



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MAY 1999

Peterborough Regional College

SUMMARY

Peterborough Regional College has a training unit whose staff manage the work-based training programmes. The quality of on- and off-the-job training is good and trainees benefit from good resources and modern equipment both at work and within the college. There is little workplace assessment and this slows progress towards completion. Equal opportunities work is underdeveloped, but staff have had some isolated success in recruiting people from under-represented groups to training. Changes to management procedures and quality assurance activity have achieved marked improvements to retention and qualification achievement rates. Arrangements for internal contracting with college departments for training and assessment are insufficiently rigorous.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	3
Business administration	2
Hair & beauty	3

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured workplace assessments in mechanical engineering
- ◆ good key skills integration in off-the-job training in engineering
- ◆ off-the-job training available during summer recess in hairdressing
- ◆ comprehensive learning resource packs
- ◆ well-structured initial assessment procedures
- ◆ good impartial guidance at initial interview
- ◆ good trainees' reviews involving all those involved in training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of work-based key skills evidence
- ◆ insufficient workplace assessment
- ◆ little assessment for first year hairdressing trainees
- ◆ lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of equal opportunities
- ◆ internal contracting agreements not rigorous

INTRODUCTION

1. Peterborough Regional College is a general further education college situated within the boundaries of the unitary authority of Peterborough, one mile from the city centre. The college also operates finance and management programmes from a small site three miles away. The college provides government-funded work-based training in construction, engineering, business administration, hair and beauty, customer service, management (including training and assessment) and hospitality. The areas of hospitality, management and customer service were not inspected owing to the low numbers of trainees. The college has been delivering government funded training since 1975. At the time of inspection, there were 318 trainees on programmes due to be inspected, of which 175 were modern apprentices, 77 national trainees and 66 on other training programmes. The college has diverse sources of income: 68 per cent from the Further Education Funding Council, 4 per cent from the sole contract with Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTE) and the remainder from sources such as tuition fees and the European Social Fund (ESF). The college also has a small number of New Deal clients participating in the full-time education and training option. A unit manager, work placement manager, three workplace co-coordinators, one administration manager and two full- and one part-time clerical staff run the vocational training unit.

2. Greater Peterborough has a mix of urban, rural and semi-rural locations. Within a mile of the college there are five of the most deprived wards in Britain. Unemployment in the area in January 1999 was 3.4 per cent, but there is a wide variation in the unemployment rates in the travel-to-work area. In the west of the region unemployment is at 2 per cent, but it reaches 5.6 per cent in the east. Some 10 per cent of claimants are under 20 years of age, with a further 16 per cent in the 20-24-age group. This indicates that those unemployed under the age of 25 represent more than 25 per cent of the total figure. Five per cent of year 11 pupils move into work-based training, with 71 per cent staying on in full-time education and training. In 1998, the proportion of school leavers achieving five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 41.3 per cent compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. The minority ethnic population of Greater Peterborough is 4.2 per cent with higher concentrations in the city of Peterborough itself.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. The vocational training unit manager and the work placement manager undertook responsibility for the production of the self-assessment report. They attended three training sessions provided by the chamber. They conducted a wide-ranging analysis of the provision by providing briefing sessions with college managers, tutors and staff. Interviews were held with all the delivery teams, and a representative sample of trainees and employers. They analysed and assessed all the college's work-based training provision including statistical data. The self-assessment report was accurate in the findings of construction, engineering, business administration, equal opportunities, management of training and quality assurance. In hair and beauty, a lower grade was awarded by inspectors and a higher grade for trainee support than those given in the self-assessment report.

4. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 33 days at Peterborough Regional College in May 1999. The team worked jointly with a team of Further Education Funding Council inspectors during this time, sharing information and each other's findings. The occupational areas inspected jointly were engineering, business administration and hair and beauty along with the generic aspects of provision. Inspectors met with a total of 89 trainees, 26 work providers and employers. They interviewed a total of 30 staff, representing vocational training unit and curriculum staff. A comprehensive selection of college documents was provided for both teams. Five sessions of training were observed along with reviews and assessment in the workplace and initial interviews of potential trainees

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

5. The college has 97 trainees in construction. There are 22 trainees on the plumbing programme, six of whom are youth trainees, nine are national trainees and seven are modern apprentices. Ten trainees are taking wood occupation programmes, with five being youth trainees and five modern apprentices. In electrical installation, there are 65 trainees, 24 of whom are youth trainees, one is a national trainee and 40 are modern apprentices. Trainees are working towards NVQs at level 2 or level 3 according to the programme and their level of competence. All trainees attend off-the-job training one day each week during the academic term. Assessment is undertaken during attendance at the college. The self-assessment report was generally accurate and inspectors awarded the same grade that was identified by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good matching of trainees to suitable placements
- ◆ significant improvement in trainees achievements over the last three years
- ◆ comprehensive range of occupational workbooks

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no work-based observation and assessment
- ◆ lack of co-ordination of key skills training

6. There is a wide variation in the types of work placements that are available within this occupational area. The staff within the vocational training unit have good knowledge of the placements available and sensitively place trainees with an employer who can provide a suitable learning environment for each trainee's needs. Off-the-job training is well planned and monitored to provide a framework for the assessment process. College resources are good, with well-equipped workshops and classrooms, providing a good realistic working environment. Good-quality workbooks, designed by college staff, give trainees ample opportunities to work independently. In 1995-96, trainees' achievements stood at 20 per cent, but this has increased to 76 per cent in 1997-98. Trainees leaving the programme early made up 75 per cent in 1995-96, but this has also changed over the same period to stand at 21 per cent in 1997-98.

7. The co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training and assessment is poor. There is no workplace assessment carried out by college staff. There are a small number of workplace assessors in electrical engineering but the college has not actively promoted the training of qualified workplace assessors in plumbing and wood occupations. Trainees are not encouraged by college staff to bring evidence in from the workplace in plumbing and wood occupations. The delivery of key skills across the occupational area is not systematic. Different schemes operate under various lead and awarding bodies, making a consistent approach more difficult. The vocational training unit, construction staff and the key skill unit meet to discuss key skills implementation, but this had not yet led to effective key skill delivery within the programmes. Construction staff do not fully understand the issues surrounding key skills.

Engineering

Grade 3

8. Peterborough Regional College has 151 trainees, of which 90 are on motor vehicle NVQ programmes, comprising 49 modern apprentices, 21 national trainees and 20 trainees on other youth training programmes. There are 61 mechanical engineering trainees following general engineering, maintenance or welding and fabrication programmes, of whom 53 are modern apprentices and eight are national trainees. One group of trainees initially attends the college on a 20-week full-time block, for their engineering foundation level 2 programme and then they continue to attend off-the-job one day a week. The other trainees attend college one day a week

for off-the-job training. For the remaining four days they are at their employer's premises. Trainees' progress is reviewed quarterly, either at work or at college. The inspection grade awarded was the same as that identified by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ marked improvement in trainees' achievements
- ◆ good-quality training reviews involving all stake holders, in mechanical engineering
- ◆ some good integration of key skills in off-the-job training
- ◆ well-structured workplace assessments in mechanical engineering
- ◆ good involvement of employers in trainees' development

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ restricted programme organisation for trainees
- ◆ insufficient workplace assessments
- ◆ some weak work-based assessments at level 3, in motor vehicle
- ◆ lack of work-based key skills evidence

9. There has been a marked improvement in the engineering section achievements and a reduction of non-achieving early leavers between 1995 and 1999. In 1995-96, only 9 per cent of trainees achieved their target qualification, with 77 per cent leaving early without qualifying. In 1998-99, 64 per cent achieved and 33 per cent left early. All mechanical engineering trainees are visited at work by an occupationally qualified co-ordinator from the unit each quarter to review their progress. These reviews involve the trainee, employer and work-placement co-ordinator. For mechanical engineering trainees, a member of the college curriculum training team is also present at these reviews. Reviews are carried out to a high professional standard and fully involve the trainee and employer. Feedback is given to trainees on their progress within the NVQ and concerning what further activities need to take place before the next review. This process reinforces the learning and assessment strategy of the NVQ process.

10. Off-the-job training carried out in the college's well-resourced workshops and classrooms is well planned and effectively delivered. The two engineering (mechanical and electrical) workshops and the two motor vehicle workshops are well equipped and resourced for all programmes. Learning support materials, including learning packs, are effectively used to help trainees learn at their own pace. Some aspects of the key skills training are good and well integrated into the occupational programme, especially in numeracy. Communication and some information technology sessions are less well planned to be relevant to the trainees' engineering work. Trainees have tutorial support from their respective engineering discipline tutors, which helps them to develop their NVQ portfolios. College mechanical engineering staff carry out workplace assessments by arrangement with trainees' employers at least every two months. In the mechanical engineering area employers

are also involved in assessment and mentoring. The larger engineering companies offer additional trainee support through mentoring. They arrange work experience in areas other than trainees' normal work duties to enable them to increase their experience and to support the trainees' NVQ programme. However, some trainees' workplaces are not sufficiently equipped to meet the range required by the qualification, and these employers have no plans to arrange for their trainees to sufficiently cover the work experience required.

11. Trainees' progress and development is restricted by the confines of the traditional college academic year. The start and completion dates for all these programmes are determined by term dates. The achievement of NVQ awards is not intended to be governed by particular periods of time. Progression depends on the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Accreditation of prior learning is not used to speed up the achievement process and all trainees start training at the same point. Motor vehicle assessments are also carried out to a high standard generally, but in some cases there is a failure to record such details as the type of vehicle used, and the particular diagnostic test run to discover the vehicle's fault, in the assessment documents. Some level 3 motor vehicle trainees do not connect assessment results with their degree of skill in carrying out the job competently. There is no key skill evidence in the engineering trainees' portfolios. Workplaces and off-the-job training provide the opportunity to collect evidence and the awarding bodies require it to be included in portfolios.

Business administration

Grade 2

12. The college has 26 business administration trainees of whom eight (three modern apprentices and five national trainees) are working in accounts for the Association of Accounting Technicians' (AAT) qualification; seven (four modern apprentices and three national trainees) are in information technology; and 11 (four modern apprentices, six national trainees and one trainee on another youth training programme) are in business administration. Off-the-job training is provided by two of the college's teaching departments. Accounts trainees follow a programme in the finance and management section and the other trainees follow appropriate NVQs in the business and office technology section. Account trainees attend off-the-job training at a small unit in the centre of Peterborough devoted to finance and management teaching. All trainees have employers or work placements and attend off-the-job training on a day, evening or half-day release basis. The employers and work placements are of various types, including the local magistrates' court, large retail organisations, small printing works and an estate agent.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good progression routes
- ◆ many trainees achieve additional qualifications
- ◆ flexible delivery of programmes

- ◆ comprehensive range of helpful resource materials

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ key skills not integrated into AAT programme

13. Good off-the-job training is well matched to the tasks that the trainees undertake in the workplace. Assessments and reviews take place in the workplace by the college staff at least every eight weeks. Evidence in the trainees' portfolios shows a good standard of competence. Trainees are encouraged to progress from levels 2 to 3 and in AAT to level 4. Many trainees have the opportunity to achieve additional qualifications, especially in the use of information technology. In business administration and information technology the training is flexible. Trainees can start and complete the programme throughout the year. There is a comprehensive range of college-produced learning materials which are used by trainees to help them to gather evidence of their skills and knowledge for assessment. Trainees understand the qualification requirements and assessment procedures thoroughly. Their training plans are reviewed and updated regularly and they agree revised targets for completion when necessary. Training is effectively planned and delivered with regular assessment and feedback to trainees. Key skills evidence is shown in the NVQ portfolios and then presented separately in key skills portfolios. Trainees' achievements have improved over the last three years with 64 per cent of all leavers achieving their qualifications in 1997-98, compared with 24 per cent in 1995-96. In accounts, retention is high and the average yearly achievement rate is over 70 per cent. Resources are good for off-the-job training with premises and equipment well maintained and attractively presented. Staff are well qualified and are respected and valued by trainees and employers.

14. For those trainees in accounts, key skills are not integrated into the training programmes. Trainees join full- and part-time college students for their off-the-job accountancy sessions. None of the other college students are on programmes that have a key skills requirement. The college does not have an integrated approach to key skills and they lack the active support of training staff. Some trainees have been late in receiving key skill briefs and documents. AAT programmes are constrained by external assessment and examination dates and still tend to follow the traditional academic year, with examination re-sits available in November. Trainees achieve good results despite these constraints.

Hair & beauty

Grade 3

15. The college has 44 trainees on hairdressing programmes. There are 10 modern apprentices, 24 national trainees and 10 youth trainees. All of them are employed in hairdressing salons in Peterborough and the surrounding area or are on work experience. Trainees attend off-the-job training one-day a week. A co-ordinator from the vocational training unit, qualified in hairdressing, visits the trainees at work at least every two months to review the trainees' progress. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report mainly because of the lack of

workplace assessment.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ off-the-job training available throughout the year
- ◆ experienced and well-qualified staff
- ◆ comprehensive learning resource packs
- ◆ well integrated key skills

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ no workplace assessments
- ◆ inappropriate assessment opportunities for first year trainees
- ◆ slow achievement of individual elements and units
- ◆ insufficient target-setting

16. The college hairdressing department remains open throughout most of the summer vacation, only closing for one week. This enables trainees to continue with their training without losing momentum. Work-based trainees are the only learners in the hairdressing department during the summer vacation giving them good access to the clients attending the college salon. Trainees are able to join and complete the training programme at any stage during the year. College and unit staff are highly qualified and enthusiastic. This enthusiasm and expertise is expressed in the teaching of practical and theory sessions and during review visits to trainees at work. Trainees have effective role models in the college staff.

17. Early leaver rates have reduced from 57 per cent in 1995/1996 to 32 per cent last year. Over the same period, the rate of qualification achievement has also increased from 38 per cent to 60 per cent. The hairdressing department has developed comprehensive learning-resource packs including handouts, reference papers, training exercises, question and answer sheets, assignments and formative assessment material. Staff use these packs to ensure the consistency and quality of the training sessions. The packs are expressed clearly and trainees use them comprehensively. All the key skills development is integrated into the hairdressing programmes. The integration of key skills is enabling trainees to see the relevance and importance of these skills in their working lives.

18. Trainees' prior experience, although discussed, is not taken into account when designing the training programme. All the assessment for the trainees' qualifications is carried out at the college, although it is informed by the use of witness testimony from staff at work. This process severely restricts the opportunity for trainees to demonstrate their skills and understanding during the course of their normal work. This is compounded in the first year by the continual use of simulation on practice heads or blocks as the only assessment method. Trainees have their own blocks on which they practise all the hairdressing skills from blow-drying to cutting. An over-reliance on this method of learning has resulted in trainees only working on two or

three real clients during the first eight months of the programme. Trainees are frustrated at the lack of opportunity to practise their skills in realistic conditions. They are also unable to gain valuable experience about hair types, texture, growth patterns, and condition. In a simulated environment they are not able to develop essential communication skills with clients. This concentration on input and method is resulting in trainees taking longer than average to demonstrate competence. The extra models available during the summer have started to improve this situation. Second-year trainees work on one or two clients each week, but they are often only starting to obtain unit accreditation after being 18 months on the programme. Most second-year trainees do complete within two years, but accreditation of competence is left to the last few months. Trainees leaving before this time are not able to gain unit accreditation. Many trainees are working in salons on Saturdays before moving into a work-based training programme. All trainees follow the identical programme with the same target dates for completion. The targets set are not detailed or sufficiently challenging. There are no short-term targets or milestones, neither are targets rigorously reviewed or modified.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

19. The college has a range of policies covering equal opportunities and disability, which apply to all staff, students and trainees. The college has a committee whose purpose is to consider equal opportunities in the curriculum. Equal opportunities in employment are discussed in a joint consultative committee meeting with the teaching and non-teaching trade unions represented at the college. The college employs a full-time equal opportunities officer whose role it is to promote equality of opportunity between the college and local communities. There are facilities for trainees with disabilities and impairment along with specialist aids and equipment to support their learning. The combined charter and diary containing details of college policies and other information is given to all trainees.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good implementation of equality of opportunity by staff in vocational training unit
- ◆ active promotion to establish multi-cultural links with the community

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of effective monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ programmes not targeted to attract under-represented groups
- ◆ poor awareness by employers of equality of opportunity

20. There is a grievance, complaints and disciplinary procedure which is written in plain English and published in the trainees' handbook. This is distributed to all trainees and students at the college. Trainees are aware of the process to follow

should they have the need to make a complaint. The staff within the vocational training unit have attended a wide range of staff development programmes on raising their knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity. They are sensitive to the issues as they relate to trainees. The vocational training unit is strategically placed by the student entrance. This encourages trainees to call in and discuss any matter related to their training programme. The unit staff have successfully integrated an Asian man into a hairdressing programme and women into plumbing and engineering training. Unit staff have close links with the equal opportunities officer. Work-based training is promoted at the community projects established locally. Publicity material contains positive images of trainees in non-stereotypical occupations and carries an equal opportunities affirmation. They have been successful in recruiting trainees from local Polish and Italian communities. The college as a whole has a percentage of students from minority ethnic communities that corresponds to their representation in the local community. The vocational training unit is less successful in this area with 2.5 per cent of their trainees from minority ethnic groups. The college has 2 per cent of trainees with disabilities. Where trainees have been identified by the vocational training unit staff as being unlikely to be able to achieve an NVQ at level 2, but are not endorsed by the TEC, the college provides additional support at no cost to the trainees. There are currently eight trainees in engineering and construction who are being given the opportunity to train with this support. Vocational training unit staff are successful in finding suitable employment or work placements for trainees with disabilities or special learning needs, and in helping them to achieve.

21. The monitoring of data to establish patterns of representation has only just started. For example, the unit now monitors early leavers and achievement data in line with the requirements of the CCTE. These data are not being used to evaluate the needs of the local community. Although there are individual success stories, the training unit does not market work-based training programmes to under-represented groups within the local community. There is poor understanding and awareness of equality of opportunity among local employers. Many of them are small organisations and are not always aware of the rights of trainees and their own responsibilities as employers. Some do not have equal opportunities policies, and the college does not offer an example of a policy to them.

Trainee support

Grade 2

22. The college has a comprehensive range of trainee support services. All trainees have a specialist induction, a personal tutor, a dedicated work-placement co-ordinator providing individual support and access to all the college learning resource functions. Trainees are guided and mentored by the vocational training unit staff. Progress reviews at work occur every eight to 12 weeks. These reviews include vocational training unit staff, the trainee and workplace supervisors. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that identified in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured initial assessment procedures
- ◆ good impartial guidance at initial interview
- ◆ well-planned induction process
- ◆ good trainees' reviews involving all stakeholders
- ◆ good career development, advice and guidance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ underdeveloped process for accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ training plans not individualised in all areas

23. The vocational training unit provides a comprehensive interview and induction process, designed to establish trainees' requirements and any additional learning support required. Where particular learning support is recognised trainees are helped by vocational training unit staff or additional support is arranged from the key skills unit or specialist staff within the college. At interview all trainees' basic skills are assessed. Trainees benefit from a well-structured initial assessment process which identifies key skill achievements and other learning needs. This initial assessment process involves interviews with training unit staff who use the results of the basic skills tests to establish the appropriate programme and identify suitable workplace providers. From this process trainees are offered good impartial advice on the opportunities available to them, within the college or at other providers in the area. Trainees speak highly of this process. All trainees are required to report to the vocational training unit on each occasion that they attend off-the-job training. This enables staff to monitor attendance, but it also provides regular opportunities for discussion and personal contact between the vocational training unit staff and trainees. Induction to the programme involves three steps: induction to the work of the training unit, to the college teaching programme and to the employing organisation. This process is well monitored and reviewed. College training staff work with employers on training reviews and produce good vocational training action plans. Many trainees' files contain ample evidence of the effectiveness of the reviews and detailed and informative action plans. Career development advice and guidance is well structured and delivered by the college's career unit in addition to that offered by the vocational unit. There are comprehensive additional learning needs units within the college and those trainees identified as needing additional learning support are well integrated into the provision. In addition, training unit staff use their comprehensive network of local business and commercial contacts to secure development opportunities including jobs and other work placements. They provide a high level of pastoral support and guidance.

24. There is no systematic assessment of accreditation of prior learning gained before entry to the training programme. In some vocational areas, trainees' plans are not individualised and only refer to the progressive achievement of awards, but without target dates. In other areas, the training plans are set with targets that take no account of varying the sequence in response to individual trainee's needs.

Management of training

Grade 3

25. The vocational training unit manages the college's work-based provision. The vocational training unit is the central focus for all trainees, employers and college staff involved in work-based training. The unit has a strategy to enable everyone involved to work towards meeting the targets set by the CCTE as well as towards trainees' individual goals. Vocational training unit staff are an integrated team within the college. The college has a clearly defined business plan reviewed yearly and holds the Investor in People award.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ highly effective vocational unit team management
- ◆ significant improvement in performance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ subcontractor agreements not rigorously structured
- ◆ some curriculum staff not responsive to work-based training

26. The decision in 1995-96 to appoint a senior manager to the vocational training unit, directly responsible to the principal, has had a positive impact on the viability and success of work-based training within the college. Close collaboration with the college principal, the CCTE and curriculum managers enables constant feedback and progress. This has now established many examples of good practice and effective procedures which have enabled staff to improve the rates of achievement and retention among trainees over the last three years. The vocational training unit staff share and develop ideas as a team. Each member of the team understands their individual and team roles and responsibilities. The vocational training unit management takes responsibility for the coordination of training within the college and at work. Unit staff recruitment, training and support, follow the normal personnel and staff development practice of the college. Work-based training performance indicators and data are used to inform training unit and curriculum staff's action plans. The training unit effectively manages the small quantities of New Deal provision. All the New Deal clients' training programmes are individualised. Previous achievement of qualifications and experience of prior learning is taken into account to design these training plans. Trainees' achievements are celebrated at annual award ceremonies with prizes sponsored by employers.

27. The vocational training unit has negotiated contracts with individual college curriculum teams for off-the-job training and assessment of the NVQ programmes. These service level agreements are insufficiently detailed to dictate the precise teaching, assessments and outcomes required by unit staff. Unit managers have insufficient authority over the curriculum teaching teams to achieve the units quality objectives. Some curriculum teaching staff undervalue the importance of the work-based training within their curriculum area by not being responsive to requests from the vocational training unit for information on trainees and supporting

documentation. The four work-placement co-ordinators have very large numbers of trainees, over 80 on average, in their care. Despite these high numbers, the training unit staff continue to support and develop their trainees.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

28. Peterborough Regional College operates two quality assurance systems with respect to government-funded vocational training. Both are integral to the daily operation of the college and they are integrated together. The systems to assure quality of provision within the college have become progressively established.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ strong commitment to continuous improvement
- ◆ well structured and documented vocational training unit team meetings with clear outcomes
- ◆ good incorporation of the self-assessment process

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of reinforcement of performance requirements to training staff
- ◆ some weak response by training staff to documentary requirements

29. The quality assurance system is comprehensive and covers all aspects of vocational training and monitoring. The vocational training unit staff are aware of the relevant processes and there is a well-established system of quality management review which feeds into the college's quality forum. Within the vocational training unit, staff are keen to review and improve the levels of service they provide. This is formalised through structured weekly management meetings, at which issues are discussed, actions taken, timescales and responsibility are identified. Significant improvements against key performance indicators have resulted from quality assurance procedures. Surveys of trainees and employers' views have been analysed. Two of the unit's staff are trained quality assurance auditors. These reveal that 88 per cent of trainees are satisfied with their training, as are 84 per cent of associated employers. The training unit has used the departmental quality meetings as a tool for implementing changes to practice which have significantly improved early leavers rates, interview techniques and NVQ achievements. Internal verification is satisfactory. However, there have been limited attempts by the college to train workplace assessors in order to increase the number of assessors who are occupationally competent. The process of self-assessment has been conscientiously adopted leading to frank and self-critical analysis of the unit's services. It identified areas of strength and weakness, which have been fed into management review and incorporated within departmental and college-wide action-planning.

30. Monitoring of the training provision by the vocational training unit has highlighted weaknesses in the collection of work-based evidence. Subcontracting agreements are vague with regard to the detailed information, which the college

sections are required to supply, and the frequency with which occupational assessments are expected to take place. Despite regular informal feedback between the vocational training unit and college staff, most work-based evidence is reviewed and cross-referenced to performance criteria towards the end of key academic periods, rather than on a continuous basis. Despite regular requests from the vocational training unit for essential completed documents, response is slow from curriculum staff. Quality assurance documents are sent to curriculum staff, but this lack of compliance prevents the unit staff from completing all the paperwork required by the CCTE and trainees.