



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF SOMERSET COLLEGE OF ART AND TECHNOLOGY

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### Outcome of Re-Inspection

The overall provision in work-based learning (WBL) in hairdressing is now **good**.

### Background

Somerset College of Art and Technology was inspected in May 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 hairdressing WBL which was found to be less than satisfactory.

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, re-inspection of Hair took place on 5 March 2004, 1-2

November 2004, and 25-27 April 2005.

### **Hairdressing (WBL)**

In the May 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified for hairdressing and beauty therapy as a whole:

#### **Strengths**

- high pass rates on NVQ level 1 body massage and hairdressing courses
- good teaching on the national diploma course in beauty therapy
- well-equipped and effectively used integrated learning centre
- good progression rates to HE and employment.

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor retention rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing and national diploma beauty therapy courses
- low pass rate on NVQ level 2 beauty therapy course
- poorly managed assessment
- poor management of the work-based learning curriculum.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that good progress has been made in addressing the

above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now good.

Retention has significantly improved for foundation apprentices. Of those starting in autumn 2004, 81% are still in learning and all of these are making good progress. Of the second year apprentices, 64% are still in learning. Many of the NVQ units are complete. Of the small number of advanced apprentices starting in 2004, 80% are still in learning. All learners are on target to complete within the expected period. Learners' practical skills are good.

Key skills are now integrated more fully into the programme. Staff use relevant assignments well to embed key skills into the learners' work. Learners are aware of key skill requirements and understand the relevance of completing them as part of the framework. Exemptions for key skill tests are correctly identified at initial assessment. Key skills are now introduced and achieved earlier in the programme. Key skill progress is discussed at reviews and understood by employers.

A very effective and dedicated assessor for WBL is now in post. The new management team is very effective in addressing the needs of the WBL programme. The staff development programme is good, and all staff have up-to-date skills and knowledge that meet industry requirements. Many staff are still working in the industry and this is recognised positively by learners and employers. Support for learners from the college specialist team is effective. The college now has a good client base that meets the needs of the assessment of the NVQ.

Assessment in the work place is now effective. There is thorough planning and implementation of assessment visits to employer premises. Visits take place every four weeks. The assessment process is rigorous and consistently good. Action planning following assessment is now more effective, with the use of job cards which enable clear target setting and enable collection of evidence including witness testimony. Some internal verification is now carried out in the work place. Employers are involved in the assessment process, which has improved their understanding of the requirements and encourages them to provide necessary clients for the learner.

Initial assessment is effective, and informs individual learning plans. This has improved the flexibility of the programme and identifies the needs of individuals. Preferred learning styles are recorded on the lesson plans to aid teaching. In the better lessons teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to address these individual learning styles.

Reviews are now carried out every four weeks and cover all aspects of the framework. Previous actions are revisited and attendance issues are discussed with the learner and employer. The college, learner and employer are given a copy of the review. Targets are clear and effective in moving the learner forward. Learners are now more aware of their progress and can easily identify what they have achieved and what they have left to complete. An effective tracking system is now in place. Quality assurance of reviews has improved and is standardised across all WBL provision in the college. An effective audit system has been implemented and staff receive appropriate training. Equality and diversity and health and safety issues are covered appropriately during the review process.

Following the original inspection the college implemented an effective strategic review for the division and put in place an appropriate management structure. There is now accountability and clear direction. Analysis of individual learner progress is used effectively to monitor and develop the programme. Issues for concern are identified and addressed at an early stage. A range of quality assurance processes have been put in place, which have had a positive impact on the delivery of the programme. Data are used more effectively to inform quality development and track individual progress. Communication has improved significantly both within the college and with employers. Appropriate and regular meetings are held to cover all aspects of the programme at operational and strategic level. Engagement by employers in WBL programmes is now good. Visits by the assessor are more frequent. Senior managers have visited a range of employers and the college has held a series of events to engage employers in the apprenticeship programme, including a college competition that was judged by them. A robust employer survey has been conducted and analysed. However, it is too recent to judge its impact. Every employer has received a useful information pack, which they value. Employers recognise the significant improvements in the delivery of the WBL

programme.

There will be no further re-inspection of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.

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