

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE

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Outcome of re-inspection

The overall provision in the work-based area of hairdressing and beauty therapy is now **satisfactory**.

Background

Cambridge Regional College was inspected in January 2003. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in work-based learning (WBL) construction, engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy, which were found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or where leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory leadership and management, or less than satisfactory provision in solely WBL, inspectors from Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the less than satisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that previously less than satisfactory areas of provision, or leadership and management, are now satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is curriculum provision that is less than satisfactory, there will be no monitoring visits. All less than satisfactory provision will be re-inspected, normally during one week, within two years of the original inspection.

If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

Date of the re-inspection

In accordance with the above procedures, a re-inspection monitoring visit took place on 21-22 September 2004 to consider the progress being made in work-based learning in construction, engineering, and hairdressing and beauty therapy.

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

In the January 2003 inspection, the quality of work-based learning in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on part-time courses
- good practical teaching
- wide range of industry links
- good support for learners.

Weaknesses

- low pass and retention rates on some NVQ courses
- too many dull and uninspiring lessons
- low completion rate for the full framework for work-based apprentices
- insufficient client base for practice and assessment.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

All of the practical teaching observed is good or better. The sessions are well planned, with active learning opportunities with good reference to industry standards and high expectations. Teachers motivate learners and use good coaching techniques. Although most background knowledge teaching is satisfactory, a minority remain uninspiring. These sessions are sometimes too teacher-led and the activities lack variety.

Completion rates for work-based modern apprenticeship frameworks have significantly improved, and are now satisfactory. For foundation apprentices who started in 2001, 47% have successfully completed the framework. For those who started in 2002, 43% have currently completed and four learners are still in learning. Learners who started in 2003 are making satisfactory progress and 77% of those who started are still in learning. Although it is too early to judge the completion rates of advanced apprentices, of the 11 who started in 2003, 72% are still in learning. The use of individual learning plans and progress reviews has greatly improved and now contribute to the improved progress rates of apprentices.

Good management actions have resulted in many clear improvements to work-based learning in this area. The college is responsive to employers and learners needs and offers a flexible programme. The work-based training staff are well managed and continue to provide good support for learners. On and off-the-job learning is appropriately co-ordinated.

There are now good arrangements to ensure that learners have sufficient access to clients for practice and assessment. Client sessions are busy with a wide range of appropriate clients. The arrangements for on-the-job assessment have also significantly improved. All learners have access to regular assessment visits at work, and approximately half of the learners have access to and make good use of a work-based assessor.

The re-inspection of the construction and engineering work-based areas is incomplete and an overall judgement stating that it is now satisfactory cannot be given. These areas will continue to receive further re-inspection monitoring visits.