



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT APRIL 2000

New College Durham

SUMMARY

Training in business administration at New College Durham is good. Trainees demonstrate high levels of competence and training is well planned. There is too little work-based assessment. Training in construction, engineering, retailing and customer service, hospitality, hair and beauty and health care (dental surgery assistants) is satisfactory. There are good resources at the college. Assessment in the workplace is not regular and is often unplanned. Much needs to be done in some areas to improve the teaching and assessment of key skills. Arrangements for ensuring equality of opportunity are satisfactory and there are effective complaints procedures. All trainees are treated fairly but those with mobility difficulties cannot access the library area. Trainee support is good. There are comprehensive pastoral and welfare systems. Management of training is satisfactory. Staff have every opportunity to ensure that they maintain and update their professional and occupational skills. Integration of on- and off-the-job training is poorly organised. Quality assurance procedures are good. Self-assessment gives a good appraisal of the trainees' performance, and action plans are designed to address weaknesses in training arrangements. Good practice is not always identified and shared across all vocational training areas.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	3
Business administration	2
Retailing & customer service	3
Hospitality	3
Hair & beauty	3
Health, care & public services	3

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good resources in the college
- ◆ good training at the college
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ effective complaints procedures
- ◆ good pastoral and welfare support
- ◆ comprehensive quality assurance system

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poor achievement and retention rates
- ◆ underdeveloped arrangements for work-based assessment
- ◆ lack of integration between college and work-based training
- ◆ poor arrangements for key skills training and assessment
- ◆ restricted access to some resources

INTRODUCTION

1. New College Durham is a general further education college. It has two sites close to the centre of Durham. The Framwellgate Moor site supports the majority of the college's further education and work-based training. The Neville's Cross site supports the majority of the college's higher education work. Plans are well advanced to consolidate all of the college's work on the Framwellgate Moor site. The college is responsible for prison education and training in eight of Her Majesty's prisons in the Northeast of England. There is a small amount of franchised work within work-based training in which four motor vehicle trainees are placed at another further education college in the region.

2. Work-based training at New College Durham is organised through a managing agency of the college. The agency holds a contract for training with County Durham Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). It offers training in modern apprenticeships and national traineeships in addition to other youth training which is contracted through the TEC, as well as providing training for New Deal clients. At the time of the inspection the college offered work-based training at national vocational qualifications (NVQ) levels 1 to 3 in construction, engineering and motor vehicle subjects, business administration, retailing and customer service, hospitality and catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy and training for dental surgery assistants; there was a total of 316 people in training at inspection. Trainees and New Deal clients also study for basic and key skill qualifications and many achieve qualifications in addition to their NVQ. All staff are suitably qualified in their area of expertise.

3. The college offers further education in nine of the programme areas funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). It also offers a broad range of higher education programmes ranging from higher national to degree and post-graduate programmes. There is a growing range of community education courses as well as support for pupils at Key Stage 4 (14 to 16 years of age). Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is organised through the college's learning support unit.

4. New College Durham serves the county of Durham, with its population of 488,800, and the wider communities of the Northeast region. Minority ethnic groups represent less than 1 per cent of the population. The unemployment rate in 1999 for County Durham was 7.5 per cent, compared with the average in England of 5.5 per cent. The county has low levels of educational achievement with 38.2 per cent of pupils achieving five or more general certificates of education (GCSEs) at grades C and above, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. This is also reflected in NVQ achievement with 33 per cent of adults in the County qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent in 1998-99, compared with 42 per cent nationally.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. The college's self-assessment involves staff from all teaching and support sections including programme managers, cross-college managers and the college managing agency. The self-assessment report for work-based training at the college was based on the views of work-placement officers, tutors, trainees, employers and college support staff. The report was co-ordinated by the programme manager responsible for the college's managing agency. The grades awarded by inspectors agreed with those given in the college's self-assessment report for construction, engineering, hospitality and catering, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance. Lower grades than those given by the college were awarded for business administration, retailing and customer service, hair and beauty, health care (dental surgery assistant) and equal opportunities.

6. A team of nine inspectors spent a total of 36 days inspecting TEC-funded work-based training and the New Deal at New College Durham in April 2000. Inspectors interviewed 115 trainees at the college and in the workplace. Sixteen training and assessment sessions were observed and 14 were graded. Inspectors held 104 interviews with college staff and saw 42 employers and work-based supervisors. Visits were made to 52 workplaces. Inspectors reviewed training materials, learning resources, trainees' files and portfolios of evidence for assessment. Training plans and training materials were inspected, as were company policies and procedures, contracts and other relevant documents.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction			1			1
Engineering	1	1				2
Business administration		2				2
Retailing & customer service			2			2
Hospitality			1			1
Hair & beauty		1	3			4
Health, care & public services			1	1		2
Total	1	4	8	1	0	14

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

GOOD PRACTICE

It is an example of good practice when an employer who was unable to provide a trainee with a particular aspect of work-related training used a contact with another company to provide the trainee with specific trade skills.

7. New College Durham has 112 trainees in construction who are undertaking NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in decorative qualifications, wood occupations, bricklaying and mechanical engineering services (plumbing). There are 49 modern apprentices, 30 national trainees, 27 other youth trainees, and six New Deal clients who are following the full-time education and training option. At the time of the inspection one female trainee was in training and there were no trainees from a minority ethnic background. The college works to identify suitable work-placement opportunities for trainees by using existing contacts with employers and telesales initiatives. Employers are supportive of trainees who value the guidance they are receiving from qualified tradesmen. One hundred trainees are in work placements and attend college on a day-release basis. The remainder of the week is spent gaining on-the-job experience with local companies which range in size from sole proprietors to medium-sized contractors. Work experience is dependent on the industry sector in which the employer operates and ranges from new-build projects in the commercial and industrial sectors, to repair, maintenance, and improvement projects in the domestic housing sector. Of the trainees in work placements, 17 have non-employed status. An additional six non-employed trainees currently have no work-placement opportunity. These trainees are attending college on a full-time basis until a suitable work placement is secured. Several of the strengths given in the college's self-assessment report for construction were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with the key strengths given by the college in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report failed to recognise the poor achievement rates in construction. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given by the college in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective training and assessment in off-the-job training
- ◆ excellent resources for training in painting and decorating
- ◆ rigorous internal verification

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient use of work-based evidence in craft occupations
- ◆ inadequate training and assessment of key skills
- ◆ poor achievement rates

8. On starting their programme, trainees are issued with a detailed induction course book which, when completed, satisfies the requirements for the health and safety unit at NVQ level 1. Course handbooks clearly describe assessment methods and the role of the trainee in the assessment process, and include descriptions of the programmes of work, key skills, progression routes and names of key staff involved in the training. Detailed workbooks are available for each unit of the qualification

and these are used in conjunction with action plans and assessment plans. They enable trainees to demonstrate a clear understanding of their progress and how and when they will be assessed. Guidance notes are issued to prepare trainees for the assessment of their underpinning knowledge.

9. Excellent resources are available to the trainees in the college to complement those available for on-the-job training. The painting and decorating workshop is particularly well designed. The training room is situated above the practical training area and provides trainees with the opportunity to have quick and easy access to learning materials while undertaking practical exercises.

10. Staff fully understand the scope and purpose of internal verification and effectively implement the college's procedures. Every full-time member of staff involved in work-based training is a qualified internal verifier.

11. Most reviews of trainees' progress at work are carried out by the college's work-placement officers. There is, however, a growing use of the college's construction lecturers to conduct these reviews. In addition, lecturers complete an interim review report twice each year which relates to off-the-job training. Reviews of on-the-job training include employers, who are invited to comment on the trainees' progress, ability and personal effectiveness. While reviews make reference to on-the-job activities, there is little reference made to NVQs to inform the employer of the trainees' progress towards achievement of the qualification. Completed reviews for all trainees contain only a general commentary and do not address the trainees' individual development needs.

12. The college has recently implemented a programme of work-placement visits by lecturing staff to raise employers' awareness of NVQ requirements, to review trainees' progress and to identify evidence which can be used to support the trainees' achievement of the NVQ. All trainees have recently been issued with a diary which records work-based evidence and records tasks undertaken both on and off the job. Many trainees have yet to use the diary. Employers and work-placement officers are unaware of its existence and do not understand its purpose. For trainees who move from construction site to construction site between reviews, opportunities are being missed to collect evidence which naturally occurs in the workplace. Site visits by staff also present opportunities to assess trainees through direct observation, but this practice is currently limited in its scope.

13. Key skills are still being developed as a separately assessed course component. At the time of the inspection, only information technology and application of number at level 1 were being taught. Work had not started on the preparation of learning materials for communication level 1 or any of the mandatory key skills at level 2.

14. The achievement rates on modern apprenticeship and other youth training programmes are poor. In 1999-2000, the modern apprenticeship achievement rate was 33 NVQs per 100 leavers. For the same period, the achievement rate on the other youth training programme was 20 NVQs per 100 leavers.

Engineering

Grade 3

15. At the time of the inspection 110 trainees were working towards engineering and motor vehicle qualifications. Of these, 10 were following a programme in engineering maintenance, seven a programme in engineering production, 10 an engineering foundation and six an electrical engineering programme. Seven were following a programme in performing manufacturing operations and 14 were working towards other engineering qualifications. In the motor vehicle area there were seven trainees following a preparation for work course, 37 were working towards a level 2 NVQ in vehicle mechanical and electrical systems (unit replacement) and eight were following a programme leading to a level 3 NVQ in vehicle mechanical and electronic systems (maintenance and repair). There were also four New College trainees who were studying at another college working towards heavy goods vehicle and vehicle bodywork qualifications, which are not taught at New College Durham. Of all trainees, 67 were registered on the modern apprenticeship programme, 21 on the national traineeship programme, 14 on other training courses, and eight were clients taking the New Deal full-time education and training option.

16. Trainees are referred to the college by employers, the careers service, the Employment Service or by personal application. When trainees are not employed the college endeavours to find a suitable work placement. Apart from the trainees taking the performing manufacturing operations programme, and the New Deal clients, who are in work experience placements, all other trainees are employed by local companies. The college uses a number of local employers to provide work-based training, and this is supplemented by day-release vocational studies at the college. The NVQ at level 2 in engineering foundation is taught in a full-time 13-week block, and thereafter trainees undertake work-based training with their employer while working towards an NVQ at level 3. All assessment is carried out by college staff. Many level 3 trainees work towards additional qualifications at national and higher national certificate level. The college's self-assessment report correctly identified many of the strengths and weaknesses in their work. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good resources in engineering training
- ◆ good use of digital camera for evidence gathering
- ◆ high standard of off-the-job training
- ◆ high standard of portfolios

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some trainees unclear about their NVQ programme
- ◆ missed opportunities for gathering evidence in the workplace

- ◆ inadequate range of assessment methods
- ◆ late introduction of key skills for engineering modern apprentices

17. In the motor vehicle area the resources are good. The workshops are clean, light and airy. There is a well-equipped classroom area, with 11 new computer terminals and a range of teaching aids. In engineering there are also good workshop and classroom areas. Teaching staff all have good practical occupational experience.

18. Theoretical and practical training undertaken at the college is of a high standard. Trainees are attentive and employers are pleased with the standard of skills and theoretical knowledge learnt at the college. There are productive working relationships between the college staff and employers, and employers support the trainees throughout their programme.

19. There is widespread use of a digital camera for recording evidence. This is often used in companies to record actual work the trainees are undertaking. Prints are included in trainees' portfolios and cross-referenced to NVQ evidence criteria. Evidence which can not be obtained at work is achieved by simulation in college workshops. In motor vehicle, most assessments are carried out at college by the observation of trainees performing practical tasks on cars belonging to staff and trainees. Trainees' portfolios are generally of a high standard. They have a clear understanding of their progress and understand the requirements of their NVQ, in particular the assessment process used by the college.

20. Some trainees are in employment where they can not obtain the evidence for their particular NVQ. In a number of instances, trainees in their final year are still unclear about their NVQ route. The college has been aware of this for some time but no satisfactory solution has yet been found.

21. Opportunities are being missed for the assessment of evidence which naturally occurs in the trainees' daily work tasks. The assessment of trainees' competencies relies too heavily on witness testimony. Many employers have a low awareness of the NVQ process and do not routinely take part in trainees' reviews. There is little workplace assessment by college staff and there are no employers or supervisors qualified or used as work-based assessors. Most assessment occurs through simulation in the college's workshops. Although the standard of off-the-job training is good, many trainees have taken longer than planned to obtain their level 2 qualification and others are late gathering evidence for their level 3 assessment. In some cases trainees are into the final year of their programme and have not yet drawn together evidence for their assessment.

22. In the engineering modern apprenticeship, key skills are introduced too late in the trainees' programme. There is no integration of key skills with the occupational training. Many opportunities are lost to gather and assess evidence for key skills which trainees demonstrate as a natural part of their daily work activities.

Business administration

Grade 2

23. There are 23 trainees studying for qualifications leading to business administration and accountancy NVQs at levels 2 and 3. This includes 16 modern apprentices and three New Deal clients working towards business administration qualifications and four trainees taking accountancy. All modern apprentices are employed and one New Deal client attends a work placement within the college. Employers include accountants, and engineering, distribution and construction companies. The college is also an employer of modern apprentices. Trainees attend off-the-job training at the college one day each week. Business administration is organised by a programme manager, one member of staff who trains and assesses, plus a work-placement officer who carries out trainees' reviews and maintains contact with employers. During the contract year 1999-2000, 14 trainees started training and four left early without achieving a qualification. The college's self-assessment report for business administration identified 11 strengths and one weakness. Many strengths were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice and the weaknesses concerned a generic aspect of provision. Inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high levels of occupational competence among trainees
- ◆ good range of additional qualifications
- ◆ good key skills training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ late start in NVQ training
- ◆ infrequent work-based assessment

24. New Deal clients and trainees following modern apprenticeship programmes have good-quality on-the-job training. A work-placement officer visits trainees and clients in the workplace. This officer provides pastoral support and acts as a link between the college tutors and employers. Employers are informed of the outcome of reviews, and are satisfied with the standards of work produced by trainees. Many trainees are producing work of a higher standard than that required by the NVQ specified on their training plan. At the start of training, trainees are usually placed on a level 2 programme in business administration in the knowledge that, following a visit in the workplace by their college tutor, or following an examination of the trainees' evidence which they have gathered in the workplace, appropriate changes to the qualification level can be made. Therefore, some trainees produce work for an NVQ at levels 2 and 3 simultaneously.

25. Trainees are offered qualifications additional to those required by the modern apprenticeships programme and the New Deal. These are valued by employers, they increase the trainees' skills and enhance the trainees' employability. Fifty per

cent of the trainees are employed by the college and have access to further qualifications. For example, in addition to the NVQ programme, one modern apprentice is taking a higher national certificate in business studies, a management course, and a text processing qualification.

26. The majority of trainees attend college on a day-release basis. Some trainees attend evening classes. Off-the-job training concentrates on theory, key skills, study towards additional qualifications and the trainees' portfolio development. Key skills training is given in information technology and in the application of number. Trainees are able to demonstrate competence, and collect evidence for key skills from work they have carried out in employment. For key skills, teachers have prepared detailed lesson plans and schemes of work clearly show the aims, objectives and expected outcomes of the sessions. Internal verification practices are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the awarding body. Despite the majority of trainees having employed status, they are encouraged to continually update their curriculum vitae and continue job-search activities. Jobsearch activities for New Deal clients follow a planned programme of activity. Work-placement officers find and arrange job interviews for clients.

27. Trainees can begin training at any point in the academic year, but for some trainees who start training during the early summer months delays are experienced, as the academic year does not start until September. This has affected 50 per cent of all trainees currently on training programmes.

28. Trainees have challenging job roles and are able to collect a wide range of evidence at work to demonstrate their competence, but there is no systematic work-based assessment. One trainee had been on a course for seven months and had not yet received any work-based assessment. Another had received only one work-based assessment in five months. When work-based assessment does take place, full and accurate records are maintained.

Retailing & customer service

Grade 3

29. New College Durham currently provides training in distributive operations at NVQ level 1, retailing at NVQ level 2 and customer service at levels 2 and 3 to 14 trainees and New Deal clients. In the customer service area there are four national trainees and one modern apprentice. There are currently five youth trainees following the distributive operations programme. Four clients on the New Deal full-time education and training option are working towards qualifications in retailing. Off-the-job training in retailing takes place fortnightly at the college. Customer service training is offered on the basis of weekly evening 'drop-in' sessions at college. A similar facility is offered to trainees in retailing to enable them to seek advice and to access computers to practise their information technology skills. Work placements are arranged in large supermarkets, charity shops, high street stores, a large hotel and the college library. With the exception of the modern apprentices, no trainees or clients have employed status. A college work-placement officer carries out reviews of trainees' progress either in the workplace or at

college. There is currently one tutor for both customer service and retailing and distributive operations. A tutor was appointed in March 2000 with responsibility for the NVQ level 2 programme in retailing. The primary method of assessment in all areas is by the observation of trainees' practical tasks and written work. No work-based assessors are used. Over the last three years, 18 trainees started retailing or distributive operations training. Of 10 leaving the programme over this period, two achieved a qualification. Inspectors agreed with a number of strengths and weaknesses in the college's self-assessment report. Other strengths in the self-assessment report were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses during the inspection. The grade awarded by inspectors is lower than that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-structured training in retailing
- ◆ frequent contact between assessors and trainees
- ◆ effective workplace training by employers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor NVQ achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate written assessment procedures

30. In the retailing programme the college tutor has produced a good scheme of work with supporting lesson plans to cover all the knowledge and understanding required for achievement of the NVQ.

31. The resources at the college are well maintained. Trainees are able easily to access all the facilities at the college. Some trainees attend additional training in literacy, numeracy, life skills, and key skills according to need.

32. There is frequent contact between assessors and trainees, particularly on the retailing and distributive programme. This helps to motivate the trainees. In addition to the fortnightly training sessions in the college, the assessor visits the workplace either weekly or fortnightly to undertake assessment. Visits are fully recorded and feedback is given to the trainees on their performance.

33. Although they are not directly involved in the NVQ process, employers are very supportive of training. They arrange for the trainees to undertake work activities to meet assessment requirements. During their working week trainees benefit from working in teams as well as developing their particular craft skills.

34. The college faces difficulties in finding suitable work placements for trainees. One trainee who started training in June 1999 only obtained a placement in March 2000. When placements are found, trainees often face lengthy travel times to and from work.

35. Achievement rates are poor. In the last three years only two trainees have left with a qualification. An achievement rate of 20 per cent is well below the national average for this occupational area.

36. A small number of trainees and clients have been offered training targets which are inappropriate. One trainee, a New Deal client, has an individual training plan stating that the client will achieve the full nine units of a level 2 NVQ in retailing, plus key skills. The client has a target achievement date of October 2000, but little progress has been made. It is doubtful whether, within the timeframe of the New Deal option, the client could achieve the qualification specified in the individual training plan. Another trainee, undertaking a customer service national traineeship is in a work placement in which the work activities will not allow the trainee to gather or demonstrate evidence to meet the course requirements.

37. While there is evidence of good assessment practices and internal verification practices are satisfactory, there are no written procedures for assessment. Instructions are given to trainees orally, rather than in writing. This results in trainees not remembering what they need to do to prepare for the next assessment. Trainees' portfolios of evidence consist primarily of classroom assignments supported by assessors' reports. There is a move to increase the variety of assessment methods. The lack of a written assessment plan hinders both the trainee and the employer in their preparation for the assessor's visit, resulting in missed opportunities for accrediting achievements and slowing the trainees' progress towards achievement of the qualification.

Hospitality

Grade 3

38. Thirteen trainees and two New Deal clients are following a wide range of qualifications within the hospitality programme area. In food preparation and cooking there are three modern apprentices, four national trainees, and one New Deal client, who are taking courses at NVQ levels 1 to 3. In kitchen supervision there are three modern apprentices, and restaurant supervision has one modern apprentice. Food and drink service has one modern apprentice, as does bar service, and in housekeeping there is one New Deal client following the full-time education and training option. Trainees have been on their programme for up to 18 months. The majority joined at various times throughout 1999 and usually have a target date for completion of two years after starting the course. Off-the-job training occurs at the college where trainees join with other full- and part-time students. Currently, nine of the 17 trainees attend this training. Other are trained and assessed wholly in the work placements. All trainees are currently in work placements. All but four are employed. Assessments can be carried out at the college or in the workplace. Trainees are encouraged to build a portfolio of evidence to supplement assessors' observations. There are no work-based assessors. Workplaces include large hotels, public houses, a bistro, and local hospitals. The college's self-assessment report identified several strengths considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with some strengths and weaknesses given in the report

and identified additional strengths and weaknesses. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective off-the-job training
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ positive action to improve trainees' performance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor achievement rates on the modern apprenticeship programme
- ◆ insufficient workplace assessment
- ◆ poor integration of key skills

39. The college offers flexible training arrangements to meet the needs of the trainees. Approximately 50 per cent attend once a week for theory and practical skills training, which is carried out in a realistic working environment. The programme of work covers the necessary skills and ensures that those trainees who miss a training session can quickly catch up. The training is good and carried out by experienced staff. Trainees receive training in the workplace from their employer who provides coaching and supervision. The on- and off-the-job training provide the trainee with a wide range of experiences, but are not fully co-ordinated. Employers' premises are of good quality and provide appropriate opportunities for the development of the trainees' skills.

40. Trainees receive a workbook for each unit of their NVQ. It contains subject information and questions and assignments to confirm trainees' understanding of the subject material. Trainees also receive a logbook to record work-based activities. This helps them build a portfolio of evidence for assessment. To meet appropriate legislation the college and employers provide trainees with essential clothing and equipment.

41. The hospitality programme team has identified areas for improvement in the training and has begun to take action. Poor attendance is being addressed by providing a more flexible training programme in which the trainee does not need to attend college but is visited in the workplace. A senior hospitality team member has developed close links with the college's managing agency to assist with the recruitment of trainees and with the identification of appropriate training programmes and work placements. To promote career opportunities for trainees an advisory board has been established. This meets each term and includes representatives from employers and the careers service.

42. Since 1996-97 28 trainees have started a modern apprenticeship programme at either level 2 or 3. Of these only one has achieved the qualification, while 17 have left without any qualification. On other training, 31 trainees, who were studying at level 1 or lower, left over the same period, 12 of whom achieved a qualification.

43. The internal verification of assessment is sound and meets the requirements of the awarding body. For trainees attending training on a day-release basis, most NVQ assessment takes place in the college. These trainees are encouraged to produce a portfolio of evidence which is a combination of workplace and college activities. However, there is little evidence of assessment being carried out at work. One trainee has had one visit in six months from his assessor. Another has had two visits, but no assessment has taken place based on the observation of work-based tasks. Assessors visit the workplace on a regular basis to assess trainees who do not attend the college's training day. Trainees receive a monthly workplace visit during which the assessor reviews portfolio evidence, discusses progress and attainment with the employer, and makes an assessment based on the observation of the trainees' work activity. Assessment practices which are adopted for those trainees who are assessed wholly at work, are not being applied to trainees whose work-based programme is a combination of on- and off-the-job training.

44. There are no arrangements to integrate the teaching and assessment of key skills within the vocational training programme. Trainees and some trainers regard the gathering of evidence for key skills and the assessment of key skills, as an activity which is undertaken after completion of the NVQ. Currently key skills assignments are unrelated to the vocational work.

Hair & beauty

Grade 3

45. There are currently 16 trainees and six New Deal clients on hairdressing and beauty programmes. Fifteen trainees are working toward an NVQ at level 2 in hairdressing and one trainee is studying for an NVQ at level 3. There is one New Deal client following a beauty therapy programme. Four New Deal clients are taking an NVQ at level 2 and one is taking level 1 in hairdressing. The trainees consist of 11 modern apprentices and five national trainees. They are placed in a variety of salons in the Durham area where they work for four days a week. The college currently has links with 15 salons. Fifteen trainees have employed status. The trainees start their programme at the college when induction takes place. Induction to the workplace comprises a health and safety project which is completed in the workplace. One day each week the trainees attend college where they receive theoretical and practical training and are assessed by the college tutors. Within the timetable there is also a tutorial session and there has recently been one hour added to the timetable for the teaching of key skills. The New Deal clients are all on the full-time education and training option.

46. Until February 2000 there had been no access to assessment in the workplace and all trainees were assessed in the college. There are no workplace assessors to assess trainees in the workplace. Recently there has been a drive to provide work-based assessment by college tutors. The college secured the contract to provide work-based training in hairdressing from the TEC in December 1998. In 1998-99 nine trainees started programmes. Three left with no qualification and one trainee achieved an NVQ at level 2 in hairdressing. In this current year 17 trainees have started with the programme and three left early with no qualification. The college's

self-assessment report identified eight strengths and three weaknesses. Two of the strengths were considered by inspectors to be concerned with the generic area of trainee support. Four additional strengths were identified during inspection. Two of the weaknesses were confirmed by inspectors and one was not seen as being specific to work-based training. An additional two weaknesses were found. The grade awarded by inspectors was lower than that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ good early development of practical skills by trainees
- ◆ innovative assessment method
- ◆ good current retention of trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ underdeveloped arrangements for workplace assessment
- ◆ inadequate employer liaison
- ◆ delayed key skills assessment

47. There is a wide range of salons used for work placements, ranging from small village salons, with a team of two, to large town centre salons employing a number of staff. The variety of salons enables the trainees to be matched to a placement which suits their needs. Some salons offer a supportive environment for trainees who may lack confidence, and salon supervisors work with them to overcome this. The college's work-placement officer is sensitive to the individual needs of the trainees and offers support when necessary. Salons offer training in a good range of technical skills and provide the trainees with opportunities to observe the skills of qualified operatives. Trainees are enthusiastic about their chosen occupation and are prepared to travel long distances, often at great expense, to enable them to pursue their career. Qualified stylists are scarce and salons invest in the trainees' development to enable them to meet the needs of the business.

48. Practical skills are developed early in the trainees' programme. Many have worked in salons during holidays and as casual staff prior to starting their programmes and as a result can carry out a range of tasks when they first start the programme. All salons offer training in which trainees can work on 'models' to develop their practical skills. The trainees have limited access to clients in the college, particularly those trainees who attend early in the week. The college often has insufficient clients for the number of trainees in the class. This results in trainees spending excessive amounts of time working on trial blocks.

49. An innovative approach has been adopted to recording evidence for assessment. The college has invested in a digital camera for use in the college salons. When work is being carried out that is suitable for assessment, tutors take photographs at different stages of the process. The trainees copy these images into

a computer and print off the images to use in their portfolios of evidence. The photographs are of good quality and the trainee can give a copy to a client for future reference.

50. Internal verification is good and meets awarding body requirements. There are three qualified internal verifiers within the programme area. Records of verification decisions are well maintained and are distributed to assessors to support them in improving their work practices.

51. The current retention rate of 80 per cent is well above the national average for the modern apprenticeship and national traineeship programmes. But in 1998-99, the first year of the hairdressing programme, nine trainees started the course and four left early, one having gained an NVQ at level 2 in hairdressing.

52. The college has only recently addressed the need to assess the trainees in the workplace. Previously all assessment took place in the college. Most trainees have now been observed once at work with further visits scheduled. The college plans to visit the salons four times each year. During visits to the workplace the assessor carries out a progress review in addition to an assessment. This frequency of visits, coupled with the need for the assessor to carry out progress reviews, will not be sufficient to ensure that a full range of evidence will be gathered in the workplace, unless the visits are carefully planned. No such detailed plans for assessment were available and there are no work place assessors to aid the process.

53. Employers have insufficient knowledge of an individual's programme of training. Neither trainees nor employers are issued with a training plan. Employers are given no feedback from the college regarding trainees' progress within the course that they are following. The trainees are not allowed to take their portfolios away from the college. Consequently, they do not have access to the NVQ standards at work. Witness testimonies from employers are often very general. They do not always accurately describe the trainees' achievement of an occupational standard.

54. The college has been late in addressing the teaching and assessment of key skills. Second-year trainees, some of whom have almost completed the level 2 NVQ, have gathered little evidence for key skills. Staff are only just coming to terms with the assessment of key skills alongside the NVQ. The college has identified the problem and the team leader in hairdressing has prepared materials which can be used to aid the integration and assessment of key skills.

Health, care & public services

Grade 3

55. There are 20 trainees on a youth training programme called Next Step. All trainees are working towards the dental nurse national certificate. The programme of training leads to a nationally recognised qualification but is not an NVQ. There is no requirement for key skills but the college chooses to offer key skills as an additional element to the programme of study. The college provides off-the-job

training. Most trainees start off-the-job training at the beginning of the academic year, but there are opportunities for trainees to start at other times. The normal duration of the course is 24 months. Trainees spend one day each week at college for off-the-job training and four days on placement in dental practices, all are employed status. Some trainees find their own placement by responding to job advertisements, or a placement officer identifies a suitable placement. The placement officer assesses the health and safety aspects of potential placements and informs placement providers of the requirements for youth training. A lecturer who is a qualified dental nurse delivers off-the-job dental nurse training. Every 12 weeks a work-placement officer from the college reviews trainees' progress in the placement. In addition, every two to three weeks, trainees have an individual tutorial with their course leader who reviews their progress.

56. Final assessment takes place in line with the examining board's schedule. There is a written examination, practical assessment and oral questioning. These are marked externally and moderated by the examining board. Before qualifying as a dental nurse trainees must complete 24 months' practical experience. Trainees also work towards three key skills and lifesaver awards. When trainees have successfully completed the dental nurse national certificate the college provides opportunities for progression to a professional development award in the promotion of oral health. Retention rates for dental nurse trainees have averaged 51 per cent over the last three years. Of those trainees who remained in training, 100 per cent passed the final examination. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths which inspectors considered to be no more than normal practice. Some of the other strengths related to generic aspects of training. The provider had not given sufficient consideration in the self-assessment report to the importance of the trainees' placement experiences and the links between on- and off-the-job training. Inspectors identified further strengths and weaknesses and awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good variety of practical experiences for trainees
- ◆ well-planned off-the-job training
- ◆ high examination pass rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate induction
- ◆ poorly planned on-the-job training
- ◆ poor retention rates
- ◆ poor understanding of examination procedures by trainees

57. Placements provide trainees with a wide variety of experiences. Most trainees work as dental nurses in a surgery for the majority of the time. The experience leads to the development of a good range of personal and vocational competences. Their learning is unstructured and largely dependent on the daily events of the

practice. Dentists and placement staff are enthusiastic and supportive. Trainees clearly enjoy their work and value their experience.

58. Most trainees have a thorough induction to the off-the-job training at the start of the academic year. Off-the-job training is well planned. Attendance at college is closely monitored. There are detailed schemes of work which describe the learning aims and objectives. A variety of effective teaching and learning methods are used. Learning resources within the college are generally appropriate but inspectors observed the use of some poor quality materials during one lesson. During the first year trainees work towards additional qualifications in key skills and lifesaver awards. Appropriately qualified tutors teach these sessions. Trainees enjoy off-the-job training and receive good academic and pastoral support from the course tutor. Although trainees receive oral feedback about their development, they do not routinely receive written feedback which they can keep for future reference. There is a planned programme of revision and trainees undergo practice assessments each term. Their achievements are logged throughout the programme.

59. Analysis shows that 49 per cent of trainees who start the programme take the final examination. Of those who entered the national examination in 1999, 100 per cent passed. This is significantly above the national average. There have also been three merits awarded during the last three years.

60. Work-based induction is mostly inadequate. On-the-job learning is not planned or linked to off-the-job training. Within the work placement training is unplanned and in most cases takes place when supervisors and trainees can afford the time. The majority of trainees are closely supervised for a short period of a few weeks at the beginning of their placement. Once deemed competent by their workplace supervisor, most trainees receive guidance only when they identify a need. Most trainees practise as full-time dental nurses and too little consideration is given to their learning needs by practice providers. Placement providers, tutors and the managing agent do not work as a team to ensure that the trainees make the most effective use of off- and on-the-job training. The majority of dental practice supervisors acknowledge that they are not fully aware of the requirements for work-based training or the college's courses. Supervisors are unable to link the trainees' experiences with the college's requirements. Many assessment opportunities are missed. Placement providers and supervisors are given insufficient advice and guidance about the learning and development needs of trainees. A few trainees have missed off-the-job training due to the demands of their placement. Some trainees view on- and off-the-job training as two unrelated experiences. Although the placement officer makes visits to review the trainees' general progress every 12 weeks, inspectors found the practical application of health and safety procedures to be weak in two placements that they visited.

61. A high percentage of trainees leave the course early. The percentage of early leavers has decreased by 17 per cent between 1997 and 1999. Retention of trainees is still poor with an average 51 per cent having left the programme early between 1997 and 1999. Data do not reliably inform managers of the causes.

62. The majority of trainees who will shortly take their final examinations do not have a confident understanding of course procedures. Although arrangements are in place to provide support for trainees and to prepare them for their final examination, these only meet the needs of most trainees in part. Not all tutors have the specialist knowledge required to answer trainees' questions. The return of practice essays and associated feedback to the trainees can take up to two weeks.

63. The integration of key skills into the scheme of work is a good initiative. Trainees spend approximately one third of their time in the first year working towards key skills awards. However, most trainees have a weak understanding of the relevance of key skills to their work. Key skills are assessed predominantly through exercises which are led by the tutor, with a few work-based assessment activities. There is insufficient use of the workplace to generate evidence and too little use of direct observation for assessment purposes. Opportunities for accrediting prior learning are not routinely used. At least three trainees had information technology skills but still completed the same assessment exercises as other trainees. One trainee who had successfully completed a key skill was unable to demonstrate its competencies. The problems had been recognised earlier by tutors, but effective action had not been taken.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

64. New College Durham has an equal opportunities statement and code of practice applicable to all aspects of its work which function within an area of low deprivation and a minority ethnic grouping of less than 1 per cent. The college has recently developed an equal opportunities action plan. Reference to the college as an equal opportunities employer and one which promotes equality of opportunity through its services is contained in advertising and marketing material. Recruitment procedures and the college's staff development programme seek to ensure that all staff are aware of and take action to combat inequality. Positive images promoting non-stereotypical roles and celebrating achievement are featured in publicity material, displays and news articles. The college has complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures. Trainees, employers, staff and others are made aware of the arrangements through the college's literature. The self-assessment report by New College Durham identified four strengths and two weaknesses. The inspectors found a different set of strengths and weaknesses and awarded one grade below that of the college report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear guidance on codes of practice
- ◆ corporate action plan relating to equal opportunities
- ◆ effective complaints procedures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ representation of trainees and staff not systematically monitored
- ◆ inadequate promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ restricted access to some resources

GOOD PRACTICE

It is good practice when a trainee with sensory impairment is placed with an employer who is sympathetic to the trainee's condition. A member of college staff who is a signer supports the trainee at work and the employer and staff are learning to sign.

65. The college's equal opportunities statement and codes of practice were last revised in February 1998 and are currently under review to accommodate changes in legislation and to reflect the college's action plan for equal opportunities. The codes of practice cover a comprehensive range of the college's activities and seek to ensure that it promotes equality of opportunity to all associated with the organisation. One of the college's assistant principals has overall responsibility for monitoring the application of the codes of practice throughout the college.

66. The college has recently devised an equal opportunities action plan. The plan seeks to establish the systematic reporting by the college of the representation and participation of the various groups of trainees. It requires the college to monitor recruitment against broad targets in order to promote inclusiveness, set specific targets to engage with under-represented groups and to ensure appropriate representation of all groups across the college. The action plan is comprehensive in its aims but will require some time before its full impact is felt.

67. All members of the college have access to the complaints procedures. A complainant can follow guidelines published by the college and these are available at all college reception areas. Formal complaints are recorded and managed effectively by senior college staff. There is evidence that concerns have been addressed fully and fairly.

68. The college does not systematically collect data on trainees and analyse the representation of different groups at the time of application and following enrolment on its programmes of education and training. Basic statistics are produced by the college's managing agency for TEC monitoring purposes, but there was no evidence to indicate that the statistics had been reviewed with the purpose of setting targets, for example, in order to change the balance of student representation in particular programme areas which are dominated by male or female trainees. There were isolated examples of the college seeking to change perceptions by, for example, the introduction of initiatives promoting the participation of women in engineering and construction. However, these initiatives had not been followed through.

69. The main library and learning resource centre at the college's Framwellgate Moor site is inaccessible to students with mobility difficulties. A mobility lift had broken down and was deemed irreparable. To accommodate students and trainees with mobility difficulties who need access to the library and learning resource centre, access is offered by a back-door route and, in response to a bell, trainees are offered entry to a lower ground floor room. At the request of the student or trainee a member of college staff will bring materials from the library to them. In contrast, other students are able to access the library and learning resources at will,

gain access to books, videos, CD ROMs, information technology, specialist staff and can complete assignments in quiet study areas.

Trainee support

Grade 2

70. Potential trainees are recruited principally through referral from the careers service. New Deal clients come to the college through referral from the Employment Service. Applications are monitored prior to an interview being offered to ensure that the chosen vocational area is not over-subscribed and that a suitable training place can be offered. New Deal clients who are undecided about the vocational course they wish to pursue are enrolled on a four-week introductory course which aims to help them make an informed choice about their future career. Work-placement officers within the college's managing agency, who are responsible for specific programme areas, interview those trainees and clients who are already clear about a specific career route or who have already obtained a placement prior to contact with the college. Seven work-placement officers deal with all trainees and clients. All hold basic health and safety certificates and five possess a basic counselling certificate. All trainees and clients carry out a basic skills test. The training officer completes an individual training plan with each trainee, which details whether or not any additional support may be required in numeracy or literacy. A college induction takes place within the first four weeks of the trainee or client starting their programme. This covers health and safety issues and equal opportunities, and introduces trainees and clients to the facilities at the college. The college's work-placement officers carry out progress reviews every 12 weeks. The college's self-assessment report identified six strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with three of the strengths. Neither of the weaknesses was seen by inspectors as a key feature. One other weaknesses was identified by inspectors. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of resources
- ◆ good support systems for trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor workplace induction arrangements

71. The trainees and New Deal clients have access to a comprehensive range of resources at the college. There are two well-stocked libraries with quiet study areas. A computer suite with access to the Internet is readily available, where trainees can have support from tutors or work independently. There is a crèche but the number of places available is limited. Trainees and clients can join the college's fitness club and have access to a college hair, beauty, and tanning studio.

72. Pastoral and welfare support for trainees and clients is good. The office of the college's managing agency has a drop-in facility to deal with problems of any nature. A range of specialist staff in the college's student guidance and welfare office offer trainees a comprehensive service of career guidance, finance, and welfare advice. All trainees and clients have access to the college's counselling arrangements. Where necessary trainees can be referred to specialist support outside the college. All trainees and clients have access to a free college bus service to and from home. The support for trainees with hearing impairment is good.

73. Trainees' successes are celebrated and are displayed prominently in the college. The college uses local newspapers to good effect when promoting trainees' achievements. There is an annual awards ceremony for trainees. A current modern apprentice in plumbing is the local TEC trainee of the year.

74. The managing agency's work-placement officers have responsibility for the recruitment and selection of trainees, and for establishing and maintaining relationships with employers. Staff are trained in health and safety matters and in counselling skills to enable proper health and safety checks of employers' premises to be carried out, and to conduct trainees' pastoral reviews. Staff receive training in interviewing and initial assessment but are not occupationally competent to advise potential trainees on appropriate vocational programmes.

75. The quality of workplace induction is poor. The college has not established a standard format for the trainees' induction into the workplace by employers. Some trainees cannot recall having any form of induction in the workplace. Within the trainees' college induction pack there is a placement safety project which the trainees should complete within the first week at the placement. This is used to advise the trainee about proper practice and to inform the college's work-placement officer that the placement is safe for the trainee. The project is often incomplete and late arriving at the college.

Management of training

Grade 3

76. New College Durham manages its TEC and New Deal funded work through an internal managing agency. The agency consists of a programme manager, a supervisor, nine placement officers and four administrative staff. The occupational training programmes each have a programme manager and a team of lecturers who share teaching responsibilities and are responsible for training and assessment. The managing agency's work-placement officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining links with employers in different programme areas, for the recruitment and selection of trainees, for the monitoring of health and safety arrangements in the workplace and for trainees' welfare. Placement officers are set targets for trainees' recruitment and achievements and conduct reviews of trainees in the workplace. Administrators are responsible for TEC contracts, trainees' allowances, TEC claims, for careers liaison and general office duties. The college subcontracts a small part of its work to another college. There is a staff appraisal and

development system. The Investor in People Standard was renewed in February 2000. The college has been successful in increasing its work-based programmes for the contract year 2000-01. The college's self-assessment report identified six strengths and three weaknesses in management of training. Several strengths in the report were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with the weaknesses. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive and well-documented policies and procedures
- ◆ thorough staff appraisal and development programme

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no written subcontractor arrangements
- ◆ poor links between on- and off-the-job training

77. There is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures for all aspects of the college's work. The managing agency has its own customised procedures specifically for work-based learning programmes. Policies and procedures are updated as required. The college's policies link with those of the managing agency through the programme manager who develops a business and operational plan for the agency in response to the college's strategic targets. Staff bulletins and regular meetings keep staff informed of issues and developments within their sectors. There are regular team meetings in which targets are set for individuals and for the team, and performance is analysed as it relates to contractual requirements and improvement strategies. Targets are also agreed for enrolments and retention of trainees. Staff are actively involved in identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the college's performance.

78. The college has a policy of open access to staff development at no cost to permanent staff. Part-time staff receive remuneration for attending staff development sessions. There is a significant budget allocated for staff development. Staff from some programme areas have benefited from industrial secondments to keep abreast of recent occupational developments. Best use is made of staff training activities by the evaluation of training and the dissemination of results within teams. All staff development is evaluated to consider whether it has addressed strategic priorities, appraisal outcomes, individual needs, value for money, and staff satisfaction levels. An annual staff training report is produced by the staff development manager and the results of the evaluation of training are published twice a year and communicated to programme managers. The college has received the Investors in People Standard.

79. The college subcontracts its training for a small number of engineering trainees to another college. There are no written subcontractor agreements to establish the

conditions and terms of service. The policy relating to equality of opportunity had not been updated since 1993. The health and safety policy related to 1997.

80. There are poor links between on-the-job training which is carried out by employers and training conducted at the college. Trainees benefit from good-quality on-the-job training. There are few written procedures relating to on-the-job training and it is not used in the planning of the overall training programme. Good training takes place off the job but plans and outcomes are not systematically communicated to employers. Work-placement officers are responsible for informing employers about their involvement in the training and assessment activities. They also form the link between training in the college and the workplace. Work-placement officers do not possess an in-depth understanding of the training programmes to be able to carry out this task effectively. This has negative impacts on the level of employers' awareness of trainees' progress at college and the college tutors' understanding of the trainees' achievements at work. The lack of integrated work-based training, review and assessment has been identified as an area of weakness by the college, and with the training in the college working agreements, arrangements are now being implemented to link the work of the programme areas and the managing agency more closely.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

81. The college has a mission statement, a charter, a quality manual, and a quality assurance procedures file. The college has its own managing agency, Next Step, which has its own set of quality assurance procedures based upon the TEC quality standards. These are broadly in line with *Raising the Standard*. Responsibility for quality assurance at New College Durham lies with the college's vice-principal. Throughout 1995-1997 the college developed a new approach to quality assurance entitled 'Standards for Success'. In 1998-99 the organisation refocused the priorities in its strategic plan, which led to the college corporation approving a plan containing 10 new strategic aims to be introduced in 1999-2000. These break down into strategic objectives with targets, evidence requirements, responsibilities, and timescales for achievement. All programme areas were requested to examine each objective and to identify any relevant objectives and targets they considered a priority. Operating plans for each area were produced and agreed with the vice-principal. Performance against the plan is checked and results feed into the strategic planning process. The vice-principal produces an annual report for the college's academic board and for the corporation on the achievement of standards across the college. The indicators of successful implementation of the policy are fully recorded. External accountability for TEC-funded work requires the college's managing agency to produce an annual self-assessment report for Durham TEC, a financial audit and an annual audit against the regional TEC's quality standards. Internal accountability involves programme area training teams in carrying out self-assessment, management checks on contractual compliance, establishing periodic internal verifier fora, and reporting on the quality of work and standards being achieved. Standard procedures for internal verification are recorded in the internal verifiers' handbook. The college self-assessment report identified four strengths

and three weaknesses. All of the strengths and two of the weaknesses were confirmed by inspectors. The college's had already acted on the third weakness. The grade awarded by inspectors is the same as that given in the college's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive quality assurance system
- ◆ strong commitment to quality assurance
- ◆ continuous improvement as a result of evaluation
- ◆ staff development linked to strategic priorities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor evaluation of quality assurance procedures
- ◆ inadequate sharing of good practice

82. The college has a comprehensive quality assurance system. It provides a continuous cycle of self-assessment across all courses and services. There is a three-tier approach to setting standards and assessing performance. The first tier focuses on targets for students' attendance, retention and achievement. Results are discussed by course teams, divisions, senior management, academic board, and the corporation. The second tier relates to self-assessment, the outcomes of which are discussed by course groups and divisions, and are reported on at senior management team, academic board and corporation level. Grades are allocated and any areas graded four or five are automatically discussed by the vice principal and assistant principal, group and senior management team. Peer observation has been in place since 1997-98. Outcomes are reported to the academic board. The third tier covers cross-college services and management functions. The senior management team reviews performance and reports the outcomes to the corporation. Targets are set and action plans are produced for each of the tiers. Progress is monitored on a regular basis. Each course team sets its own targets and monitors progress against them. The targets for the college's managing agency are mainly focused on the requirements of the TEC contract, but these targets are then incorporated into the operating plan for the programme areas.

83. There is a strong commitment to quality assurance within the college. All staff from all sections are informed of the arrangements through the staff handbook. Details are available on the intranet to which all staff have access. Numerous meetings take place to ensure the inclusion of staff in the self-assessment process. Staff interviewed had a high level of understanding of the quality assurance arrangements. The college's framework for quality assurance is based upon self-assessment. Each programme area has a quality assurance co-ordinator and programme managers have regular team meetings. Progress against the action plans is checked and evidence was seen where this had resulted in improvements, including areas of work covered by the agency providing the work-based training.

84. The college's managing agency has recently carried out a survey to obtain feedback from employers and the results have been analysed. Findings have been circulated to the vocational area programme managers and the agency and have been discussed in staff meetings. Some action has already been taken. For example, an employers' handbook has been produced and has recently been posted out to employers.

85. Although there is a comprehensive quality assurance system, the college has identified that some areas have developed their own standards to ensure that they comply with external requirements. The college's managing agency falls into this category. It has its own standards which are determined by the TEC's contractual requirements. The managing agency internally audits its own standards but there is no centralised system to ensure that these different standards comply with the overall quality assurance requirements set out in the college's '*Standards for Success*'. The college identified this as a weakness and is reviewing whether the different standards can be harmonised.

86. Self-assessments have resulted in improvements in the college to the benefit of trainees and clients. But good practice in training is not systematically shared across all curriculum areas in order to improve work-based training.

87. The college's second self-assessment report for work-based training was published in February 2000. The document is detailed and contains an introduction setting the context for the college and its work-based training programmes. There are separate sections for each aspect of provision, all having an introductory section, clearly expressed strengths and weaknesses, and the evidence for the assessments. Plans for the improvement of training follow each section of the report and these are summarised in an action plan at the end of the document. The report was a useful aid to inspectors in preparation for inspection. It was thorough and many of the strengths and weaknesses identified were found to be an accurate description of the college's work.