



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 2000

Lowestoft College

SUMMARY

Lowestoft College offers good training in marine transport, with good resources. Off-the-job training in engineering is well planned and there are good retention rates. Foundation for work training is well structured in a wide variety of subjects. Trainees in construction have a good off-the-job training programme but there are insufficient assessments in the workplace. Key skills are well integrated with training in business administration and there is some well-planned training. Retention rates in hospitality and hairdressing are poor. Trainees are making slow progress. Equal opportunities practices are well implemented within the college but this does not extend to the workplace. Additional learning is not always clearly recorded, owing to a complex structure for the management and procedures of trainee support. Management of work-based training is not well co-ordinated. There is little monitoring of data. The college's quality assurance procedures are not used effectively to improve training.

GRADES

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

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ effective community networks and links
- ◆ good integration of key skills with training in business administration
- ◆ well-planned training in marine transport
- ◆ strong recognition of and response to local training needs

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention rates in hair and hospitality
- ◆ lack of clear structure for providing learning support
- ◆ weak monitoring of achievement and retention data
- ◆ weak monitoring of the quality of training
- ◆ unclear responsibility among curriculum teams for planning training in the workplace

INTRODUCTION

1. Lowestoft College is a medium-sized, general further education college situated in England's most easterly town of Lowestoft. In 1999, the college celebrated 125 years of further education. The college is situated on a single site. It uses other training facilities within the area which include a theatre and training centre for construction. A range of specialist resources is used for catering, engineering, construction, hair and beauty, and in particular, for maritime and offshore programmes. The college contracts with Norfolk and Waveney Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to offer work-based training in construction, engineering, business administration, hairdressing, hospitality, marine transport and foundation. The college also contracts with Suffolk TEC for the full-time education and training option of the New Deal. The college obtains 59 per cent of its income from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), 14 per cent from tuition fees, 7 per cent from European Union projects, 4 per cent from the TEC and the Employment Service, with the remaining 16 per cent coming from other commercial activities. There are 185 trainees. Sixty-six are modern apprentices, 72 are national trainees and 47 are youth trainees. There are 21 New Deal clients on the full-time training and education option. There are 25 members of staff in the college development group and the senior management team who are responsible for managing the New Deal options and TEC-funded programmes.

2. The district of Waveney and the town of Lowestoft are situated in a rural location with a poor transport infrastructure and lack of high-profile businesses. Forty-nine per cent of Waveney's residents spend less than 10 minutes travelling to work. The traditional industries of fishing and ship-building are in decline. Twelve per cent of the working population are employed in the declining sectors. There is an increase in leisure and tourism. Five per cent are working in these sectors. The unemployment rate in the area as of November 1999 is 6.7 per cent. In the 16 to 18 year age group, 4.7 per cent are unemployed, rising to 16 per cent in the 19 to 24 years age group. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers in Waveney achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 42.9 per cent, compared with the average in Suffolk of 53.8 per cent and the national average of 47.9 per cent. In 1999, 73.9 per cent of year-11 pupils stayed on in full-time education and 7.7 per cent progressed to work-based training. Minority ethnic groups in the district constitute less than 2 per cent of the population.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. In 1998, the director of planning and quality compiled the first self-assessment report in collaboration with each curriculum area of the college. Members of the senior management team attended a series of workshops on self-assessment organised by TECs on a regional basis. Trainees and employers were sent survey forms. Meetings were conducted with the contract manager and curriculum staff. A second self-assessment report was produced in November 1999. This report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses which are not applicable to work-based training but to the college as a whole and some were identified as being no more than normal practice. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that in the self-assessment report in three occupational areas, a higher grade in one occupational area and a lower grade in three. The same grade was awarded for trainee support and management of training. A lower grade was awarded for equal opportunities and quality assurance.

4. The inspection was carried out jointly with inspectors from the FEFC. A team of eight Training Standards Council inspectors spent a total of 30 days at Lowestoft College in February 2000. They met with 102 trainees and five New Deal clients. They visited 35 work placements and interviewed 28 workplace supervisors. Inspectors interviewed curriculum staff, TEC/New Deal management staff and college management staff. They examined a range of college and awarding body documentation. They examined trainees' files and portfolios. Evidence from observations of training sessions, assessments and reviews of documents made by FEFC inspectors were also used. Inspectors observed 13 training sessions and awarded the grades tabled below.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering		3	3			6
Business administration		2				2
Hospitality	2	1				3
Hair & beauty				1		1
Foundation for work		1				1
Total	2	7	3	1	0	13

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

5. There are 19 trainees in construction, of whom 11 are national trainees and six are modern apprentices. Two are on other training programmes. There are six New

Deal clients. All trainees attend off-the-job training at the college one day a week or in blocks of three weeks' duration. This flexibility enables attendance patterns to be arranged to suit the needs of a range of employers. Most of the employers are small companies offering various construction services in Lowestoft and the surrounding area. National vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 are currently offered in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, and painting and decorating. All trainees are employed. New Deal clients follow a training programme at a training centre in Kirkley. This centre has been established through the innovative links created between the college, local construction companies and developers. All the off-the-job training and most of the assessment for trainees is carried out in the college's workshops. Business support officers visit trainees in the workplace at three-monthly intervals. Further weaknesses were identified by inspectors and a lower grade was awarded than that given by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ comprehensive off-the-job training programmes
- ◆ strong and innovative external partnerships
- ◆ good assessment in college workshops
- ◆ good job outcomes for New Deal clients

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak work-based assessment
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ lack of target-setting in review process
- ◆ no workplace reviews for some trainees

6. There is a wide range of good companies employing trainees. They include small building developers, local authority service departments, holiday complexes and a ship's refurbisher. In these companies trainees have good learning opportunities in the specific subjects that they require. All placements provide trainees with work experience. In most cases, this is appropriate to their NVQ programmes. Off-the-job training is effectively planned. Standards are specified and, in most cases, learning opportunities are effectively used and standards are met. Although the retention rate is high, at 100 per cent for modern apprentices in 1998-99 and 67 per cent for young people on other work-based programmes, not all trainees complete their NVQs.

7. College assessors assess trainees. Most assessments are carried out in the college's well-resourced workshops. They are effectively and systematically carried out and records are well maintained. Trainees are clear about standards to be achieved and know how they are progressing. While some trainees are able to assemble their portfolios well, others find this difficult. Some trainees do not fully

understand the importance of building a portfolio of evidence. New Deal clients are effectively assessed on the job through being involved with the community regeneration initiative. A high number of these clients secure long-term employment with local and national building companies.

8. There is a high standard of health and safety training across all programmes. Trainees' awareness and implementation of safe practice are good. The construction department has created many innovative links with local construction companies and developers. The college is currently running a brokerage scheme on behalf of housing developers. It is managing a series of projects as part of a community regeneration initiative. These include renovating old Victorian houses from disused bedsitter conversions to high-class quality family housing. Other partnership arrangements include close links with local and national companies to develop work-based assessment programmes for employed trainees. External verification reports show that all courses comply with requirements and that action points raised have been systematically addressed. The internal verification system is well recorded and effectively implemented.

9. Two youth trainees and one modern apprentice have been transferred from another training provider who has ceased trading in the area. These trainees have had their needs re-assessed and are now working on appropriate programmes. In one instance, a carpentry and joinery trainee had been working at a much higher skill level at work than at off-the-job training sessions. The business support officers visit trainees on the job at three-monthly intervals. They work well to ensure that trainees' needs are being addressed. Trainees' progress is discussed and recorded, pastoral issues are dealt with and, on most occasions, a company representative is involved.

10. Some trainees have not been reviewed for four months. Short-term targets are not always set as a result of review meetings. Although employers are very supportive of trainees, they are not always aware of the content of the off-the-job training programmes and are unable to match the workplace experience to the off-the-job training. There is little assessment in the workplace. Most of the assessment takes place in the college's workshop and so trainees are not always assessed in a real working environment. Opportunities are missed for work-based training and assessment.

Engineering

Grade 2

11. Lowestoft College offers training in automotive, electrical, mechanical, servicing and maintenance engineering, along with fabrication and welding at NVQ levels 2 and 3. There are 63 trainees on the programme. There are 42 modern apprentices, of whom 11 are working towards qualifications in mechanical engineering, 12 towards qualifications in electrical engineering, and 19 towards qualifications in fabrication and welding. There are 10 national trainees of whom one is working towards electrical engineering, one towards fabrication and welding and eight towards motor-vehicle qualifications. There are 11 on other training

programmes, of whom nine are working towards a motor-vehicle qualification and one towards a qualification in each of electrical and fabrication welding. There are four New Deal clients on various engineering programmes. Trainees are employed with local engineering companies, or on training programmes with a good expectation of employment at the end of training. Trainees on automotive programmes gain most of their practical experience in the workplace. Off-the-job training takes place at the college one day a week during term time. Practical exercises are built into this programme. The other engineering programmes at level 2 are designed to include either an 18- or 36-week block of practical and theory training before trainees enter the workplace. A typical week consists of four days of basic engineering and one day in the specialist trade area. Thereafter trainees are placed with local employers. All modern apprentices following mechanical, electrical, maintenance and fabrication welding programmes attend college for one day each week. Assessment is planned to take place in the workplace. The length of the modern apprenticeship programme is tailored to suit the employer and the trainee, following consultation. Off-the-job trainers have extensive experience in engineering. They hold relevant trade and assessor qualifications. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report, identified of further strengths and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good foundation training
- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ well-planned off-the-job training
- ◆ high retention rates
- ◆ good assessment practice
- ◆ strong safety practices

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor understanding by employers of the modern apprenticeship framework
- ◆ slow development and integration of key skills training
- ◆ inadequate equipment in college workshops

12. The level of basic engineering skills taught during foundation training is good. Employers value the good grounding that is given in associated engineering disciplines as well as in the specialist trade. Some employers have made valuable contributions to the college by donating specialist equipment to help with training activities. Motor-vehicle trainees have the opportunity to work on modern roadworthy vehicles to improve their diagnostic and reparation skills. There are placements with a wide variety of different engineering companies, ranging from small rural garages to large industrial shipping companies. Good continuity of training has been established between employers and the college. Visits are made

by the review teams quarterly to discuss trainees' progress. Trainees are allocated mentors to supervise their tasks in the workplace and validate their evidence. The range of tasks available in the workplace is more than adequate to meet the range of competencies required. Recruitment of modern apprentices has doubled each year for the last two years. Achievement and retention rates for the level 2 foundation NVQ are good. Off-the-job training sessions are well conducted and trainers interact well with trainees. Questions from trainees are encouraged and effectively dealt with. Assessment planning and record keeping at level 2 are well established. There are good systems for monitoring trainees' progress, which is on display on noticeboards in the training area. This helps to motivate trainees. A good variety of assessment methods are used. However, formal assessment is not normally completed until the end of the programme. Time is allocated during work time to work on portfolios. Portfolios are of a high standard with the tasks completed in order to cover the range required clearly identified. Retention rates on all programmes are improving, with over 90 per cent of trainees remaining on the programme in 1999.

13. Qualified assessors visit companies monthly to carry out assessments. High standards of health and safety are emphasised at all stages of training. In the machine workshops, all machines have been fitted with the necessary emergency stop system, which automatically cuts off the machinery. In addition, an overhead wire enables off-the-job trainers to stop machinery instantly on identification of a potential hazard. The trainees transfer their safety awareness to the workplace. Good health and safety practice is also followed at the college. A new extraction system has recently been installed in the welding section.

14. Not all employers understand the complex framework of the engineering qualifications. Many employers value the traditional approach to training rather than the NVQ system. Insufficient effort has been put into ensuring that employers are familiar with the requirements of the framework. Some trainees are unaware of the progression routes available within the industry following their foundation training. Limited information is made available. Some trainees have not received learning support packs six months into their programme. Opportunities are missed to add to trainees' skills by their achieving appropriate additional qualifications. For example, trainees have not received training and certification in specific areas such as manual handling and abrasive wheels.

15. The college does not effectively promote key skills training in engineering. Employers are not informed of the key skills requirements for level 3 trainees. The college has set up a working group to improve the integration of key skills into the programmes. Information is slow to reach off-the-job trainers and trainees. Trainees are not aware of how key skills are going to be assessed. In the college workshops some tools and equipment are outdated or in short supply. The main areas are electrical test equipment, drawing materials and modern cutting tools.

Transportation

Grade 2

16. Lowestoft College offers a marine programme leading to an NVQ at level 2 in merchant vessel operations. This is equivalent to the grade II seaman's certificate. It is a new programme, first offered in 1998. There are three trainees, and one New Deal client on the full-time education and employment option. All the trainees are employed. Trainees undergo a medical inspection and complete a training session in personal survival techniques in the college's environment tank. This simulates conditions of wind, waves, rain and thunder in the open sea. Trainees then participate in a 28-day observation trip on an operational vessel before starting their programme. Following the trip, they attend a six-week period of block release at the college covering the statutory requirements of the maritime and coastguard agency. Trainees work towards certificates in first aid and elementary fire fighting and receive additional training in personal safety and social responsibility. They also participate in a two-day outdoor team-building exercise. The training covers various shipboard duties such as dealing with stock, wire and rope splicing techniques, vessel maintenance and housekeeping, watch duties and operating and maintaining fast-rescue craft. On completion of the block-release phase, trainees start a cycle of 28 days at sea followed by 14 days' leave. During the periods of leave, trainees may spend some time at the college to work on their portfolios of evidence. After 18 weeks, trainees spend two weeks at the college for training leading to the certificate of proficiency in survival craft. They then return to sea for four further 28-day periods. While at sea, training is provided by the ship's officers and crew. Trainees record evidence for their NVQ. The ship's master or first officer authenticates the evidence. Progress reviews with college staff take place during the trainees' leave period.

17. There are five full-time and two part-time training staff and three technicians at the college. Five of the staff are qualified as ship's masters and two hold an authorised ship's pilot licence. All training staff are qualified as trainers, four are qualified assessors and one is qualified as an internal verifier. Two staff hold nationally recognised health and safety qualifications. Assessment is carried out in the college by college staff during the trainees' leave periods. A variety of assessment methods is used. Internal verification is also carried out by college staff. Two trainees have completed the programme and six have left early. Five other trainees, not on the TEC contract, have been on the programme. All completed their training. The self-assessment report accurately identified some strengths and weaknesses. The high standard of training was not identified as a strength in the report. The self-assessment process also failed to identify the weakness in assessment practice. One of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report has been corrected. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job-training
- ◆ good quality portfolios

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ rigorous health and safety practices
- ◆ well-planned on-the-job training
- ◆ effective monitoring of trainees' progress
- ◆ additional qualifications achieved

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ low retention rates
- ◆ lack of focus in progress reviews
- ◆ some weak assessment practice

18. Trainees receive good off-the-job training. The programme covers a wide variety of topics. Many of the topics are additional to the requirements of the NVQ but are relevant to merchant vessel operations. They extend the trainees' knowledge and capabilities. Learning materials given to trainees are thorough and well presented. Training methods are also varied. There is considerable practical work, some of it in small boats, to reinforce the theory training. Trainers are qualified and have substantial occupational experience. Trainees use the environmental tank for survival training and the college's computer-controlled bridge simulator. This simulator is a state-of-the-art piece of equipment. Trainees produce portfolios of a high standard. The evidence is relevant, readily attributable, valid and neatly presented. Trainees receive help and advice with portfolio-building during their periods of leave but much of the work is done while at sea. Some trainees gather evidence for more than the required number of optional units in their NVQ. Work placements are good. Trainees serve on ships owned by their employer. These are mainly used on standby duties at oil and gas platforms in the North Sea. There is some platform supply work. The nature of the ship's standby duties gives the trainees ample time for their on-the-job training, some of which they arrange for themselves. For example, one trainee needed to take part in a fire drill in the engine room to provide evidence for the NVQ. The trainee approached the ship's master who arranged an appropriate fire drill to meet the trainees' requirements. The ships also provide ample opportunities for the trainees to gather evidence for their NVQs. The health and safety requirements of working at sea are rigorously applied. Trainees receive comprehensive health and safety training over and above the statutory requirements. This is continually reinforced in the college and at sea. Trainees have a high awareness of health and safety. For example, one trainee could describe how an assessment for a permit to work in a confined space is carried out. This duty is usually performed by the ship's safety officer. On-the-job training is well planned. College staff meet with the employer monthly to discuss training requirements. Trainees are aware of the requirements of their NVQ and contribute to the planning. While at sea, trainees discuss the requirements of their training plan with the ships' officers. Trainees' progress is accurately monitored and recorded. Trainers, trainees and employers have a copy of the progress sheet. This is updated and re-issued following each assessment. College staff meet monthly to discuss all trainees' progress. Minutes of the meeting are kept. These

contain action points, responsibilities and timescales. Trainees work towards a number of qualifications in addition to the requirements of their programme. All are relevant to their employment. Some, for example the coxswain's ticket for fast rescue craft, are provided by the employer.

19. Retention rates on the programme are low. Of the 12 trainees who started on the programme, six left before completion. Of these, five left after their first trip to sea, having decided that a seafarer's career was not what they wanted. This was before the college introduced the concept of an observation trip before the trainees are registered. Assessments are carried out by an unqualified assessor, and are not countersigned by a qualified assessor. The college has been sent guidance on the procedures for assessors under training by the awarding body. This practice does not follow the procedures. Progress reviews are not sufficiently focused on trainees' achievements and progress. They are more concerned with matters relating to trainees' satisfaction and other pastoral support. They contain few definitive action points for the trainees to achieve.

Business administration

Grade 3

20. There are 25 trainees on the business administration programme. There are nine youth trainees working towards NVQ at level 2 in business administration, nine modern apprentices and seven national trainees. This includes nine trainees following programmes leading to a joint NVQ in accounts and technician award. In administration, off-the-job training for trainees working towards level 2 takes place on one day each week. This takes the form of a NVQ workshop. Level 3 trainees have a more flexible pattern of attendance, usually a half-day training session during college term time. College assessors visit the workplace to assess trainees. Trainees collect examples of work-based evidence for assessment. The off-the-job workshop sessions are held at college. They provide portfolio development training and opportunities and necessary theoretical and practical training. Some short in-house college placements are used for practice and assessment if required. The programme for level 2 trainees includes half a day training in keyboard and text processing leading to secretarial qualifications. The business services officer carries out a quarterly review in the workplace. The assessor interviews trainees starting modern apprentice programmes. New trainees undergo an initial basic skills test and modern apprentices are also initially assessed for key skills. Further assessment is carried out at the start of the off-the-job programme to identify trainees' programme requirements in more detail.

21. Nine trainees are following accounting programmes leading to NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4. Trainees also can work towards accounting technician awards. Trainees attend college one day a week for off-the-job training and join a standard day-release programme. They are expected to use logbooks to record any workplace activity. Work-based assignments are set. Assessment takes place in college during off-the-job sessions and through taking exams. A business services officer visits trainees to carry out the quarterly review in the workplace. Inspectors agreed with

the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned on- and off-the-job training in administration
- ◆ good integration of key skills with training
- ◆ good learning materials
- ◆ effective target-setting

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ outdated office equipment
- ◆ no planned on-the-job training in accounts
- ◆ poor retention rates on level 2 administration programmes

22. In administration, off-the-job trainers from the college visit trainees at work. The initial visit is used to plan the programme and help trainees and employers to identify the ways in which competence can be achieved in the workplace. Employers contribute well to the training and assessment plans. The off-the-job programme is well structured and planned. The programme is flexible, adapting to the needs of trainees' work roles. In the off-the-job sessions, staff work to identify and meet trainees' needs. College assessors visit trainees at work. Assessments are well planned and effectively carried out. Internal verification is well organised.

23. In administration, targets are set and reviewed in both on-the-job training and off-the-job sessions. Trainees can readily identify their progress and achievements. They were clear about what is required of them and what they need to do to achieve their targets. Portfolios are of a good standard and the majority of evidence is generated at work. Key skills have been effectively integrated into the programme. Trainees understand the importance of the role of key skills and how they are integrated. Trainees use good learning materials to support their training. These include key skills learning materials, theory notes, work sheets, textbooks and work-based assignments. The college has a training office where facilities are also available to trainees. Trainees working towards the level 2 NVQ in administration receive off-the-job training leading towards qualifications in word processing and text processing.

24. The off-the-job training programmes are satisfactorily organised in accounts. Trainees clearly understand what is expected of them. Key skills have been recently introduced. Trainees know what they are required to do to and are given advice and guidance. All assessment is carried out off the job. Trainees are encouraged to bring forward evidence from the workplace. They use detailed log books to help with this. Trainees are employed in relevant work placements and gain valuable experience. However, opportunities are missed to involve employers in the planning and design of the on-the-job training programme. The modern

apprentice programmes in accounts do not fulfil the full requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework.

25. Some off-the-job training in administration takes place in facilities with out-of-date office equipment, information technology hardware and software. Seating and the general layout of the room used are less than satisfactory. The need to upgrade equipment has been recognised and the college has plans to improve the situation. The retention and achievement rates are not broken down between administration and accounts. The retention rates are poor for both the modern apprenticeship and youth programmes, with over 70 per cent of trainees leaving early in 1998-99. The achievement rates for those who stay are above the national average. The average over the past two years is 96 per cent.

Hospitality

Grade 3

26. There are two distinct programme areas in this occupational area. These are hospitality and meat processing. There are 11 national trainees working towards qualifications in meat processing. This programme started only five weeks ago. In hospitality there are six modern apprentices, 11 national trainees and three other trainees. All are working towards a range of programmes in hospitality, which include food preparation and cookery at NVQ levels 1 and 2, bar service NVQs at level 2 and supervision NVQs at level 3. With the exception of a trainee with moderate learning difficulties, who has a work placement in the college refectory, all the trainees are employed in catering establishments in the Lowestoft area. All the national and other trainees receive off-the-job training at the college one day a week during term time. The modern apprentices attend off-the-job training sessions at the college every other week. The bar service training takes place in the workplace. The meat processing trainees' on- and off-the-job training takes place at the abattoir where they work. These trainees are assessed in the workplace by two supervisors with appropriate assessor awards and occupational experience. Off-the-job-training is carried out in the workplace by a college trainer who is also the designated internal verifier. The trainees also learn key skills at a small training centre in a neighbouring village. The college's self-assessment report was insufficiently self critical and failed to identify weaknesses in assessment practices and the slow rate of trainees' achievement in hospitality. The recent introduction of meat processing meant that this area was not included in the report. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ strong links between on- and off-the-job training in meat processing

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ little workplace assessment in hospitality

- ◆ poor retention rates
- ◆ slow integration of key skills into training

27. Trainees are employed in a wide range of different work placements in the area. These include large holiday villages, small catering outlets and hotels and restaurants. Workplace supervisors provide many opportunities for trainees to develop their skills across a wide range of activities. The training facilities for off-the-job training at the college are good. Off-the-job trainers are well qualified and endeavour to keep abreast of current industry practice. The training resources for meat processing are excellent. There is a dedicated classroom, and a disused meat processing plant has also been converted to provide an excellent training facility. Hygiene and safety procedures are strictly enforced in the plant. The employer supplies the trainees with all the appropriate protective equipment. The learning materials for this programme are still being developed. A trainee with additional learning needs has a sheltered work placement within the college's catering operations. Trainees are closely supervised and guided through their learning by the catering staff. One previous trainee on this programme has successfully progressed to a national traineeship.

28. More able trainees and those with prior experience are able to complete their training more quickly. All the assessment for meat processing takes place as the trainees work on the meat-processing lines. This is well planned but the programme is very new. The opportunities for trainees to participate in the national and international catering events identified in the self-assessment report are limited because most of the places are offered to full-time students.

29. Little use is made of work-based evidence for trainees in food preparation. They complete workplace-monitoring sheets regularly but are unsure about the value of this activity. Thirty-three per cent of the qualification is assessed in the workplace by direct observation or by the use of the workplace monitoring sheets. The remainder of the assessment is carried out in the college's training kitchen by college staff. This programme has a strong emphasis on technical skills and the quality of training sessions is good. However, trainees are not set demanding targets by their trainers even for the completion of the NVQ level 1 programme they follow as part of their first year. Assessment of the trainee chefs only takes place in the college's practice kitchen and is not structured.

30. Retention rates are poor across the programme. During the last three years there has been an average retention rate of 49 per cent. Retention is improving and now stands at 60 per cent. In 1999, only one trainee completed the qualification. The college recognised in 1998 that the retention rates for trainees working in the bar and food service area was particularly poor. Training in these areas is no longer offered.

31. An off-the-job trainer visits hospitality trainees once a term. No assessment is carried out during these visits, which are used to establish a link between the college and the trainees' workplaces. Employers are not sufficiently informed about

opportunities for naturally occurring evidence, or about the use of witness testimony. Trainees are being slow to achieve. Key skills training and assessment are still being developed and are not yet integrated into the programmes. Although some hospitality employers have qualified assessors on their staff, they have little input into the assessment process. Little use is made of witness statements.

Hair & beauty

Grade 3

32. Lowestoft College has 25 trainees on hairdressing training programmes. Of these, 22 are national trainees. All these trainees are working towards NVQ level 2 in hairdressing. There are three modern apprentices, who are working towards NVQ level 3 in hairdressing. There are also two New Deal clients. There are 24 female trainees and one male trainee. All the trainees are employed and work in salons in Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and the surrounding area. One trainee has learning difficulties. During their first year of training, trainees attend college one day each week for 23 weeks. This is mainly for theory but also for some practical training. In the second year, attendance at college is on average one day each month. The first-year trainees attend for three consecutive weeks each month, with the second-year trainees attending on the fourth. This attendance is during college term times. Some of the second-year trainees attend college on Tuesday evenings for eight weeks in order to work in the barbering unit. Most of the practical skills are developed and assessed in the workplace, in partnership with 17 qualified work-based assessors. They are guided in assessment by the college's internal verifier. Modern apprentices attend college for one day each month. The low retention and achievement rates were not identified in the self-assessment report. A lower grade was awarded by inspectors than that given by the college.

GOOD PRACTICE

This is an example of good monitoring of trainees' progress.

Some trainees keep a 'model diary' in which they keep a daily record of the tasks they have completed during the day. This enables them and their assessors to review their progress.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ high percentage of work-based assessors
- ◆ good participation by trainees in programme planning

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention rates in modern apprenticeships
- ◆ uninspiring theory teaching
- ◆ poor planning of workplace assessment

33. Trainees have good access to a range of suitable workplaces to meet their individual needs. Some are modern and highly fashionable professional salons in high-street locations. Others are smaller, more traditional salons located in rural districts. The college's salon where off-the-job training takes place is spacious and well lit. There is plenty of space, allowing ample room for specialist demonstrations.

34. Eighty-nine per cent of the workplaces have a qualified assessor. Most of the training and assessment is undertaken on the job at specified times, usually during the evening. In addition, the college has two members of staff who undertake some assessment and internal verification. One of these works at NVQ level 3. The other works at level 2 and is still working towards the internal verification award. Trainees have good opportunities to participate in the planning of their off-the-job training programme. Second-year trainees raised some concerns in the first year of their training. As a result, the second year of the programme has been changed. Trainees now undertake all their practical assessment on the job. The time spent in college is now devoted mainly to theory work.

35. Retention rates are poor across the programmes. Six (31 per cent) of the national trainees who started the programme in September 1999 have left early. In 1998-99, all four of the modern apprentices left early. These were all within the first four months of the programme. There has been some improvement in achievement rates on the youth training programme but this programme is no longer run in the college as it has been superseded by national traineeships. Staff on the curriculum area responsible for hair are aware of the situation and have taken some action. Meetings have been held where retention and achievement issues have been discussed.

36. Theory training is uninspiring and unchallenging for trainees. A large amount of time is spent writing notes and copying diagrams from overhead transparencies. For part of the lesson, trainers dictate notes to the trainees. Theory work takes place in the practical hairdressing salon where trainees have to balance their files on their knees while writing. One end of the room contains the hairdressing reception and dispensary with other students undertaking a lesson in the other half of the room. Trainees are reluctant to participate fully in the lesson for fear of disturbing other people. During the observed session the trainees were very quiet. There was little interaction with the trainer. Different rates of learning were not taken into consideration. One trainee who is known by the trainer to have problems with reading and writing is expected to keep up with the pace of the other trainees. Only by copying from a friend do trainees catch up on any lesson notes that they have missed.

37. There is no formal assessment planning for work-based assessment. Work-based assessors/trainers do not have a formal induction to the training programme. They are not invited to attend assessors' meetings or to participate in sharing good practice across the programmes. A business services officer from the college, who is not occupationally experienced in hairdressing, carries out reviews in the workplace. At the start of the training programme, the business services officer completes the trainees' individual training plans. These include anticipated completion dates identified by the officer. The dates are not negotiated with either the on- or off-the-job trainer or with the trainee. The completion dates are nearly always two years ahead and follow the pattern of the college's programme. The trainee keeps a copy and another is kept in the trainee's file in the business unit. The on- and off-the-job trainers and assessors do not have individual copies.

Foundation for work

Grade 2

38. Lowestoft College provides prevocational training for young people. There are 19 trainees on the foundation programme, comprising nine men and 10 women. Most enter the programme in September as recent school leavers. Of the 18 on the programme, nine are in their second year. The majority of the trainees have moderate learning difficulties and enter the programme directly from school via the careers service. They can remain on the programme for two years. Where this is a realistic option, trainees are encouraged to work towards an NVQ at level 1 in subject areas such as construction, small animal care, catering or hairdressing. They join mainstream college courses for off-the-job training. In addition, where the need has been identified, literacy and numeracy training is offered as part of the off-the-job training. This is carried out in workshop sessions in the college's learner-support department. Trainees have the opportunity to gain qualifications in wordpower and numberpower either at entry level or level 1, or to work towards some units of level 2. They can also gain certificates in health and safety, basic food hygiene and first aid. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths but the importance of good-quality and appropriate work placements was insufficiently emphasised. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ highly appropriate work placements
- ◆ wide range of additional qualifications available
- ◆ good rate of progression into employment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no individual targets set for learning
- ◆ poor record-keeping

39. Trainees work with a range of employers which offer a variety of work experiences suited to the trainees' needs and preferences. These include catering organisations, care premises, construction projects, garden centres and other retail outlets. Some trainees gain work experience through becoming involved in the college's construction project in the southern part of the town. Trainees are carefully matched to the placements. Most trainees start in a work placement early in their training. Of the 18 trainees on the programme, 17 are currently on a work placement or work taster. Where either the trainee or the employer finds the placement arrangement unsuitable, an alternative is found after a full discussion and agreement with the trainee. There is no disruption to the trainees. Those not on work tasters are on practical college courses. Trainees are closely supervised and supported by college staff and employers throughout this time.

40. As well as working towards NVQs at level 1, and entry-level wordpower and numberpower qualifications, trainees are also able to gain additional certificates

appropriate to the NVQ in food hygiene, health and safety, and first aid to improve their employment prospects. In care, trainees are able to work towards a college-devised accredited qualification, as there is no level 1 NVQ available. Of those trainees currently on the programme, nine trainees have gained or are working towards certificates in food hygiene. Nine are working towards health and safety certificates. Three have achieved care certificates. Nine have achieved, or are working towards, first aid certificates, and 14 are aiming to achieve wordpower level 1. All certificates are kept in trainees' records of achievement along with a photographic record of their training. Halfway through the training programme, each trainee receives a college certificate, which lists the qualifications achieved and other personal achievements. Retention rates on the programme are high. The majority of trainees go on to obtain jobs. Of those trainees completing their course last summer, nine of the 12 leaving gained sustainable employment. Of the rest, two went on to further study within the college. One was undecided about the future and returned to the careers service for advice.

41. Trainees are clear about the programme they are undertaking and about the different modules they are taking. They understand the various qualifications they undertake as part of the off-the-job training. They also understand how all of the different areas of learning fit together to help them to achieve the main aim of their training programme.

42. Trainees do not know their progress in relation to their overall training plan, how far they have to go before they reach their target or what they have already achieved. Although long-term targets are set, they are not specific to individuals.

43. Many of the college staff work with trainees both on and off the job because of the structure of the programme and the level of support required by this group of trainees. There is no consistent approach to recording information about trainees. A variety of records are kept in a number of differing formats and by different people. Some are very detailed, while others contain little or no information. The records are not effective in helping trainees to progress. Frequent visits are made to trainees in the workplace to ensure that they are able to settle and resolve any problems at an early stage. However, details of these visits and any discussions held with trainees or employers are rarely recorded. Trainees are continuously supervised during their off-the-job training and frequent informal discussions are held with college staff but these are not recorded.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

44. The college has an equal opportunities committee, which is chaired by the principal and meets twice a term. The members review the equal opportunities policy each year. It was last reviewed and amended in November 1999. The policy states how it is to be implemented and details those aspects of equal opportunities needing attention. A sub-committee specifically addresses student admissions to the

college which are of an exceptional nature. A student handbook is distributed to all trainees, and includes a statement on equal opportunities and complaints. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths which are no more than normal practice and not applicable to work-based training. Further weaknesses were identified and a lower grade was awarded than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of inclusive projects
- ◆ innovative admissions and review panel

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inappropriate NVQs appeals procedure
- ◆ weak understanding of equal opportunities in the workplace

45. The college has ample facilities for students and trainees with mobility difficulties and there is access to most areas of the college. The new building established in 1998 has specific access for those with disabilities as does a purpose-built nursery. The college has been active in obtaining European funding to provide these facilities. The needs of people in remote rural parts of the area have also been recognised. The college is involved with partners in developing a rural outreach facility which will include information technology access, outreach training and information for people living in the Lowestoft hinterland. In response to a recent national inquiry, the college has developed a code of fairness for staff and students to ensure equal treatment. It has responded to the need for widening participation by collaborating with the district and county councils. This has resulted in the opening of a training centre to help students and clients to develop practical skills in construction, painting and decorating, and electrical engineering. Negotiations are taking place with a local housing association to manage and develop a community resource centre. The college has strong links with all the schools in the area. In order to ensure fair and open access to the college, a special panel was set up in 1996. This panel ensures that applications from people with serious behavioural, social, emotional or physical difficulties are formally reviewed. It also ensures that the appropriate support is available.

46. In the student charter, there is a detailed academic appeals procedure. It is also abbreviated in the student handbook. The appeals procedure is based on grades and marks. It is complicated in its wording. There is no clear statement that it applies to the assessment of NVQs. Trainees are not clear about what to do and how to do it if they wish to appeal against an assessment. There is a complaints procedure, which applies to all college activities. However, there are no clear guidelines as to how trainees should make complaints about activities in the workplace. Trainees and employers have a weak understanding of the application of equality of opportunity in the workplace. When reviews take place in the workplace, the business service officers have now started to monitor employers' equal opportunities practices. The college has just established terms of reference for an

employer liaison committee. The terms of reference do not include how equality of opportunity is to be implemented in the workplace for trainees.

Trainee support

Grade 3

GOOD PRACTICE

This is an example of good practice in developing basic skills.

A drop-in basic skills workshop has been developed in a local company. The workshop has a wide range of learning materials as well as up-to-date information technology. One of the New Deal clients working on his literacy needs has also developed expertise in using the digital camera. He is now training the company's staff by giving presentations on its use.

47. Lowestoft College's trainees are mainly recruited by referral from the careers service, the Employment Service or from local schools. Some trainees are familiar with the college and the opportunities available to them through school and college links. Some trainees have been assessed by the careers service as needing additional support. With the exception of foundation trainees, members of the college's TEC/New Deal team interview all other applicants. They give information about training choices and assess their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, an initial assessment of key skills in communication, application of number and information technology is carried out for national trainees and modern apprentices. Once completed, a training plan is agreed and drawn up. The strengths identified in the self-assessment report were based around staff being helpful, and pastoral care. Further strengths were identified by inspectors and the same grade was awarded.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good response to individual trainees' needs
- ◆ good integration of trainees from another provider
- ◆ effective jobsearch for New Deal clients in construction

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak recording of additional learning support
- ◆ lack of structure for providing learning support
- ◆ poor involvement by employers in reviews

GOOD PRACTICE

One trainee working towards an NVQ at level 2 in merchant vessel operations is dyslexic. In order for him to be able to write up his portfolio statements during his 28-day periods at sea, the college negotiated funding with the TEC to obtain a lap-top computer and printer. The trainee has recently completed his NVQ and is now aiming to progress to the level 3 deck officer award.

48. Staff are highly aware of and responsive to the training and potential needs of individual trainees within their programme area. Through their knowledge of the facilities within the college, they can refer trainees to additional assessment with the learner support team. This may be when dyslexia is suspected or if a trainee would benefit from specific help with particular aspects of training such as additional numeracy or literacy training. Trainees feel able to raise issues and concerns with their college tutor or workplace trainer. The college offers a range of support opportunities for clients and trainees across all training programmes. As registered students of the college, all trainees have full access to all its support services, including initial assessment, additional learning support, careers guidance and counselling. The student charter sets out the level of service that trainees and clients can expect, including induction, training, health and safety and equality of opportunity.

49. Because of the problems of assessing key skills, the college has purchased a specific diagnostic assessment package. This is now being used with all trainees

enrolled on programmes since September 1999. It is proving to be effective in identifying trainees' levels of attainment in key skills. Trainees' individual training plans clearly identify their training and development needs in key skills.

50. The majority of staff are sensitive to individuals who may need to approach their training at a slower pace, for whatever reason. Frequent visits are made to trainees in the workplace by a variety of college staff including a member of the TEC/New Deal team. The frequency of these visits varies depending on the vocational programme being followed.

51. In October 1999, 13 trainees in the occupational areas of construction and engineering were transferred from another training provider to Lowestoft College. Each trainee was re-assessed both for vocational skills and for suitability of the NVQ. Individual training plans were found to be inappropriate and in many cases trainees were working towards expired NVQs. The college has successfully re-assessed all trainees. Trainees are now working towards the correct qualification. Two trainees who previously had no work experience or employment have been successfully placed with a local holiday camp. They are making excellent progress and are now fully employed.

52. There is a wide variance in the jobsearch programme for New Deal clients. In construction, jobsearch is well integrated into the learning programme. It takes place progressively to build up clients' skills. The programme is well structured and clients make good progress. Ninety per cent of New Deal clients in construction have obtained employment. Of the 139 New Deal clients who have been on the programme, 34 have gained employment. Seventy-nine left without employment or a completed individual training plan. In other occupational areas, jobsearch is haphazard. One client who had an unsuccessful interview for a position at the college was given no interview guidance or counselling.

53. Most new trainees are assessed at their initial interview using nationally standardised tests to establish their learning support needs. Once in an occupational area, additional occupationally related assessment for literacy and numeracy may take place and different needs identified. Trainees and clients may also have additional needs which are identified during their training. There is no systematic recording of these identified learning needs on individual training plan. Many staff in occupational areas refer trainees directly to the college department responsible for learning support where a specific and detailed learning plan is drawn up related to their individual needs. A few trainees refer themselves. There is no mechanism to ensure that staff in the TEC/New Deal team have this information at the time of review. Regular meetings are held between the TEC/New Deal team and vocational staff and individual trainees are discussed. Information gathered is not recorded on training plans or included in individual trainees' files. General occupational competence and the appropriateness of the training programme are identified at the initial interview but are investigated further once trainees have joined their occupational area. In some programmes, induction is thorough and trainees have an awareness of most college support systems. This is not the case in all occupational areas. Although there are checklists identifying information which

needs to be included as part of the induction process, there are no detailed procedures for this.

54. Most reviews take place every 13 weeks. Some records are kept on what takes place at the reviews. Usually this is pastoral information, rather than the progress and action-planning required to complete programmes. The information in individual training plans is not sufficiently detailed. No targets are set. Additional support needs, if they are known, are not always indicated and therefore are not taken into account when reviews take place. Staff are unable to identify their specific needs and how these might affect their training, or whether the trainee is progressing at an appropriate pace. Current systems are not sufficiently comprehensive or rigorous to ensure that individual trainees' needs are met. There is no systematic mechanism to identify whether a trainee has taken up the opportunity of receiving additional support when it has been identified and recommended. Where trainees do not take up additional support or are unable to access it, there are neither systems to investigate alternatives, nor clear lines of responsibility to find out why it is not being taken up.

55. The level of involvement by employers in trainees and clients' reviews varies. Although there is frequent contact with employers in some areas such as foundation, this is often informal and remains unrecorded. Many employers have little understanding of what the trainee is doing at college. The off-the-job training is not co-ordinated with tasks performed at work. In some areas, such as engineering, employers have expressed particular concerns about their own ability to help trainees learn key skills. They are unclear as to what constitutes key skills and do not know how trainees can complete them.

Management of training

Grade 3

56. The contract for all training programmes at Lowestoft College is managed by the TEC/ New Deal team which provides the point of contact for communication with the TEC. The team consists of a contract manager, two full-time and one part-time business service officers, a part-time New Deal support officer, one part-time finance officer and an administration trainee. The contract manager reports to a business manager located within the customer and commercial services unit of the college. The business manager reports to the head of the customer and commercial services unit who in turn reports to the vice principal of curriculum and student services. Performance targets are set with heads of the various schools in the college. A system of internal review of performance is in operation involving the relevant occupational programme teams. Meetings are held and are minuted. Agendas are published in advance. These meetings and communications form part of the college-wide management system. Marketing plans are based on labour market surveys, customer surveys and day-to-day contact with employers. Business service officers take part in regular meetings with the TEC and the careers service as well as other relevant internal and external partners. The business service officers are also involved in recruitment, placing and inducting trainees, liaising with employers and liaising internally with college tutors. A number

of strengths and weaknesses were identified in the self-assessment report and inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective community networks and links
- ◆ strong recognition of and response to local training needs
- ◆ good management of new programme development

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor use of data in making decisions
- ◆ some poor involvement by employers in NVQ training and assessment
- ◆ unclear responsibility among curriculum teams for planning training in the workplace

57. The college has developed strong relationships, partnerships and networks with other local agencies on a regular basis. College staff involved with training programmes meet with schools, the careers service and the Employment Service, employers and other relevant organisations. Its work with one local high school has helped to improve access to vocational training by giving school children tasters in vocational training then transferring them to work-based schemes when they are old enough. Its work with the Prince's Trust volunteers offers opportunities for progression into training programmes by giving training to develop communication skills and team working. One community project provides opportunities for training and work experience for New Deal clients in building trades through the renovation of derelict housing in a local area of deprivation.

58. There is good awareness in the college of local, regional, national and international training needs. Analysis of labour market information forms an important part of the college's approach to managing training programmes. The customer services and support director and the TEC/New Deal team manager are both actively involved in market research and new programme development. An initiative by the TEC team manager with the food industry has led to the new training programme in meat processing and others are under discussion. Close contact with the maritime industry has enabled the college to respond effectively to local needs by providing a drilling operations programme as part of the New Deal. The college has effectively managed the introduction of new training programmes. The New Deal programme has enabled the college to address the needs of unemployed people in the area. A new marine transport training programme has been effectively introduced and managed.

59. The TEC/New Deal team is responsible for the training contract and programme monitoring. This unit has developed satisfactory local operational management procedures and practices. Data are collected and analysed to monitor programme performance regarding the meeting of contractual requirements. Information from quarterly reviews of trainees' progress is reviewed by the

manager. Service team meetings are held which involve all the TEC /New Deal team staff. Minutes are taken and trainees' progress and performance are regularly reviewed. The business service officers regularly liaise with college tutors through team meetings and informal contact.

60. The college does not analyse its performance on a programme-by-programme basis, or across all programmes, as a regular part of its management of training. Although effective for full-time students, the current management information systems do not always provide an adequate analysis of its performance in the work-based training programmes, and aggregated management information is not produced. Targets are not set for programmes owing to the lack of analysis and accurate data.

61. In a number of occupational areas, there is no planning with employers of programmes in the workplace. Employers are often unaware of the occupational standards and levels. They are not generally informed about their role in workplace training and assessment. In a few areas, nearly all assessment is carried out off the job. There are only a few work-based assessors, mainly in one area. Employers with modern apprentices have not been involved in planning or providing extended induction training, organisation and industry awareness or key skills. Few employers are aware of the opportunities for them to contribute through planning customised programmes.

62. The current arrangements for managing training make it difficult to clearly identify who is responsible for implementing and developing work-based training programmes. The off-the-job programmes provided by the college's schools involve various specialist occupational tutors and college-based resources. However, in the workplace, the responsibilities are less clear. The TEC/New Deal team initiates the programmes, and manages and monitors them to comply with the contract. It is not clear who is responsible for planning the programmes in detail with the employer in the workplace or for carrying out assessments.

63. The issue of key skills has been identified as a weakness. Work-based assessment has also been recognised as a weakness and the action plan in the self-assessment report states that unspecified strategies are required to address this issue. However, it is not clear from the current action plan where the management responsibility lies for this across all programmes, what specifically is to be done, how it is to be taken forward and over what period of time.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

64. The TEC and New Deal team's quality assurance arrangements meet the requirements of the Norfolk and Waveney and Suffolk TECs. The vice principal of human and physical resources and the director for planning and quality are responsible for the development and maintenance of the college's quality assurance systems. The TEC contracts manager and TEC team including the departmental specialists have participated in developing the quality section within the main

college's quality assurance framework. There is a quality assurance operational procedures manual to which staff have access. Quality standards have been developed to form the basis of an audit cycle designed to ensure that all the established standards are audited at least every two years. The training standards for work-based training in the quality assurance handbook are due for audit in the forthcoming cycle. The strengths identified in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice. Further weaknesses were identified by inspectors and a lower grade was awarded than that given in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

This is an example of good practice with regard to the authentication of witness testimonies. Trainees working towards an NVQ in merchant vessel operations receive most of their training, and gather most of their evidence, while serving on ships at sea. Either the ship's master or other senior officers witness this evidence. All witness signatures appear over the ship's stamp. Only the master and senior officers have access to this stamp. Trainees' portfolios contain a list of authorised witnesses and specimen signatures for each ship on which they have served. The specimen signatures are also over the appropriate ship's stamp. Assessors also have copies of the authorised signatures. Assessment signatures appear over the college's stamp.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good framework for quality assurance procedures and arrangements
- ◆ clearly identified standards and performance measures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ ineffective monitoring of quality of training
- ◆ poor co-ordination of internal verification
- ◆ weak monitoring of achievement and retention data
- ◆ lack of useful detail in contracts

65. The college has established a good, well-recorded framework for quality assurance procedures and arrangements, which is contained in the college quality handbook. Standards have been agreed and measures established. There is a section dedicated to assuring the quality of work-based training. Most of the identified standards relate to the college as a whole, and many of the features of work-based training have not been considered. Although there are good features in the framework and procedures, their use to assure the quality of training is minimal. The college's audit team aims to carry out internal audits to ascertain whether standards are being achieved. Each quality standard is audited annually by a quality assurance forum, which draws up an annual audit schedule. Non-conformity is identified and action plans drawn up. The audit process has not had an impact on the work-based training.

66. Monitoring of on-the-job training is only carried out informally, primarily through the review process. There are no procedures for evaluating and improving training. Off-the-job training is monitored through the internal audit process but there is little evidence to show that the resulting analysis has led to improvements. Questionnaires are used to gain perceptions on quality from employers and trainees. The analysis of this evidence has not yet led to improvements. The quality assurance framework does not include a monitoring process for on-the-job training. The evaluation of the workplace experience and often the relevance to trainees' programmes is not analysed. The quality assurance framework focuses on contractual compliance rather than on continuous improvement.

67. The quality of the internal verification process varies across the training programmes. The best examples are in transport, administration and construction



where internal verification is carried out effectively. In hospitality and hair and beauty, the practice is poor. There is an internal verification handbook, but there is no overall co-ordination of internal verification across the college. Implementation also varies between the occupational areas. Good practice is not shared. Achievement and retention data are gathered in accordance with contractual requirements. This is done manually since the management information system is underdeveloped. There is little monitoring of trainees through the various programmes to show when they start, leave, transfer or complete. The resulting data lack validity and cannot be used to improve the quality of training. The service level agreements between the training department and those providing on- and off-the-job training lack detail. They omit target figures and outcomes and do not specify the type of training required or enable effective monitoring and evaluation.