to the self-assessment process through the self-assessment groups that have been established. These groups formally report back to a steering committee, which is linked to the newly formed quality and planning unit. The TEC has been involved in the self-assessment process from the beginning and was represented at the initial meeting of the self-assessment steering committee. Senior staff are also involved in improving the quality of training.

70. The college has recently undergone a major staff re-structuring programme, and many of the quality assurance systems are new or about to be put into place. The self-assessment process is a key part of the quality assurance process, and has highlighted many of the same main strengths and weaknesses identified through inspection.

71. Good links have been established with employers, and the training advisors undertake regular eight-weekly reviews at work. The majority of training advisors do not have occupational expertise, and are not able to check the quality of training in the workplace. In some of the occupational areas, tutors, or occupational specialists, visit the employers to assess trainees. There are no formal checks on the quality of training at work.

72. Lesson observations are an important part of the quality assurance processes and the college has developed a policy and related guidelines for these observations. The college also has procedures for internal verification, with a lead internal verifier in each school. There are some poor internal verification processes, for example, different forms are in use, and minutes of meetings are not always recorded. Some issues identified by external verifiers have not been actioned. In carpentry and joinery the college's minimum requirement of internal verifications has not been achieved. The validity of witness statements is not systematically checked.

73. Feedback questionnaires are given to all students and trainees at various stages of the programme. The response to these has generally been poor, and it is difficult to identify specific issues relating to TEC-funded trainees. Employers' views are currently collected informally, but are not recorded.