



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MARCH 1999

REINSPECTION APRIL 2000

UK Training and Development

SUMMARY

UK Training and Development provides satisfactory training in customer service. It lacks formal structure and there is no key skills training or assessment, but training staff provide effective coaching to trainees, and NVQ achievement rates are high. There is little practical training for hairdressing trainees off the job, but the training given in the salons is good and trainees have the opportunity to improve their skills and employability through taking additional qualifications. At the time of the original inspection, there was no formal monitoring of equal opportunities and no procedures to deal with discrimination or harassment. Although there is still little use or analysis of data on equal opportunities, effective policies on harassment and discrimination have now been implemented, and staff receive good training on equal opportunity issues. Training consultants make frequent visits to trainees in the workplace and provide good support, although there is no systematic or effective initial assessment of trainees, and no accreditation of prior learning. There is an effective staff appraisal system and, overall, management of training is satisfactory, although employers are not given sufficient information on training issues and there is no use of structured individual training or assessment plans. At the time of the first inspection, there was no formal quality assurance system. Quality assurance arrangements, although not fully co-ordinated, are now satisfactory, and there is a well-structured and detailed handbook for the guidance of staff.

As a result of the reinspection of UK Training and Development, the original published report text for equal opportunities and quality assurance has been replaced by new text, which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings introduction have also been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the original published report, which have not been subject to full reinspection, have been left in their original form.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Retailing & customer service	3
Hair & beauty	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Quality assurance	3



KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ high level of commitment to training by employers
- ◆ committed and enthusiastic training staff
- ◆ high rate of NVQ achievement in customer service
- ◆ well-designed hairdressing workbooks that are effectively used
- ◆ good practical training in salons for hairdressing trainees
- ◆ effective support for trainees
- ◆ effective staff appraisal system

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow progress in the delivery of key skills
- ◆ no structured on- or off-the-job training in customer service
- ◆ little practical hairdressing training offered off the job
- ◆ employer involvement not planned
- ◆ initial assessment of trainees not effectively used
- ◆ no accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ no structured training and assessment plans
- ◆ incomplete co-ordination of quality assurance procedures

INTRODUCTION

1. UK Training and Development (UKTD) was formed following the liquidation of Hairdressing Training Associates (HTA) in May 1998, and immediately assumed responsibility for training and enterprise council (TEC) contracts originally awarded to HTA. UKTD classifies its activities into two categories: TEC-funded and client-funded programmes. UKTD has contracts with Hertfordshire, North West London, and Surrey TECs, and with Thames Valley Enterprises, and Milton Keynes and North Bucks Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise (CCTE). Contracts in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire operate under the National Training Partnership. Hertfordshire TEC was the co-ordinating TEC for the inspection and reinspection of UKTD.

2. HTA was managed by a head-office team based in south Wales. HTA was originally formed to offer training towards hairdressing NVQs. The largest and most profitable division was that for London and the home counties and none of the former head-office-based team are now a part of UKTD. Following the liquidation of HTA, all of the London and home counties personnel were asked to stay on and carry out the work inherited from HTA in order to ensure continuity for all trainees and clients undertaking various programmes. Many of the staff expressed the desire to stay on with UKTD and some changes were made to the original structure of the training setup in a matter of weeks. This enabled UKTD to re-employ everyone who wished to stay. The company was also able to secure the TEC contracts originally awarded to HTA, ensuring that training was not interrupted.

3. UKTD currently occupies a suite of eight offices in the centre of Hemel Hempstead, in Hertfordshire. Its largest contract is with Hertfordshire TEC. UKTD has at least one training consultant who lives in the area of each of the TECs with which it contracts, but all training consultants use the Hemel Hempstead office as their base. Weekly staff meetings take place every Friday. At the time of the first inspection there were 234 trainees on TEC-funded courses. At the time of the reinspection there were 331 trainees, of whom 118 were modern apprentices and 213 were national trainees. UKTD offers national vocation qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing, key skills, customer service, and administration. Administration training was not inspected, as there were only four trainees at the time of the original inspection. Retail training has been introduced in the past year, and at the time of the reinspection there were eight retail trainees.

4. UKTD competes for trainees with several other private training providers in the area and a number of local colleges of further education. In March 1999, the unemployment rate in Hertfordshire was 3 per cent, compared with the national average at the time of 5.2 per cent. At the time of the reinspection in April 2000, the unemployment rate in Hertfordshire had fallen to 1.6 per cent, while the national rate stood at 3.8 per cent. Four per cent of the local population are from minority



ethnic groups. In 1998, the proportion of Hertfordshire school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 54 per cent, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. The corresponding percentage for Hertfordshire in 1999 was 54.9 per cent, while the national average had risen to 54.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. UKTD produced its first self-assessment report in December 1998. One of the two team managers took overall responsibility for producing the report, with inputs from the director, company secretary and the training consultants. The self-assessment report was a useful document for inspectors, giving an overview of how the company worked and how courses in the different occupational areas were provided. Strengths and weaknesses were accurately identified and the action plan was already leading to improvements by the time of the original inspection. Five of the six grades awarded by inspectors were the same as those given in the self-assessment report, while inspectors awarded a higher grade to the sixth area than that given by UKTD itself. The second self-assessment report was produced in a similar way to the first, drawing on the findings of the original inspection. The report was produced in December 1999 as part of an annual cycle. It was mainly accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the generic areas that were reinspected.

6. The first inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, who spent a total of 16 days with UKTD during March 1999. Inspectors examined company and awarding body documents. They met staff from UKTD and observed off-the-job training sessions in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Reading, Slough and Surrey. Seven of the UKTD's eight training consultants and managers were observed training or making visits to employers. Twenty-four employers were visited and, during these visits, 12 employers were interviewed. Inspectors examined assessment records, trainees' work, and 30 portfolios. They observed 21 monitoring or assessment visits and instruction sessions and interviewed 56 trainees.

7. Reinspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors, who spent a total of nine days with UKTD during April 2000. They interviewed 36 trainees. They examined documents relating to trainees, including portfolios and assessment records, and management and quality assurance documents, and interviewed UKTD's staff. They visited training centres in Hemel Hempstead and Reading, observing an off-the-job training session at each. They observed five trainees' progress reviews and visited four employers' premises.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the first inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Retailing & customer service			4			4
Hair & beauty		10	7			17
Total	0	10	11	0	0	21

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at reinspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Retailing & customer service		1				1
Hair & beauty		6				6
Total	0	7	0	0	0	7

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Retailing & customer service (customer service)

Grade 3

8. There are currently 46 customer service trainees undergoing training leading to NVQs in customer service at either levels 2 or 3. Of these, 30 are modern apprentices and the remaining trainees are on other youth training programmes. All trainees are employed. The company has 23 work placements and employers located in the counties of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Surrey. There are 10 trainees located with employers in London. Trainees are recruited and employed before joining the scheme and are put forward for training and assessment by their employers. In addition to the customer service trainees, there are 22 hairdressing trainees undertaking customer service NVQs. All customer service instruction is given in the work placement. There is no off-the-job training although the company's training staff undertake some coaching in the workplace. UKTD staff make visits to assess NVQs which are based on the evidence derived from the workplace, and for reviews, which are conducted at three-monthly intervals. Training staff are qualified both occupationally and as trainers although the main assessor does not yet hold the necessary assessor qualification. The company identified both strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses cited, but some were no more than normal practice. Inspectors confirmed most of the weaknesses and identified additional ones. They agreed with the grade given by the organisation.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-motivated trainees
- ◆ high level of commitment to training by employers
- ◆ effective coaching by company's training staff
- ◆ high NVQ achievement rate

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no structured on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ no key skills training or assessment
- ◆ a minority of trainees on inappropriate programmes

9. Trainees are keen to complete their programme and achieve their NVQs. Attendance is excellent and trainees make good progress. Trainees transferring to a new job have asked UKTD to continue their programme after they have moved to their new location. Employers are fully committed to the programme and its success. Training staff encourage and motivate trainees by their own enthusiasm and give trainees one-to-one training at the regular three-weekly visits which are made for both learning and assessment. Assessment is frequently undertaken by observation of the trainee at work. Current achievement is 117 NVQs per 100 leavers. About two thirds of trainees obtain two NVQs and less than 20 per cent of customer service trainees leave without obtaining a qualification.

10. Although the company undertakes its contractual responsibilities by completing the standard individual training plans required by the TEC, there is no detailed company-designed training plan which sets out the structure of the training programme. There are no specific individual training targets for trainees or details of how the on-the-job training should be given. There is a lack of planned off-the-job training by UKTD, although some trainees do attend well-planned internal courses arranged by their employers or by product manufacturers. There is no formal assessment plan showing how and when assessments should be made. At three-weekly intervals the training consultant carries out an assessment based upon the action plan prepared for the trainee at the previous visit. Trainees produce the required evidence as directed. The training consultant indexes the trainee's portfolio. A new comprehensive action plan is left with the trainee detailing areas of evidence required for the next meeting.

11. Key skills training has not yet been started although there is a written plan to introduce them over the next few months. A minority of trainees is aware that these will be introduced in due course, but the rest have not yet had induction and await instructions and guidance from the provider. There is little accreditation of prior learning. A few trainees are on inappropriate programmes or at inappropriate levels. One trainee is on an NVQ level 3 programme where a level 2 would be more appropriate for the job being performed. In another case, a trainee, who is working in a personnel department, would benefit more from taking a completely different NVQ. The customer service NVQ is the only one offered.

Hair & beauty (hairdressing)

Grade 3

12. UKTD has 184 trainees on hairdressing programmes. There are 19 modern apprentices, 109 national trainees and 56 on other programmes. All trainees are on NVQs at levels 2 or 3 in hairdressing. The 109 national trainees also undertake NVQs at level 2 in customer service. Trainees work in one of the 55 salons currently used which cover a large geographical area over five counties. All assessment takes place in these salons, either by one of the 45 salon assessors (with a further eight working towards qualifications), or by one of the five visiting company training consultants. Off-the-job training is offered at three centres; Hemel Hempsted, Stevenage and Reading. Trainees attend for one day every two weeks for a session, which includes theory and portfolio development work. Employers and trainees have the option to opt for total in-salon training with theory provided on a one-to-one basis by the training consultants, using workbooks and regular visits to the workplace. Forty per cent of trainees are using this option. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but identified additional strengths and weaknesses. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given by the company in its report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ committed and enthusiastic training staff
- ◆ well-designed, effectively used workbooks
- ◆ good salon training for trainees
- ◆ work-based assessment encouraged and promoted
- ◆ programmes enhanced by additional qualifications

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow progress in achieving practical assessments
- ◆ no planned employer involvement
- ◆ slow progress in the delivery of key skills
- ◆ little practical training offered off the job
- ◆ poor tracking of trainees' achievements

13. All the training staff have good working relationships with their trainees and show interest and commitment to their progress and welfare. Well-planned salon visits are carried out and appreciated by the trainees. The training consultants are also responsible for off-the-job training. Much of the training fully involves trainees and uses directed questions to check that learning is taking place. In some sessions, however, there is an over-emphasis on portfolio-building and trainees spend long periods doing individual work with little input by the tutor. The portfolios are generally of a good standard. They are well organised and there are some

outstanding examples of good photographic evidence being effectively used and of information technology skills. There is no training plan given to trainees or employers, but one has been produced and will be distributed in the near future. There is a lack of variety in the strategies used for these training days and few learning resources available, although the accommodation used is suitable.

14. A complete set of workbooks has been developed by UKTD for each unit of the new NVQ level 2 and 3 qualifications which were introduced in summer 1998. Workbooks are well designed to cover the theoretical requirements of the NVQs. They are effectively used during the off-the-job sessions at the centres and are an essential part of the training when trainees opt for total in-salon training. Trainees find the books informative and useful and they are all provided with them at the appropriate time in their programmes. UKTD also gives salons free textbooks to assist the trainees by providing alternative information.

15. All the salons are encouraged to have an in-house assessor and training for this award is provided by UKTD. Most salons take advantage of this offer and all assessment is carried out in the workplace by one of these in-salon assessors. Some of these assessors do not make full use of all the opportunities for assessment and some trainees are making slow progress in achieving practical assessments. Most trainees take almost two years to complete their NVQ level 2 in hairdressing. Trainees do not feel disadvantaged by this. Although workplace supervisors are involved in training, UKTD has not yet planned any formal involvement by employers in the programmes to inform the assessors of this problem.

16. The salons used by UKTD provide good practical training for the trainees. Trainees have the opportunity of regular model sessions and some are sent on specialist courses provided by manufacturers or the head office of their company. Trainees' practical skills are of a good standard. There is little practical training offered by UKTD. One session observed for two trainees in their salon on long hair work was of a good standard and trainees quickly developed confidence and new skills. Some of the smaller salons have difficulty in providing the whole range of hairdressing requirements for their trainees. UKTD has plans in hand to address areas such as perming, where there is a national problem in attracting clients who want the service.

17. The company has been slow to integrate key skills into the programmes, although some useful documentation has been produced. A mapping exercise has been carried out, but as yet, there is little awareness of key skills among trainees. Information technology skills are not encouraged or promoted.

18. There is no formal tracking of trainees' achievements. The training consultants have individual records but the head office does not keep an overall picture of the achievements at any given time. There was a 58 per cent achievement rate in hairdressing from April 1998 to February 1999.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

19. UKTD has an equal opportunities policy which was originally produced in July 1998 but which has recently been revised and supplemented with a range of new policies and procedures. These policies meet all legal requirements, as well as the requirements of the TECs with which UKTD contracts. The proportion of the population who are members of minority ethnic groups varies widely across the different geographical areas in which UKTD works. UKTD currently has one male hairdressing trainee and has just recruited another. Approximately 6 per cent of all trainees are members of minority ethnic groups.

The main weaknesses identified by the first inspection were:

- ◆ equal opportunities policy not fully implemented
- ◆ no formal monitoring of equal opportunities
- ◆ no procedures to deal with discrimination or harassment
- ◆ poor awareness by trainees of equal opportunities

20. Since the original inspection in 1999, the managing director has carried out a review of all equal opportunities policies and procedures to identify any deficiencies. This review has included the selection and recruitment, complaints, special needs, employers' responsibilities, harassment and discrimination, and appeals procedures. By the time of the reinspection, most new procedures had been implemented and staff had attended a range of training programmes on equal opportunities.

21. At the first inspection, inspectors awarded equal opportunities a grade 4. All the weaknesses identified by the first inspection have now been addressed, and the original weakness relating to the lack of procedures to deal with discrimination or harassment has now become a strength. In the self-assessment report submitted for the reinspection, UKTD gave itself a grade 3 for this aspect of its work. Inspectors agreed with this assessment and awarded the same grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff training in equal opportunities
- ◆ effective implementation of harassment and discrimination policies

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no effective analysis and use of equal opportunities data
- ◆ insufficient co-ordination of equal opportunities activities

22. UKTD has made effective use of Staff development to promote good equal opportunities practice and improvements. Staff have attended training courses relating to equal opportunities issues in the workplace. These have included updates

GOOD PRACTICE

To help them understand some key equal opportunities issues, trainees are shown a video which presents and explains clear examples of various forms of harassment and discrimination. To reinforce and apply the points being made, the trainees are also given handouts which take them through the scenarios shown in the video and help them to identify the problems being illustrated and the appropriate actions which need to be taken.

on current legislation, explanations of what is meant by 'direct' and 'indirect' discrimination, training on recruitment and selection and in disability awareness, and guidance on equal opportunities action-planning. UKTD has developed a range of new equal opportunities policies and statements, and procedures have been put in place to help raise the awareness of all staff and trainees. Trainees are given detailed information about the equal opportunities policies, and about their rights and responsibilities and how to exercise them in the workplace. These are all explained at induction and then reinforced, with any updates, in the workplace. UKTD has recently introduced the use of a video on equal opportunities. Trainees watch the video and then complete worksheets to reinforce their understanding. Some training consultants have also attended training courses on conducting trainees' progress reviews and drugs and dyslexia awareness. Those who have been on these courses pass on what they have learned to the other training consultants, to help them deal with trainees who have a range of personal problems and learning difficulties.

23. The equal opportunities policy and procedures are detailed and contain guidelines for implementation. These include comprehensive information on criteria for selection and recruitment to ensure fair treatment for all potential staff and trainees, as well as guidance on discussing equal opportunities at induction and on monitoring equal opportunities in the workplace. There is also a range of procedures to monitor the conduct of initial assessments, assessments, and internal verification, the implementation of the complaints and appeals procedures, and the service provided to applicants with special needs. Employers' responsibilities relating to selection and recruitment are highlighted, as are their obligations concerning the use of equal opportunities policies and their general employment responsibilities for trainees. Specific procedures have been introduced to protect trainees against harassment and discrimination in the workplace or during off-the-job training. These procedures are comprehensive and clear and have been implemented very effectively. They contain clear workplace examples that allow trainees to decide whether they have a genuine complaint or grievance, and show trainees how to overcome the problem by working with their training consultant. Trainees are told what will happen next in order to establish the facts relating to any complaint, when to involve their employer or parents, and how confidentiality will be maintained at all times. These procedures are issued to all trainees and discussed with employers during monitoring visits. Parts of the equal opportunities policy have not yet been implemented, including the new procedures relating to selection and recruitment, which take place annually in April and May. There are also plans to review the equal opportunities policy on an annual basis.

24. In addition to an equal opportunities statement, all recruitment literature contains positive visual images of male and female trainees in non-traditional roles. Recruitment material does not currently contain any images of people from minority ethnic groups, however. UKTD has in the past commissioned design companies to introduce such pictures into the recruitment materials for a range of its training programmes, but the images produced were of poor quality and UKTD decided not to use them. The company is currently in further discussions with its designers about changes to its recruitment literature.

25. There is no formal analysis of equal opportunities data. Data on the gender and ethnicity of trainees for each occupational and TEC area are collected not only at the start but throughout their training. The overall proportion of male trainees in hairdressing has decreased from 10 per cent to 6 per cent since the first inspection, but there has been little analysis of the available data to identify why or where this has happened and what positive action can be taken to reverse the trend. Similarly, the data which have been collected show that the proportion of hairdressing trainees from minority ethnic groups has risen from 3 per cent to 5.8 per cent in the North West London and Hertfordshire TEC areas. There has been no analysis to identify why this has occurred, however, or to see whether the increase can be linked to any promotional activities, such as UKTD's participation in career conventions.

26. In the self-assessment report submitted for reinspection, UKTD sets strategic targets to address weaknesses highlighted in the original inspection. These targets all have timescales for their completion and UKTD keeps comprehensive records of all actions taken towards achieving them, as well as details of the reasons for any delays. However, there is no formal action plan for implementing the equal opportunities policy as a whole. Now procedures and equal opportunities statements have been introduced after a range of staff development activities, meetings and discussions, but there is no clearly structured timetable for implementing operational plans. Equal opportunities issues are not always formal agenda items at management meetings and outcomes and actions to be taken are not automatically recorded. UKTD has recently decided to include responsibility for some aspects of equal opportunities in the job descriptions for newly appointed assistant managers. The intention is that this should in turn lead to the equal opportunity aspects of activities such as training, assessment, recruitment and marketing being discussed formally at management meetings. UKTD is also in the process of appointing an equal opportunities co-ordinator to take responsibility for monitoring equal opportunities company-wide and for taking any actions required.

Trainee support

Grade 3

27. Most of UKTD's trainees are selected and interviewed by employers who liaise with the provider regarding individual training requirements. Initial assessment takes place for some hairdressing NVQs but is not used in customer service and administration and it does not influence training. Assessment for key skills, additional support requirements and prior learning is not recorded. Training consultants induct trainees into the training programme on the job but this does not include key skills. Trainees are visited frequently in the workplace when training consultants give one-to-one coaching and training. Monitoring visits to discuss trainees' progress also take place every three months. Inspectors agreed with most of the weaknesses cited in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade as the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ frequent workplace visits
- ◆ effective pastoral and work-related support for trainees
- ◆ employers involved in trainee reviews

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no systematic or effective initial assessment of trainees
- ◆ no accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ no systematic assessment of additional support requirements
- ◆ inconsistent quality of training reviews
- ◆ no recording of support required or provided

28. Most trainees are employed status and some trainees are referred to the company through the careers service. Training consultants induct trainees individually or in small groups at the workplace. Trainees have a reasonable awareness of the requirements for their qualifications. There is no induction into key skills. Trainees are allocated to individual training consultants. They are visited every two to three weeks and have one-to-one coaching and training sessions with training consultants. Training consultants are sensitive to trainees' needs both on and off the job. This includes trainees with communication and confidence problems. For example, one hairdressing trainee with writing and spelling difficulties is visited every week and has ongoing support for assignments and theory training. Trainees are also able to telephone training consultants at any time to discuss work problems. There is also good informal pastoral care for trainees in the workplace. However, support is not formally documented on any training plans or reviews.

29. Employers are enthusiastic and are keen to ensure that trainees achieve their NVQ qualification. They are committed to individual trainees' progress and are able to make comments on training reviews. There is productive involvement of workplace supervisors in the review process in hairdressing. Employers are questioned and involved in discussions with the training consultant and the trainee. Training consultants also closely monitor when trainees are absent from off-the-job training and they notify employers immediately.

30. Initial assessment is not effectively implemented. Trainees do not receive an assessment to comprehensively analyse additional support or key skills requirements. In hairdressing, initial assessment sometimes takes place after trainees have already started on the programme. Learning difficulties such as dyslexia are picked up once trainees have started on their programme. Training plans contain information relating to details of programmes undertaken, qualification aims and completion dates. They are not individualised to record all trainees' support requirements. There is no formal process for accreditation of prior learning. Several hairdressing and customer service trainees have relevant previous experience, learning and qualifications for which they have received no credit.

31. Trainees' reviews are completed every three months to meet TEC requirements. Most are of good quality and involve both the trainee and employer. However, in a minority of cases, particularly in customer service, they are not always comprehensive and some lack detail of training and development activities in the workplace, personal issues or attendance. A minority of trainees' reviews is not carried out in an appropriate environment. For example, some hairdressing reviews are carried out in the public reception area of hairdressing salons. Trainees are, therefore, unable to discuss confidential issues with training consultants in private at the time of their review. In such circumstances, trainees said that they would telephone their training consultant with any problems.

Management of training

Grade 3

32. UKTD has been operational for only eight months. Although the organisation has taken over the TEC contracts, the existing trainees and the staff of a former company, it has not inherited the company structures. The company's current policies, procedures, systems and documentation are new and have been developed in a relatively short space of time. The company is making demonstrable progress in improving the management of its training. It now has two main training activities. A hairdressing provision, where there is both off-the-job training and practical work experience, and a customer service provision, where there is no off-the-job training, and the learning is confined to the practical work experience on employers' premises. The company currently employs 14 staff and has recruited three additional staff because of an increase in business. Internal verifiers cover both areas. A small administrative section supports the training and assessment staff. Staff are occupationally well qualified and experienced. With the exception of two training consultants who are working towards their assessor qualifications, all staff hold the appropriate qualifications. The company identified a number of strengths and weaknesses and inspectors, who also found alternative strengths and weaknesses, agreed with these. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than that given by the company, as significant progress had been achieved in implementing the management action plan.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective staff appraisal
- ◆ strong commitment by staff to company's objectives
- ◆ good use of work-based assessors in hairdressing salons

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of detailed guidance for employers on training issues
- ◆ no structured individual training and assessment plans
- ◆ underdeveloped management-information system

33. Members of staff are well qualified and occupationally competent. They are recruited by advertisements and through the Jobcentre network. Priority at recruitment is given to those who have a high level of technical competence and knowledge. After the initial induction, and for the first few weeks, new staff undertake their duties while directly supervised (shadowed) by a senior member of staff. Priority for training is given to the acquisition of the appropriate assessor/internal verifier qualifications. The company is developing good personnel policies and procedures. Staff appraisal covers job roles, areas of training needs, training activities already planned, opportunities for new company initiatives, accomplishments, and factors affecting performance which require action. Although the company is new, it has recruited effective and supportive staff who share the company's values and strategies.

34. There is an open style of management where staff can discuss issues freely. There is a strong team spirit. Staff assemble at the office each Friday to deal with administrative issues, share experiences and attend team meetings. The organisation has established good working relationships with local employers, which has resulted in a strong commitment to training by both employers and work placement providers. The company has 45 qualified assessors in hairdressing salons and a further eight candidates are working towards qualification. They provide work-based assessments. The company provides training for an assessor in each salon free of charge. It produces a quarterly newsletter, which is circulated to employers to update them on current training issues.

35. Management targets TEC contracts and are discussed freely with staff. Individual targets for managers and staff are set and monitored against individual performance. Most of the training is undertaken at employers' premises. There is a lack of guidance given to employers in respect of training responsibilities for customer service, but there is some guidance for hairdressers. Responsibility for the link between on- and off-the job training is unclear. Trainees receive only the standard TEC individual training plan. This does not set out training targets or any details of assessment. Employers do not receive a copy. There is no provision for trainees with special training needs and staff have not received training in this area. There is no structured system for monitoring the advancement of trainees or tracking their progress. There is little use made by staff of the management-information system. The database is limited to providing senior staff with TEC-required information. It is not used to influence decision-making by training consultants and most staff keep their own manual records. The organisation has made some progress in developing procedures and practices to overcome many of the weaknesses, but as yet, these have not been fully established in the operational systems.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

36. Overall responsibility for quality assurance at UKTD rests with the managing director, while the day-to-day management of quality assurance arrangements is undertaken by the training manager. The quality assurance framework meets TEC and awarding body requirements. UKTD has extensive links with employers and monitors trainees' placements on a frequent and regular basis. Details of the quality assurance system are included in a manual and all policies are regularly reviewed. Many of the procedures which were new at the time of the first inspection are now fully established in use.

The main weaknesses identified by the first inspection were:

- ◆ no formal quality assurance system in place
- ◆ no formal evaluation of training
- ◆ internal verification is not planned
- ◆ insufficient observation of workplace assessors

37. Quality assurance was awarded a grade 4 at the first inspection. Since then, UKTD has made significant progress in addressing all four of the main weaknesses identified by inspectors, and three of these weaknesses have now been fully rectified. There is a formal quality assurance system, and this ensures that internal verification is properly planned. The systematic arrangements for internal verification now include the monitoring and observation of work-based assessors. The targets set in the action plan drawn up following the first inspection have been met, but there are still weaknesses in the arrangements for evaluating the quality of training. At reinspection, inspectors awarded UKTD a grade 3 for quality assurance, the same grade as that given by the company in its most recent self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective implementation and development of quality assurance arrangements by staff
- ◆ well-structured and detailed staff guidance handbook
- ◆ comprehensive and accurate self-assessment report

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ incomplete co-ordination of quality assurance procedures
- ◆ insufficient evaluation of results of surveys of employers and trainees

38. Staff have a good understanding of the quality assurance arrangements and implement them fully. The arrangements are effective in ensuring that training is of a consistently good standard across occupational areas and programmes and

contribute to steadily improving performance by trainers and trainees. Staff attend training courses and conferences in order to gain insights and ideas for improving the training programmes for which they are responsible. They also discuss among themselves ways of improving the quality of training and adopt good ideas or make necessary changes when appropriate. For example, the company changed the way in which it provided off-the-job training in hairdressing as the result of an initiative from members of staff who, following consultation with trainees, suggested that the instruction should have a more practical and less theoretical emphasis. The use of review sheets to record the details of trainees' progress reviews, which was being piloted during the first inspection, has now been fully adopted and the sheets themselves are at present being further developed. The company has also started to monitor the ethnicity and progress of potential trainees referred from careers offices.

39. UKTD has an effective quality assurance policy which lists how quality assurance procedures should be implemented. These arrangements meet the requirements of the awarding bodies and TECs with which UKTD contracts, and the company complies with all the terms of its training contracts. The quality assurance procedures relate directly to the training process and are based around three files of documents. The first, which is issued to all staff, is a comprehensive and detailed handbook for consultants. The second is an extensive procedures manual for internal verifiers, and the third is a guide to financial procedures. The consultants' handbook covers all training activities for which consultants are responsible and includes procedures for publicity, recruitment, induction, equal opportunities, health and safety, initial assessment, and the planning of training, progress reviews and assessment. It is written in clear, easily understood language, and items, such as the material on health and safety, can be extracted for trainees to use. The manual for internal verifiers includes procedures for planning verification, conducting sampling arrangements and handling appeals, as well as curricula vitae of the company's consultants/assessors and copies of observation and verification reports. At present, internal verifiers visit and monitor each consultant at least twice each month and visit and monitor each work-based assessor at least once a quarter. Taken together, the consultants' handbook and the internal verifiers' manual provide adequate quality assurance arrangements to cover the company's training activities.

40. The self-assessment report is well written and comprehensive and provides an accurate reflection of the company's activities. There is a good introduction to the work of the organisation and the judgements that are given are supported by clear evidence. The report accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses in both the occupational and generic aspects of training. All staff are involved in the self-assessment process and are familiar with the contents of both the self-assessment report and its accompanying action plan. The action plan is discussed at monthly meetings and is reviewed each quarter. Each of the first two self-assessment reports has been produced on time, in December 1998 and December 1999 respectively.



41. UKTD has no written procedure for identifying the content and scope of the quality assurance system. New initiatives and procedures are developed, but it is unclear whether or when they are brought within the quality assurance system. The process is not fully co-ordinated and there are no clearly defined parameters for establishing what is and what is not part of the system. This makes reviewing and updating arrangements difficult. The views of employers, trainees and staff are collected by means of questionnaires. There are surveys of trainees' expectations when they start their programmes and of their views during their training, surveys to gather the views of trainees who leave their courses early, surveys of trainees' levels of satisfaction when they have finished their courses, and surveys to gather the responses of employers. Altogether, six separate postal studies are undertaken, plus a telephone survey of employers. The information collected by these surveys is partially analysed but no systematic evaluation takes place at present. UKTD has plans to introduce a full evaluation in due course, but at the time of the reinspection this had not started.