



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MARCH 1999

REINSPECTION NOVEMBER 2000

Huddersfield Technical College

SUMMARY

Huddersfield Technical College provides work-based training in eight occupational areas. Construction and manufacturing were reinspected. The college no longer offers leisure, sport and travel training. Manufacturing training has improved and is now satisfactory. Construction training remains less than satisfactory. The college has failed to resolve the lack of work-based assessment. Retention is poor in both areas. Off-the-job training is provided by college departmental lecturers and training and assessment co-ordinators. Links between the on- and off-the-job elements of the training programmes are weak in most areas. The college has good equal opportunities arrangements for students and trainees while they are at college, but work with employers is informal and unstructured. Trainee support is effective but initial assessment and the use of individual training plans to promote progress are underdeveloped. College quality assurance systems foster the improvement of off-the-job training. Internal verification and some assessment are generally poor. Good practice is not systematically shared.

As a result of the reinspection of Huddersfield Technical College, the original published report text for construction and manufacturing has been replaced by new text, which makes reference to the original inspection findings.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
Agriculture	3
Construction	4
Engineering	3
Manufacturing	4
Business administration	3
Leisure, Sport & Travel	4
Hospitality	3
Health, care & public service	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Construction	4
Manufacturing	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ high quality off-the-job training
- ◆ good resources
- ◆ high standards of personal support and professional counselling
- ◆ very good staffing procedures and development



KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ some poor initial assessment and little accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ insufficient workplace assessment in some areas
- ◆ inadequate use of data to inform improvements
- ◆ unstructured monitoring of employers' equal opportunities work
- ◆ poor retention and achievement in most areas
- ◆ poor individual training plans in several areas

INTRODUCTION

1. Huddersfield Technical College serves the town of Huddersfield and its surrounding districts, which have a population of just over 378,000. The college currently employs 1,228 staff working across a number of sites. The college has a contract with Calderdale and Kirklees Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) for advanced modern apprentices, foundation modern apprentices and other youth training programmes, offering national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in agriculture, construction, engineering, business administration, hospitality and care. The college no longer offers leisure, sport and travel work-based training. The training unit is responsible for the overall management and delivery of the TEC contract, including the financial claims and statistical returns. The training unit is managed by the college's training manager. The unit employs 20 permanent members of staff, plus three trainers on a fixed-term contract. Off-the-job training is delivered by teaching staff within the college's internal schools, with the exception of care and automotive training, the majority of which is delivered by training and assessment co-ordinators based in the training unit. The college subcontracts work for gas services installation, gas services maintenance and highway maintenance to two specialist colleges. The numbers of advanced modern apprentices, foundation modern apprentices and other youth trainees are as follows:

	Advanced modern apprentices	Foundation Modern apprentices	Other youth training	TOTAL
Agriculture		4	3	7
Construction	44	99	35	178
Engineering	66	28	63	157
Manufacturing	22			22
Business administration	28	21	5	54
Hospitality	4	17	1	22
Health, care & public service	8	11	4	23
Total	172	180	111	463

2. There is a significant population of people from minority ethnic groups in the area, made up of Asian, Black African/Caribbean and Chinese groups. The minority ethnic population is rising and constitutes over 20 per cent of the residents in some inner-urban parts of the area. The population profile shows that a higher proportion of young residents are from minority ethnic communities compared with the national average. The minority ethnic cohort aged 16 to 25 resident in Kirklees (1991 census of population) is 18.2 per cent. The social profile is weighted towards skilled manual occupations. During the first inspection the unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent



compared with the national average of 4.6 per cent. At reinspection, the rate was 4.1 per cent compared with the national average of 3.7 per cent. Falling levels of unemployment are attributed to growth in service industries.

3. There are 32 schools in the Kirklees area which offer 11-16 years education. In 1998, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Kirklees was 38.3 per cent, and in Calderdale it was 38.2 per cent, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. There are 10 schools which offer sixth-form provision in the Kirklees area. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Kirklees was 41.3 per cent compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Three members of staff undertook the self-assessment training provided by the TEC. The first self-assessment process was a collaboration between training unit staff and teaching staff. The findings were collated by the training unit. The final draft of the first self-assessment report was refined by the training unit manager and circulated to all heads of school. The college's senior management team and corporation confirmed their agreement with the self-assessment report. The college produced an updated action plan in preparation for reinspection. The action plan did not identify any new strengths or weaknesses but commented on the progress of the actions for each area.

5. The first inspection was carried out by a team of 12 inspectors who spent a total of 41 days at the college in March 1999. All aspects of training were inspected, including tutorials and portfolio-building sessions. Inspectors examined a range of documents, trainees' records, portfolios, contract information, awarding-body reports and company policies. They interviewed 108 trainees, 48 placement providers and 40 college staff. In all, 10 training sessions were observed.

6. The reinspection was carried out by a team of three inspectors, who spent a total of nine days at Huddersfield Technical College in November 2000. They interviewed 24 trainees, 11 staff, 15 workplace supervisors and observed five training sessions. Inspectors reviewed trainees' files, training materials, assessment and internal verification records, external verifier reports and achievement and retention data.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the first inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Agriculture		2	1			3
Construction			2			2
Engineering	1					1
Leisure, sport & travel				1		1
Hospitality		1				1
Health, care & public service		2				2
Total	1	5	3	1	0	10

Grades awarded to training sessions at reinspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction		2	1			3
Manufacturing		1	1			2
Total	0	3	2	0	0	5

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Agriculture

Grade 3

7. The agriculture provision, which includes commercial horticulture, is delivered at the Taylor Hill annexe. This is a specialist centre for land-based training, situated a short distance from the main campus. There are 17 youth credit trainees, of whom 12 are working towards agriculture qualifications (mixed farming) at NVQ level 2, and five are pursuing commercial horticulture qualifications (intensive crop production) also at NVQ level 2. Trainees attend off-the-job training on a day-release basis, with assessment being carried out both on and off the job. Trainees are employed by, or on placement with, a variety of local employers, including farmers, nurseries and landscape contractors. Most trainees follow a fixed two-year programme. The Taylor Hill annexe has facilities for training and assessing NVQ competencies in agriculture and commercial horticulture. Facilities include classrooms, workshops, livestock areas and a commercial glasshouse. There has been a recent increase in facilities at the annexe, and there is an active programme of continuous development of the site, in accordance with a strategic plan. Figures for early leavers are only available for 1997-98, when the rate was very high at 50 per cent. Figures for NVQs achieved per 100 leavers for the last three years are 50, 48 and 46 respectively. Inspectors confirmed approximately half of the strengths and weaknesses indicated in the self-assessment report, and identified additional strengths and weaknesses. They awarded the same grade as that proposed in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured training
- ◆ enthusiastic and motivated staff
- ◆ effective internal verification
- ◆ good training resources
- ◆ all leavers in 1998 found relevant employment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of integration between on- and off-the-job training

- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ training and assessment not geared to individual needs of trainees
- ◆ most horticulture trainees work towards an inappropriate qualification

8. Off-the-job training is well planned and documented. Detailed schemes of work take into account the seasonal nature of agricultural and horticultural work. The schemes are reviewed regularly, and updated as necessary. The college is involved in a pilot for key skills, and key skills are established effectively in occupational training activities. Staff approach their work with enthusiasm, and have productive working relationships with their trainees. New developments are welcomed, and staff demonstrate a willingness to adapt to new challenges. Internal verification is rigorous and effective. It is well planned, and records are detailed. The internal verifier has considerable occupational experience in addition to the appropriate qualifications.

9. The Taylor Hill site has undergone many recent improvements, and new accommodation has improved facilities for trainees. There is a good range of machinery for both horticulture and agriculture trainees, and employers lend tractors to their trainees for off-the-job training activities. The co-operation of local farmers in allowing their land to be used for training and assessing provides a realistic commercial environment. Horticulture trainees have the use of a modern, well-equipped, commercial glasshouse. The college is highly successful in ensuring that trainees go into employment or further education on completion of their programmes. Last year, all leavers progressed into the industry. Impartial careers guidance is given freely by staff during reviews, to ensure that most trainees have a career plan as their training progresses.

10. The college adopts a traditional day-release approach to its NVQ programme, with too much emphasis being placed on off-the-job assessment. This has resulted in excellent opportunities for work-based assessment being missed. College staff are unaware that one large horticultural employer, which is willing to support work-based assessment, has qualified assessors available. The college's recent changes to assessment procedures have helped to address this problem, but the process is by no means complete. Individual training and assessment needs of trainees are not considered sufficiently, and trainees largely follow programmes of similar content and duration, irrespective of their skills on entry to training.

11. Of the five horticulture trainees, four are working towards qualifications in commercial horticulture, even though their work is in amenity horticulture. The trainees working in amenity horticulture are also unable to provide work-based evidence for some of the commercial horticulture units, and this creates an unnecessary barrier to total work-based assessment.

Construction

Grade 4

12. Huddersfield Technical College has 178 modern apprentices and other youth trainees on construction programmes in the following categories:

	Advanced modern apprentices	Foundation modern apprentices	Other youth training	TOTAL
Plumbing	19	17	17	53
Joinery	9	35	9	53
Bricklaying	1	16	5	22
Highway maintenance			3	3
Electrical installation	15	26		41
Painting & decorating			1	1
Gas fitting		4		4
Heating & ventilation		1		1
Total	44	99	35	178

13. The highway-maintenance training is subcontracted to another college in Sheffield. Training in painting and decorating, heating and ventilation, and gas fitting is subcontracted to a college in Leeds. There are service level agreements with these colleges which are monitored by Huddersfield College. Trainees in the other trades attend Huddersfield College for off-the-job training one day a week. All trainees are employed in a variety of small to medium-sized employers where they receive on-the-job training. Training and support staff have appropriate vocational, technical and assessors' qualifications. Trainees' reviews are carried out every six to 12 weeks by the training unit staff. Qualified occupational assessors undertake most of the assessment in the college. In 1997-98, 28 of 59 trainees left training before completing the scheme. They achieved 18 NVQs. In 1998-99, 37 of 56 trainees left the scheme early and achieved 26 NVQs. In 1999-00, 44 of 72 trainees left early and achieved 40 NVQs. These statistics show a decrease since 1997-98 in the proportion of trainees who complete their training and an increase in the average number of NVQs achieved by each trainee who completes their training. In the 2000-2001 contractual year, up to the time of inspection, 25 trainees left the scheme early and achieved 26 NVQs.

At the first inspection, the weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ lack of knowledge of key skills by trainees
- ◆ lack of awareness by employers of NVQs and training
- ◆ missed opportunities to gather work-based evidence

- ◆ lack of work-based assessment
- ◆ very poor retention
- ◆ no progression opportunities from NVQ level 2 in electrical installation
- ◆ excessively long time scales for achieving plumbing NVQs
- ◆ assessment not used to update training plans

14. Some action has been taken to attempt to remedy some of the weaknesses identified in the original report. The college did not produce an updated self-assessment report for reinspection identifying new strengths and weaknesses. It produced a revised action plan. The main weakness of the lack of work-based assessment remained. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and stimulating off-the-job training
- ◆ effective integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ clear understanding by trainees of their programme
- ◆ good support from placement/assessment co-ordinators

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to resolve the lack of work-based assessment
- ◆ insufficient use of work-based evidence
- ◆ slow progress of some plumbing trainees
- ◆ insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training in plumbing
- ◆ poor retention rates

15. The off-the-job training in the college is well structured and well taught. Lessons are stimulating and conducted at a good pace for trainees. There are sufficient and appropriate resources for training and assessment. Staff are well qualified occupationally and hold the appropriate assessor qualifications. NVQ assessment carried out in the college is rigorous and internal verification is thorough. Trainees are well aware of key skills. Evidence of key skills achievement is generated as an integral part of off-the-job training and assessment. Trainees receive helpful guidance on identifying key skills evidence from their NVQ work and how to record it in their portfolios. Additional key skills evidence is gathered through workshop activities in the college. Trainees in construction understand the structure of the awards they are working towards and how the assessment activities, assignments and their personal portfolio will enable them to achieve the NVQs. Trainees are well supported by college staff who encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. Most trainees are highly motivated and keen to apply the theory in their work. Many employers understand the training scheme and how the NVQ and key skills complement each other.

16. Trainees receive good advice and guidance from the placement co-ordinators during their regular visits to the companies. Neither of the two placement co-ordinators are occupationally qualified and they are not involved in assessing trainees. Trainees and workplace trainers can contact these staff at any time to discuss the progress of trainees. The assessment co-ordinator in carpentry and joinery has recently begun visiting employers and discussing training in preparation for work-based assessment. In electrical installation, there are 10 employers who have started training as assessors and when qualified, they will be able to assess their own trainees in the workplace.

17. The college has failed to introduce work-based assessment for trainees. All assessment currently takes place in the college. Work based evidence is recorded in some areas, but not consistently for all construction trainees. There are a few examples of where work-based evidence is being used to supplement assessment in the college and this has improved trainees' progress towards the NVQs. In general, however, work-based evidence is not being used systematically to support NVQ assessment. Trainees often simulate activities in the college that they have carried out in the workplace. Trainees' assessment takes place during the academic year and does not take full advantage of the assessment opportunities in the workplace. One workplace supervisor was keeping detailed records of a trainee's work activities, which included evaluative assessment of the trainee's performance. College staff were unaware of these records and missed the opportunity to use work-based evidence for assessment. The college's external verifier for construction has not permitted the use of work-based evidence as supplementary evidence. Only directly observed evidence and evidence assessed by a qualified assessor has been acceptable.

18. As in the first inspection, some plumbing trainees are making slow progress. As a result of the first report, the off-the-job plumbing training has been restructured to reduce the time taken for assessment. However, there are nine plumbing trainees who are into their fourth year of training and have yet to achieve NVQ level 2. Some trainee's relevant work experience during the training programme has not been accepted as evidence for the NVQ. The excessive time required for some individual NVQ assessments in plumbing in the college has contributed to the delay and demotivation of this group. First and second year trainees now attend college for three one-week blocks plus one day a week. Some trainees have to repeat the preparation for assessment in the college, as other trainees use the equipment they have assembled before they have had the opportunity to use it for assessment.

19. On- and off-the-job training are not well co-ordinated. The individual training plan from the TEC is used to record the college curriculum and does not refer to trainees' work experience or the training from the employer. The college staff do not negotiate with the employer about the use of work-based evidence. The placement co-ordinators review the trainee's progress every six to eight weeks and liaise with the college staff about matters raised by trainees. The college staff also

send a report on the trainee to the employer three times a year. These actions have not improved on the co-ordination of training. There is currently no joint planning of the training between employers and the college.

20. There is poor retention in construction. In 1997-98, 53 per cent of trainees completed their programme, in 1998-99 this figure was 34 per cent and for 1999-2000, 39 per cent of trainees completed their programme. In the past two years, more than half of all trainees did not complete their training. Records maintained by training staff show that some of the trainees who leave early have completed the NVQ but not the key skills qualification.

Engineering

Grade 3

21. There are 171 trainees in this sector, studying for NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Of these trainees, 140 are on motor vehicle, five are on electronics and 26 are in mechanical engineering training programmes. There are 123 youth credit trainees and 48 modern apprentices. In addition to the training in the workplace, theory sessions and off-the-job training are delivered at the college. Off-the-job training is generally delivered by college teaching staff, except for automotive training, the majority of which is delivered by training and assessment co-ordinators based within the training unit. Five training and assessment co-ordinators for automotive training are responsible for off-the-job training, assessments, verification, and trainees' reviews. Assessments take place at work and at the college. For mechanical engineering and electronics trainees, two placement officers are responsible for pastoral reviews at work. College tutors are responsible for assessment and verification of off-the-job training and NVQ portfolio-building. All trainees have full-time work placements, usually with small- to medium-sized employers. Work placements are vetted prior to trainees beginning training. Employers sign action points resulting from risk assessments for health and safety, and a commitment to equality of opportunity for trainees. Trainees study during day-release sessions at college for off-the-job training. Additional qualifications are offered to trainees to enhance their skills and career prospects. In 1997-98, engineering trainees achieved 58 NVQs per 100 leavers, and 66 per cent progressed into employment. Both results represent a significant improvement over the previous two years' figures, which were 37 and 26 per cent for qualifications, and 43 and 55 per cent for jobs. The proportion of trainees leaving early in 1997-98 was 46 per cent. Many of the strengths quoted in the self-assessment report were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors awarded the same grade as identified in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

To increase the breadth of training, the motor-vehicle section has undertaken a joint project with another local college to establish a video-conferencing capability. Potential assessment activities are filmed digitally as they happen at the employer's premises, and are relayed live back to the college. The evidence is also recorded for verification purposes, and will be used in addition to existing assessment methods. The films will be used to supplement existing training.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and -delivered off-the-job training
- ◆ highly qualified and experienced staff
- ◆ all those involved in training and assessment work well as a team
- ◆ good access for trainees to a wide range of on-the-job learning opportunities
- ◆ effectively planned and integrated key skills training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ failure to inform mechanical engineering trainees of changes to training plans
- ◆ ineffectively planned on-the-job training
- ◆ poor NVQ awareness among some employers
- ◆ lack of rigour in internal verification for mechanical engineering
- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment in mechanical engineering
- ◆ poor retention rates

22. Off-the-job training is well organised, planned, delivered and documented. The college has excellent resources and highly enthusiastic tutors and training and assessment co-ordinators, who have developed stimulating lesson plans which both consolidate the learning experience and greatly encourage trainees' participation. First-class working relationships exist between college tutors, training and assessment co-ordinators and employers. These reinforce the interest and enthusiasm shown by trainees. The college tutors and training and assessment co-ordinators are all occupationally experienced, with many years of working in their relevant industries. They work particularly well as a team. The engineering department has recently acquired significant additional funding, enabling it to provide and equip a purpose-built training area for automotive trainees. Trainees are placed with employers offering a wide range of on-the-job learning opportunities, which stretch their capabilities and develop additional skills. These opportunities provide more interest for trainees and create increased labour flexibility for employers. Trainees show a good understanding of key skills and appreciate that a significant level of their NVQ portfolios may be cross-referenced to the key skills portfolio. One college tutor has completed his own key skills portfolio, which is available for trainees to use as an example.

GOOD PRACTICE

Additional training is being provided by a group of college tutors who have organised a one-day key skills workshop to take place during the holiday period. Final-year trainees are being invited to bring in their portfolios and key skills/NVQ cross-referencing booklets. They will receive extra training on how to seek out any existing evidence which will 'fit' each key skill element. Photocopying facilities will also be made available.

23. Many NVQ completion dates are changed on modern apprenticeship training plans without mechanical engineering trainees' involvement. The trainees concerned are considered to be unlikely to finish by the first date, so the date is changed without discussion with them. Some completion dates are altered three times. Employers are not aware of their trainees' programmes and timetables. When visiting work placements to carry out progress reviews with the trainee and

employer, tutors miss opportunities to carry out work-based assessments and familiarise employers with greater knowledge of the NVQ structure.

24. Internal verification in mechanical engineering does not conform to awarding body requirements. It is carried out only at the end of the training programme when trainees' portfolios are complete. Observation of assessors during assessment by internal verifiers is not formally recorded. Little assessment takes place in the workplace, although there is ample opportunity to do so. Mechanical engineering trainees make up 15 per cent of the total number of trainees for this occupational area.

Manufacturing

Grade 3

25. There are 22 advanced modern apprentices. Eighteen trainees are in the first year of the programme and four in the second year. Trainees are employed in local engineering, welding and fabrication companies. The apprenticeship typically lasts for four years. Trainees attend the college for off-the-job training on one day each week. Trainees begin the scheme by working towards NVQs at level 2 in the engineering foundation (fabrication and welding options) and also towards a craft award in fabrication and welding. Key-skills training and the craft-award training start in the first year. Trainees are recruited by the employers and referred to the college for training. Trainees' achievement rate in 1997-98, was 85 NVQs for every 100 leavers. In 1998-99 no trainees achieved a qualification. This was due in part to the temporary halt in the recruitment of manufacturing trainees by the college. The achievement rate increased to 108 NVQs per 100 leavers in 1999-2000. Retention remains low with 16 per cent in 1997-98, zero in 1998-99 and eight per cent in 1999-2000.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses identified were;

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ insufficient awareness of NVQ framework
- ◆ poor internal verification
- ◆ lack of rigour in the workplace reviews
- ◆ no direct workplace assessments
- ◆ insufficient programme development

GOOD PRACTICE

One trainee received off-the-job training in vertical welding at the college. He was able to demonstrate this skill in his company and reduced the manufacturing time and costs for his employer.

26. By the time of reinspection, action had been taken to remedy all the weaknesses and improvements had been made. Employers and trainees are now aware of the NVQ framework. New internal verification procedures are in place. All level 3 NVQ assessments are carried out in the workplace. The college did not produce a self-assessment report but presented an updated action plan. No new strengths or weaknesses were identified. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-equipped workshop
- ◆ effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment at level 2
- ◆ poor retention rates

27. There are good workshop resources at the college, which are well equipped with modern welding and fabrication machines. Some of the equipment is better than that in many of the employers' companies. Trainees make use of additional support for mathematics and key skills. The high turnover of staff mentioned in the first inspection report has been stemmed and the current staff have relevant occupational experience and are well respected by the trainees. College staff have obtained or are working towards the assessor qualifications. On- and off-the-job training is well co-ordinated. Training staff, the placement co-ordinator and the employers work well together in planning the training. Trainees' reviews take account of training in the college and training in the workplace. Employers value their trainees and the good work that they produce. The placement officer works with the employers and trainees to identify the appropriate optional units for the NVQ. The college trainers have recently started to visit employers to assess which NVQ units each trainee can achieve within their own manufacturing environment. The placement officer visits the companies every 12 weeks and the trainers visit three times a year.

28. There are new internal verification procedures and college staff now assess the level 3 NVQ in the workplace. College staff hold meetings about work-based training once a term and discuss assessment and internal verification. Additional meetings are also arranged when required, for example, at the request of an external verifier who was about to retire. The new internal verification procedure follows the guidelines of the awarding body. So far during this college year, six NVQs at level 3 have been internally verified in the college and a schedule produced for the remaining 16 trainees. One workplace assessment has been observed by the internal verifier since the start of the course in September.

29. Most level 2 NVQ assessments take place in the college. The technical units, which are part of the foundation phase of the apprenticeship, do make use of work-based assessment. Insufficient use is made of the workplace to assess trainees' skills. One trainee who had not completed his level 2 NVQ had constructed a road trailer single-handed. The assessor photographed the trailer but the evidence was only assessed against level 3 standards and not against level 2. In some cases, logbook recordings of work done in the company are not used for level 2 NVQ assessment but only for NVQ level 3 elements.

30. The retention rate for trainees remains poor. Many trainees leave training without completing the key skills qualifications but having completed the NVQ. Trainees and employers do not recognise the importance of key skills. There was no recruitment of manufacturing trainees in 1998-99 and, therefore, no level 2 candidates and none of the level 3 candidates achieved their NVQs in that year. Of the five trainees who left early in the current year, three had achieved NVQs at level 3, but failed to complete the key skills qualification.

Business administration

Grade 3

31. There are 60 trainees in business administration, working towards NVQs in administration, information technology and accounting. Of these, 35 are modern apprentices and 16 are national trainees, all of whom are employed status. Nine are work-based training for young people trainees on placement. Trainees' progress is reviewed quarterly in the workplace. Trainees on all programmes attend college on a day-release basis. In addition, work-based assessment takes place for administration and information technology trainees. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ key skills training effectively designed and integrated
- ◆ additional training and qualifications offered
- ◆ strong links with employers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unco-ordinated assessment and reviews
- ◆ employers not sufficiently involved
- ◆ training plans not regularly updated
- ◆ high levels of early leavers in 1997-98

32. Off-the-job training is well structured to provide the opportunity for trainees to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to complete their NVQs. Trainees on all programmes have timetabled key skills sessions as part of their day-release programmes. They are also able to book tutorial time for key skills with their tutors. Administration trainees are given the opportunity to gain additional qualifications in text processing. This is not a mandatory requirement of the programme, but is a valuable enhancement to trainees' employability. There is a well-developed network of employers with which placement staff are able to arrange suitable employment and placement opportunities for trainees with a wide range of abilities. Employers also contact the college if they have a training vacancy. Some employers do not demonstrate a clear understanding of NVQs or

the assessment process. They do not routinely participate in review and assessment visits, which are usually arranged through contact with trainees.

33. Work-placement officers visit trainees at work to review their progress. Assessors also visit trainees. However, there is no co-ordination in the timing of these visits, and consequently the opportunity to work together to set targets and monitor progress against action plans is lost. It is possible for both members of staff to visit within days of each other, resulting in subsequent long gaps between visits. The individual training plans which trainees sign at the start of their programmes are not regularly updated. The system is currently under reorganisation to enable staff visiting trainees to take plans with them in order to discuss and record progress against targets.

34. High numbers of early leavers in accounting and information technology affected the achievement rate for 1997-98, which was extremely low at 17.6 per cent. An analysis of early leavers has fed into the recruitment policy for 1998-99. An award system has been introduced to reward trainees' achievements. Indications for the current year are that trainees are achieving ahead of expected targets. So far in 1999, many of those leaving the programme have achieved at least one qualification.

Leisure, sport & travel

Grade 4

35. There are 12 modern apprentices working towards NVQ at level 3 in sport and recreation (development). Placements are all with Kirklees local authority in two separate departments – community development services, and leisure services. All trainees started the NVQ route by completing NVQ level 1, then progressing onto level 2. At level 2, some followed the playwork NVQ, while others followed the sports coaching NVQ, depending on their workplace setting. Of the 12 trainees, 11 have successfully achieved NVQ level 2, and all 12 are now working towards level 3. Off-the-job training is provided by the college one day a week in the form of theory sessions, key skills tutorials and portfolio-building support. College staff delivering the training are adequately qualified. Difficulties with assessment and placements have led to the college's deciding that the modern apprenticeship programme in sport and recreation will cease to operate after the current trainees complete. There has only been one intake to this area of training. Achievement rates have varied greatly over the last three years, at 50 per cent, nil and 87 per cent respectively. The proportion of leavers gaining employment over the last three years has been 50 per cent, nil and 25 per cent respectively. The self-assessment report identifies some key weaknesses which were verified by inspection, particularly in training and assessment. However, it does not recognise the fact that levels of knowledge and understanding of key skills by trainees and tutors are sound. Earlier difficulties with workplace assessment have been identified and acted upon, but it is too soon to evaluate the outcomes. The grade cited in the self-assessment report was confirmed.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good understanding by trainees of NVQ processes and procedures
- ◆ good understanding of key skills

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poorly co-ordinated on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ tutors and workplace supervisors not working as a team
- ◆ limited assessment in the workplace
- ◆ inappropriate qualifications
- ◆ trainees unsure of their status

36. Most trainees are confident in their understanding of the assessment process and, for example, how evidence is generated at work. They understand the processes of cross-referencing, and their portfolios are well organised. External verifier reports comment on the improvements in portfolio quality. Tutors and trainees are familiar with key skills, having been involved in developing them for 18 months. Mapping exercises are carried out, so that coverage is integrated and trainees know the different levels required for each key skill. Tutors have developed tracking systems, although it has not yet been decided how key skills will be presented for external verification. Internal verification is carried out by a key skills specialist.

37. Trainees see very little connection between what they do at college and what they do at work. The tutor for theory is a part-time member of staff from a sports science background. He has no contact with trainees at work, and the capacity to co-ordinate materials is limited. Workplace supervisors are unclear about their role in the assessment process, and although they have attended meetings, these have not proved effective in providing a cohesive approach to training and assessment. There are some very effective working relationships and communication channels, particularly for pastoral care. However, the quality is inconsistent, especially for assessment and co-ordination of the programme.

38. All those concerned with the programme have experienced considerable difficulty with assessment. Despite several workplace supervisors initially embarking on training to become qualified assessors, supported by the college, none have completed. This caused problems for the trainees and college staff when NVQ level 2 was in progress. College staff are now allocated an additional 12 hours per week to carry out peripatetic assessment at work. College staff are therefore responsible for all assessment. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the new system. Trainees' progress is monitored, but the pastoral and assessment functions of review visits are not co-ordinated. Visits may or may not involve the workplace supervisor. The review procedures state that trainees should receive two individual reviews with the employer but this is not taking place. Records of reviews are sometimes unsigned.

39. All trainees started on NVQ at level 1 in sport and recreation, which was appropriate for their needs and aspirations. Trainees working in the youth service settings then progressed on to NVQ level 2 in playwork, which also met their needs. Other trainees in the leisure services department followed NVQ level 2 in sports coaching and this progression was suitable. However, at NVQ level 3, all trainees are registered for sport and recreation (development). A convergence at this level is not appropriate, and is creating problems in identifying assessment opportunities at work for most trainees. Trainees will be unable to cover the range required. The NVQ units requiring supervisory experience are being dealt with superficially. The employment status of trainees is unclear. There is an employment declaration from Kirklees local authority, but trainees are paid by the college's payroll. Trainees stated that they are not employed, but on placement. Workplace supervisors support this view.

Hospitality

Grade 3

40. There are 18 trainees on various schemes working towards a variety of hospitality and bakery NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Of these, seven are national trainees, six of whom are following NVQ level 2 in food preparation and cooking and the other is following NVQ level 2 in serving food and drink. There are six chef modern apprentices and one bakery apprentice. On the work-based training for young people programme, there are two bakery trainees and one trainee in food preparation and cooking. The training centre is an approved assessment centre. In addition to their NVQ programme, all trainees achieve a basic food hygiene certificate. Trainees are employed status, and work for a variety of establishments throughout the area, including pubs, restaurants, hotels and bakeries of varying sizes. For the off-the-job training, trainees join other groups of students within the college. Trainees attend one day a week. Assessment is undertaken at the college, which has three outlets approved as 'realistic working environments' for assessment purposes. The college restaurant is open to paying customers, Monday to Friday for lunch, and two evenings a week for dinner. There is a bistro which is open throughout the day, five days a week, as well as a fish and chip shop which offers a variety of fast-food items each weekday lunchtime. Currently, two members of college staff carry out all assessments. Both are vocationally experienced and hold the relevant assessor awards. These two members of staff and one other member of staff undertake internal verification. The proportion of leavers gaining employment in the last three years has been 63, 60 and 71 per cent. Over the same period, 9, 15 and 38 NVQs per 100 leavers have been achieved. Those leaving before completing their individual training plans in 1997-98 comprised 67 per cent. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that cited in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of resources
- ◆ good integration and understanding of key skills

- ◆ strong links with local employers
- ◆ development of a wide range of practical skills by trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor achievement of NVQs
- ◆ 25 per cent of trainees lacking a written training programme
- ◆ lack of planning for internal verification

41. The college provides trainees with a wide range of resources in order to help develop their skills and knowledge. There are a number of well-equipped training kitchens, and the restaurant and bar are also available for training purposes when not open to the public. A number of different types of outlets are also available for trainees to observe and work in when appropriate, which gives them a good insight into the different sectors of the hospitality industry. Trainees also have access to the college library during the week. An NVQ-specific work package has been developed to support the training, as well as to help develop and assess theory. The staff involved in the programme are well qualified and provide trainees with a high degree of support. A placement officer undertakes regular reviews, but in addition trainees are easily able to contact relevant college staff, should the need arise. Within the hospitality department, key skills are well addressed. Trainees have a good understanding of key skills, how they form part of their programme, and how to gather evidence for them. Trainees have access to well-designed support materials for key skills.

42. The college has a strong industry liaison group which meets quarterly and is regularly attended by members of the local hospitality industry. This forum covers a range of issues affecting the hospitality industry, and also helps to ensure good communication between college staff and trainees' placements. The regular reviews carried out by the placement officer also help to ensure that employers are aware of the progress their trainees are making and the topics they are covering during their off-the-job training. There are numerous examples of trainees returning from off-the-job training and their workplace supervisors linking their work to the materials covered. This happens on an informal basis, and the link between the workplace and off-the-job training could be made stronger, particularly for bakery trainees. Employers and trainees in food preparation and cooking are given a written programme detailing which unit is being covered at off-the-job training sessions, and an outline of the content of these training days. This is not the case for the two trainees in the other areas within hospitality, where trainees can arrive for off-the-job training not knowing what will be covered during the day. Their employers also do not have any information about the content of off-the-job training. This makes it harder to make the link between work and college. As a result of their on- and off-the-job training, trainees are developing a good range of practical skills. Some trainees naturally develop more quickly than others do. However, because the training and assessment operate as a

rigid programme, there is no scope to recognise their achievement.

43. The timetabling of internal verification is not systematic. It is fitted around other duties when staff have the time, so lacks organisation.

44. Little assessment occurs at work. Currently, the first year of day release at college is concerned with training so little assessment takes place, and the focus moves to assessment in the second year once trainees are more practised. This means that trainees who leave the programme early are not obtaining unit accreditation. In addition, the more able trainees are not able to achieve their NVQs at an appropriate rate.

Health, care & public service

Grade 3

45. Of the 42 trainees in this area, 34 are working towards qualifications in care. There are 18 national trainees working towards NVQs at level 2 in care, and eight modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3 in care. Eight trainee dental nurses are working towards the British Dental Nurse Certificate. The college took the decision in February 1999 not to offer this qualification in future, and the TEC subsequently confirmed the decision. No further trainees will be recruited. Dental trainees attend college one evening a week for two years before taking the final examination. All evening classes are delivered by visiting dental professionals. Care trainees attend college for off-the-job training one day a week. The college has offered NVQs in care since September 1996. All trainees are either employed or on work placement with 17 local nursing or residential homes, a school for pupils with special learning needs, or dental practices. Staff from the college regularly visit all trainees at work to review their progress, at a frequency in line with TEC requirements. In 1997-98, 83 per cent of trainees left the programmes prior to completing their individual training plans and only 11 per cent of trainees achieved a qualification. The proportion of those achieving qualifications in the preceding two years was 82 per cent and 62 per cent. Over the last three years, the proportion of leavers going into employment has been 27, 56 and 16 per cent respectively. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that proposed.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ regular, well-planned and recorded workplace assessment in care
- ◆ every NVQ unit certificated on completion
- ◆ additional qualifications offered
- ◆ regular sharing of workplace practice by trainees
- ◆ monthly feedback from trainees used to improve off-the-job training
- ◆ integrated key skills for modern apprentices

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention
- ◆ some inappropriate dental employer placements
- ◆ 100 per cent failure rate for dental examination in 1997-98
- ◆ no member of staff with occupational knowledge of dental nursing

GOOD PRACTICE

To improve learning and personal development, care trainees are encouraged to share their workplace experiences during tutorials. The tutor uses the discussions to impart knowledge, help trainees share best practice, and identify gaps in trainees' experience.

46. All care trainees are assessed regularly at work. Employers contribute to the assessment process. Trainees and assessors plan assessment in advance and identify appropriate workplace evidence. Most portfolios contain a varied range of evidence and are well structured. The NVQ units are assessed and verified on completion, and units are immediately certificated by the awarding body. This allows any early leavers to take completed units with them to their next employer. Key skills are integrated into workplace practice for NVQ level 3 care trainees. Key skills units are also assessed and verified on completion. Trainees use college library and information technology facilities to aid their learning. Dedicated rooms for off-the-job care training are good and display up-to-date subject information and trainees' projects. Care trainees are well supported by college staff. All first-year care trainees gain additional qualifications in food hygiene, and first aid. Trainees are aware of progression routes to higher vocational and academic qualifications. Three trainees are progressing to nurse training; one to a degree course in counselling and one is staying at the college on a day-release basis for an HND in social care, with a view to advancing to a full degree.

47. During off-the-job group tutorial sessions, trainees share their workplace experiences. Trainees are helped in this way to build knowledge, confidence and practical skills. Each month, trainees are asked to write comments on issues they would like drawn to the attention of the course team. This often results in immediate action by the college to improve the trainees' experience. Recently, new blinds were provided for the training room and additional books purchased for trainees. Care trainees have an elected trainee representative who acts as a channel for feeding back comments to the course team.

48. One member of staff delivers all the off-the-job training, workplace assessment and workplace reviews for care trainees. Some dental work placements do not offer trainees sufficient time assisting the dentist with clients to enable them to gain the practical experience required by the award. All off-the-job training is delivered by visiting lecturers who are dental professionals. The college does not have a member of staff with an occupational background in dentistry to co-ordinate and manage the programme. None of the eight dental trainees passed the examination in 1997-98. Initial assessment is weak and poorly recorded. Although employers comply with health and safety regulations, college staff are omitting to complete health and safety checklists on some occasions. Individual training plans are not used as a working document to inform progress. In dental care, the training plan is a copy of the course syllabus.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

49. Huddersfield Technical College has an equal opportunities policy and procedures which include a personal harassment policy and procedure. There is an equal opportunities committee and designated co-ordinators. Access for people with mobility difficulties is satisfactory. The college has a total of 469 trainees, of whom 21 per cent are female, 7 per cent have disabilities, and 5 per cent are from minority ethnic communities. The college systematically monitors trainees and staff by age, gender, ethnicity and disability, and action plans are drawn up to redress any imbalances. The equal opportunities policy is reviewed regularly and was last updated in 1997. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that proposed by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-documented, comprehensive college equal opportunities policy and procedures
- ◆ effective management within the college
- ◆ rigorous review and action-planning within the college

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of employers' equality of opportunity work

50. The college's well-documented equal opportunities policy indicates how it will monitor and ensure equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity and disability. The policy document also protects trainees from personal harassment, and gives contact names if they have a complaint. Trainees are well informed of the college's commitment to equal opportunities in their introduction to training. Marketing materials promote positive images which reflect the make-up of the local population.

51. The college's equal opportunities committee reviews the policy. The committee consists of representatives of college staff, students, corporation members and staff from the training unit. It reports directly to the college's senior management board. The college also has a community liaison group, which is linked to the equal opportunities committee. The work of these bodies has influenced staff training on equal opportunities, and has resulted in the conversion of a lavatory for men in the engineering block for use by women. The training manager is a designated equal opportunities co-ordinator for gender issues. The college is also a member of Calderdale and Kirklees TEC's initiative, 'Kickstart equality award scheme'. The membership includes local employers. The college produces a range of marketing materials which are carefully monitored for gender and ethnicity bias. Various initiatives with local schools and organisations use projects and work tasters to improve links with under-represented groups. Despite

these efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and encourage under-represented groups, the impact in real terms has not redressed imbalances in gender and ethnicity among trainees.

52. The college's commitment and good practice are not rigorously promoted with employers. Employers sign to agree that they will abide by the college's equal opportunities policy. However, the monitoring that takes place to ensure that they adhere to the policy is unstructured and unrecorded. There is little formal activity by the college to inform employers more fully and educate them about the need for effective equal opportunities actions. Trainees all spend at least four days a week with their employers and so the unstructured monitoring jeopardises the good work undertaken in equal opportunities during the brief periods they spend at college.

53. There is a common application form used by young people in the area, which the college is contractually obliged to use. This application form does not include any equal opportunities monitoring information. This oversight has been corrected for the new contract year. Otherwise data are collected and analysed to monitor equal opportunities issues.

Trainee support

Grade 3

54. All prospective trainees are interviewed and offered relevant advice on career options prior to starting on a training programme. A structured induction is used to inform trainees about their rights and responsibilities and the programmes they are undertaking. In the motor vehicle area, care and joinery training and assessment co-ordinators are employed to monitor and assess trainees at work and to co-ordinate the review process. Trainees' progress and welfare are generally reviewed within a 12-week period at work. Professional counselling services are made available to trainees throughout their training. The college works with local careers offices and schools, and often gets referrals from previous users of the training facility, in order to attract trainees and work placements. Most of the strengths and weaknesses identified during inspection are identified in the self-assessment report, but inspectors awarded a lower grade than was given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ thorough induction to programme and NVQ framework
- ◆ good pastoral support and professional counselling
- ◆ additional qualifications offered
- ◆ comprehensive and well-structured career and progression advice

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ variable quality of initial assessment
- ◆ unrealistic training plans for some trainees

- ◆ lack of systematic accreditation of prior achievement
- ◆ lack of rigour in some trainees' progress reviews

55. Induction is well planned informing trainees of their rights and responsibilities and practical health and safety information. All trainees receive a useful induction booklet, covering the facilities available to them, such as the library, information technology packages and medical departments. In addition, each college school has its own induction programme reinforcing the initial induction. This is often followed by workplace induction by the larger employers.

56. Support for trainees at their placement is frequent and regular, and is often more than contractually required. Visiting tutors and assessors give well-informed, comprehensive advice. Trainees with learning difficulties or disabilities of any kind are encouraged and given additional support, which includes extending their training programmes and coaching by specialist tutors. In engineering, open nights are arranged for parents, employers and schools to promote work-based learning. The objective of these sessions is to try to bridge the knowledge gap between NVQ structure and operation, particularly at work, and to create stronger partnership links with industry.

57. Progress reviews are regular and frequent, but they are often not recorded in sufficient depth or detail to enable them to be used as a planning tool. The design of the review form does not encourage detailed planning of training in the workplace, and does not focus on collection of evidence to achieve unit accreditation. Supervisors are involved, but they leave the planning of training to the training and assessment co-ordinators and trainees. Considerable effort is made to secure full-time employment with workplace providers as soon as possible. Over 70 per cent of trainees are employed. Placements are found for the majority of trainees. On occasion it is beneficial for trainees to move to another placement and in these circumstances NVQs are continued, and the changes are made quickly.

58. Initial assessment is not systematically carried out on entry, and the opportunity to use trainees' previous learning in the occupational or key skill areas is often lost. Workplace supervisors' knowledge of NVQs is variable, as is the support given by supervisors. Some trainees would be capable of achieving their qualifications more quickly if the work and training were better planned and co-ordinated.

Management of training

Grade 3

59. Huddersfield Technical College has a single management structure to cover all its provision. The training manager is a middle manager who reports to the assistant principal responsible for business development. The training manager is responsible for co-ordinating all the training funded through TEC contracts. Administration of the TEC-funded training provision is carried out by staff

employed to work in the training unit, situated within the college. Off-the-job training is delivered by the nine vocational schools within the college. Staff in the training unit monitor all work placement providers and carry out trainees' progress reviews in partnership with trainers and tutors. The college has a range of policies and procedures to cover most aspects of its work and these apply to all staff. Huddersfield Technical College has achieved Investors in People status. The majority of strengths cited in the self-assessment report related to management of training were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. The one weakness indicated was considered not to affect the trainees' experience unduly. Other strengths and weaknesses were identified during inspection. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff development
- ◆ excellent procedures for staffing recruitment with thorough induction
- ◆ monthly targets set and reviewed with heads of schools

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ variable understanding of staff roles and responsibilities
- ◆ some poor communication with employers
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

60. Staff recruitment and selection procedures are carefully structured and applied. Applicants are informed thoroughly about the college, its systems and requirements. Once appointed, new staff are given a full and detailed induction to the college, during which they are informed about their roles and responsibilities and the management structure. Some staff in manufacturing are not committed to training within an NVQ framework. Policies and procedures are clearly communicated to staff, but some procedures are not rigorously applied in all instances. For example, the process for reviewing trainees' progress is inconsistent in different occupational areas. Staff have detailed job descriptions, and undergo an annual staff appraisal review at which their personal development needs are carefully matched to the needs of the college. Teaching and training staff are qualified and experienced. Monitoring staff receive training in health and safety monitoring and equal opportunities issues. Although off-the-job training is constrained by college term-times, the training unit is open throughout the year to supply support and guidance for trainees.

61. Internal communication is generally good. Staff have open access to managers and tutors to discuss issues relating to trainees and programmes. However, much of the communication is informal and not recorded. This leads to inconsistencies in practice and staff understanding. Regular meetings are held at all levels. Senior management meetings are structured and recorded for follow-up actions. Monthly meetings of the training team are held to discuss general issues concerning the training unit. Staff are set team targets, with the training manager delegating

activities but retaining responsibility for the work of the team. Training unit staff meet individually with the training manager each month to discuss recruitment of trainees, retention and achievement against programme profiles with reference to the TEC contract. Some action plans have been drawn up for individual occupational areas to address weaknesses in these matters.

62. Delivery of training is managed by the heads of schools. A training board meets three times a year, and it includes two assistant principals, the training unit manager and heads of schools. Meetings of the training board are structured to review training offered through the TEC contract. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training has been discussed at these meetings. This was found to be a strength by inspectors in care, and no more than normal practice in most other occupational areas. Some progress has been made to improve this, and further development is currently taking place. Course team meetings are held by the schools to discuss programme issues, and are attended by placement officers. Management-information systems are maintained satisfactorily and provide information for decision-making. Improvements have been seen in some areas monitored by these systems. A new trainee tracking system is being piloted but it is too early to comment on results. The system can be loaded onto a laptop computer to allow the trainee and their employer to see the information it holds. The system shows the percentage of completion for the trainees NVQ.

63. Communication with employers is variable. In some occupational areas, trainees' reviews are completed by tutors and monitoring staff together. In other areas, reviews are conducted by monitoring staff only, and include little detailed discussion of occupational issues or progress made by trainees in their training programme. Some employers show an interest in following the trainees' progress and some do not. Attendance is monitored, however, and no trainees have had to be removed from programmes due to non-attendance.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

64. There is a well-documented quality assurance system which covers the whole college, including the training unit. The system has a cycle of quality assurance checks throughout the year. The college meets the requirements of the TEC contract. The college obtains some opinions of or information on trainees independently to students. Team meetings are held regularly between training unit staff and teaching staff, but do not have a set common agenda and are not minuted. Some feedback from trainees and employers is collected, but the level of response has been low in some areas. The strengths indicated in the self-assessment report were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. The weaknesses cited in the self-assessment report were confirmed during inspection, and additional strengths and weaknesses were identified. A lower grade was awarded than that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ robust quality assurance systems available
- ◆ some effective monitoring
- ◆ identifiable improvements to off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unsatisfactory management of internal verification across provision
- ◆ unsystematic monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ no sharing of good practice across subjects

65. The quality assurance system includes monitoring and evaluating all aspects of programmes. This process is carried out by both training unit and teaching staff. The system is thorough, but does not differentiate between students and trainees. Off-the-job training is well monitored. Improvements to the off-the-job delivery and trainees' experience have taken place over a number of years in several occupational areas. Meetings between the training unit and the teaching schools are too informal to provide effective quality monitoring and improvement in a systematic manner. The quality of the training programme is included in the discussions, but there is no common agenda and agreements are not recorded.

66. The quality assurance arrangements are not effective for some parts of the training unit's programmes. Job descriptions do not provide staff with sufficient detailed information to carry out their duties effectively. For example, there is insufficient clarity about what progress reviews should cover and follow-up arrangements. Training sessions have been held for staff in some vocational departments, but some staff have a poor understanding of the learning requirements of work-based trainees, and they lack the appropriate delivery skills to be effective. The information and opinion collected from trainees has concentrated on the off-the-job training aspects of the programmes. New forms are being piloted which include other areas such as the work place and reviews. The monitoring process is not identifying variations in quality and practice. In all areas of training and support, elements are working well but in nearly all areas poor practice or insufficient activity is also evident. There is no consistency across occupational areas. There is no mechanism to identify good practice and disseminate it to other sections. Areas of weakness are not systematically identified, and the quality of provision is not comprehensively evaluated.

67. The college completed a self-assessment of its training provision as part of its overall assessment in September 1998 in preparation for its FEFC inspection. The self-assessment report in line with *Raising the Standard* was completed in October 1998. Generally, the self-assessment report gives a reasonable representation of the provision. There is a good representation of the views of staff, employers and trainees in the report. Many of the weaknesses identified in the report were confirmed by inspectors, but the identified strengths tended to be no more than normal practice by inspectors. An action plan has been drawn up prior to



inspection, and some weaknesses were being addressed. Self-assessment was treated by the college as part of its quality assurance procedures and as a measure by which to achieve continuous improvement. Of the 12 grades indicated in the self-assessment report, inspectors confirmed four and lowered eight.