

REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE

The College of North East London

March 1994

THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has a statutory duty to ensure that there are satisfactory arrangements to assess the quality of provision in the further education sector. It discharges the duty in part through its inspectorate, which inspects and reports on each college in the sector every four years. The Council's inspectorate also assesses and reports on a national basis on specific curriculum areas and advises the Council's quality assessment committee.

College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. The descriptors for the grades are:

- *grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*
- *grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- *grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*
- *grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- *grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 20/94

THE COLLEGE OF NORTH EAST LONDON

LONDON REGION

Inspected December 1993 - January 1994

Summary

The College of North East London is a well-managed college of further education offering a wide range of vocational and non-vocational courses to students of all ages. It has effective links with the local community, employers and higher education. The college is developing well its systems for the recruitment, guidance and support of students and for quality assurance. The high quality of work in the creative studies department is of particular note and standards are generally high in many other areas. The provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be improved. Generally, students' achievements in examinations and levels of progression to further and higher education or to employment are satisfactory, but there are some courses on which achievements are poor. The college is attempting to address the issues of low retention and weak attendance on the courses where these occur. Some of the accommodation and learning facilities are poor, but the college has already started a programme of refurbishment.

The grades awarded as a result of the inspection are given below.

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	2
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	2
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Building crafts	2	Built environment	3
Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	Business, management & accountancy	3
Electrical installation & engineering technology	2	Computing & information technology	2
GCSE and GCE A level	3	Environmental health	2
Access programme	2	Housing	2
English for speakers of other languages	3	Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
Creative studies	1	Floristry	2
Health & social care	2		

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	3
Responsiveness and range of provision	8
Governance and management	18
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	27
Teaching and the promotion of learning	37
Students' achievements	43
Quality assurance	51
Resources	60
Conclusions and issues	73
Figures	

INTRODUCTION

1 The College of North East London was inspected during the autumn and spring terms of the academic year, 1993-94. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term. During the week beginning 13 December 1993, six full-time inspectors and 10 part-time registered inspectors spent a total of 46 days on specialist subject inspections. Inspectors visited 169 classes, involving approximately 2,000 students and inspected a broad range of students' work. The inspectors also had access to an extensive variety of documentation relating to the college and its courses. In the week beginning 17 January 1994, five full-time inspectors and three part-time registered inspectors, including one lay inspector, spent a total of 29 days inspecting aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection there were meetings with governors, representatives of the local training and enterprise council (TFC), students, college managers and teaching staff.

2 The inspection was carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. The framework describes a four-year inspection cycle. When this cycle becomes fully established, colleges will have the opportunity to respond to the findings of earlier inspection visits before their quadrennial inspection and the subsequent published report. As the inspection of the College of North East London occurred early in the cycle, the opportunity for such a response was not available.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 The College of North East London is the only further education college in the North London borough of Haringey. On 1 November 1993, there were 9,277 students enrolled at the college, amounting to 2,986 full-time equivalents. Of these, 1,694 were full-time students. Over 5,000 students were following vocational courses. The number of full-time equivalent students in each of the curriculum areas is shown in figure 1. The college enrolls throughout the year and these numbers are expected to increase. Including the learning-for-work provision, the college expects to meet its growth target of 8 per cent in full-time equivalent students this year. In the academic year 1992-93, approximately half of the students studying at the college lived in the borough of Haringey. Just over half of the students were female, approximately 80 per cent were over 19 years of age (figure 2); 59 per cent were from ethnic minority groups, and approximately 25 per cent has a first language other than English. The college employs 491 full-time equivalent teaching and support staff (figure 3).

4 The college occupies seven teaching sites across the borough, from the largest site in the eastern and most deprived part of the borough, Tottenham, to the more suburban sites of Bounds Green and Muswell Hill in the west. According to the 1991 census the borough of Haringey has a population of 202,204. Twenty-nine per cent are from ethnic minorities.

The borough calculates that there are a further 14 per cent where the head of household is from a Turkish, Cypriot or Irish background. Employment in the borough is concentrated in small and medium-size enterprises. In 1991, there were 4,419 businesses employing 50,727 people. Distribution, retail and financial services predominate, followed by manufacturing, especially clothing, and the construction industries. There is a mismatch between the skills of the local population and the needs of local employers as industry becomes increasingly dependent on high technology. Many residents commute into the centre of London and the City for employment.

5 In September 1993, the unemployment rate of 21.2 per cent for the London Borough of Haringey, the fourth highest in London, compared with one of 20.2 per cent for the population of London as a whole. The unemployment rate for the parliamentary constituency of Tottenham was 25.1 per cent, which was the highest level of unemployment in any United Kingdom parliamentary constituency (London Research Centre 1993). Haringey has recently qualified for European Union regional aid in recognition of the need for economic regeneration.

6 The college of North East London was formed from the merger in 1990 of two colleges, Haringey College and Tottenham College of Technology. It assumed responsibility for adult education in the borough in 1991. The college is a local community college for the residents of Haringey but it also has a regional catchment area for specialist provision in areas such as environmental health, construction and building crafts. It is part of a consortium, 'Scheme 16', established with schools in the east of the borough. All the neighbouring boroughs have further education colleges which compete with the college for students. There are 17 schools with post-16 provision in the borough: nine state secondary schools, five state special schools and three private schools.

7 The college's aims, as stated in the strategic plan (1993-96), are to become known as:

- a centre of excellence in teaching and learning among its current and prospective students
- the first choice to meet expanding educational and training needs within the communities and employers' associations in north east London and to support local economic regeneration
- a candidate for continuing growth in the quantity and quality of work offered by national funding and validating bodies
- an employer committed to achieving greater equality with practical plans for developing human resources to the full.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8 The need to respond to national targets for education and training figures prominently in the college's strategic and marketing plans and in the business plans prepared by the college's departments to guide their activities over the period 1993-1996.

9 The college offers vocational further education courses in a diverse range of subjects including: creative studies, health and social care, environmental health, housing, business studies, building, engineering technology, hairdressing and beauty therapy, computing, and floristry. The variety of General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes already offered at all levels is broad. At least a further five GNVQ courses at foundation level and 10 at either intermediate or advanced levels will be available from September 1994. The range of provision leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) is also wide with, for example, 20 occupational areas served at level two and 13 at level three. Some 8.7 per cent of the college's students are enrolled on higher education programmes in building, environmental health, housing, health and administration courses. General Certificate of Education (GCE) A levels are offered in 33 subjects and there are 27 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects. In addition, there are courses to promote access to higher education, a limited range of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including English as a second language (ESOL) provision, and short courses for industry and other organisations. The range of courses, varying modes of attendance, flexible timetables and learning facilities available on open access, enable the college to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of students.

10 The arrangements for marketing courses and promoting the college are detailed and effective. There is a good awareness within departments of the necessity for effective marketing if the challenging enrolment targets are to be met. Most departments have adopted comprehensive procedures for researching, promoting and advertising new areas of provision and are receiving good support from the college's central marketing unit. However, the discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities suffers for lack of a detailed analysis of local needs.

11 The college has devoted considerable time and energy to the development of curricular links with schools in Haringey. At one time over 300 pupils annually were attending vocational and GCE A level courses at the college through the Scheme 16 consortium arrangement. Recently, because of decisions taken by schools, the number of pupils attending vocational courses has declined substantially. Nevertheless, the college is keen to continue its collaborative work with schools.

12 Good links exist between the college and higher education institutions in the region, notably Middlesex University. The college is finalising the arrangements to become an associate college of this university. Access courses, designed to prepare students without formal educational qualifications for higher education, are offered in a good range of subjects including primary teaching, social work, social sciences, humanities, science, engineering, environmental health, housing and information technology (IT).

13 There are good links with local community groups, for whom provision is being expanded. An active community forum has staff and governor representatives on it. A project, funded by the Home Office through section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, is being used to extend the provision of ESOL programmes for ethnic minority groups in Haringey.

14 There is a sound relationship between the college and the North London TFC. In addition to provision financed through the work-related further education fund, the TEC has established a Gateway Centre at the college to provide advice on education and training opportunities for adults.

15 As a founder member of the North London Colleges European Network which aims to improve the integration of European issues and developments into courses, the college has established educational exchange programmes for lecturers and students with institutions in eight other European countries. In collaboration with Eastern Electricity it has recently secured approximately £45,000 from the *Formation Continue en Europe* (FORCE) programme to develop training modules in environmental engineering. These aim to improve the understanding which Eastern Electricity's employees have of European standards.

16 The college is improving its links with local industry and commerce. To this end, it has played an important role in the formation of the Haringey Chamber of Commerce. Development funding through the Professional Industrial Commercial Updating initiative (PICKUP) is being effectively employed to extend full-cost training activities, initially in the electrical engineering and in the hairdressing and beauty therapy departments. Currently, the income derived from commercial activities amounts to 4.5 per cent of the college's total income. However, the effectiveness of links which exist between individual departments and employers is variable. For example, whilst staff in environmental health, housing and administration have established sound liaison arrangements with their colleagues in local authorities, the relationships between the business and computer studies departments and employers are weaker. Various companies have sponsored the development of the college's resources. For example, the faculty of building and engineering has received commercial sponsorship from a variety of sources including £8,000 worth of building work from a local company to develop building studies learning resources.

17 The policy of equal opportunities for race and gender is vigorously promoted throughout the college by the equal opportunities working party which includes departmental representatives. The college has a good record of attracting black and other ethnic minority students onto its courses. An important feature of the promotion of equal opportunities has been the way it has opened up new markets which produce substantial revenues for the college. For example, the Ministry of Defence finances 'Discovery' programmes at the college which aim to increase the recruitment of black people into the armed forces.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

18 The governing body has an experienced and balanced membership. A high proportion of members are local residents or are active in local business or the community. There are 15 members, including the principal. Eight members are from commercial and industrial organizations, including publishing, hairdressing, banking, and the health authority; two members represent the local community; three members are co-opted, two of them from Haringey council; one represents the North London TEC and there is one staff representative serving until April 1994. Five standing committees have been established to reflect the functions and mission of the college: finance and general purposes, human resources, remuneration, audit, and equal opportunities evaluation. These have clear terms of reference, which include advising the governing body. The governing body has been active in providing strategic guidance for the college while at the same time delegating appropriately to the academic board, the principal, college managers and committees the responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the college and for curriculum matters. It recognises as a priority the need to establish good financial and personnel procedures and has taken a firm and supportive role in these matters. Members show a good understanding of the background of the college and the circumstances in which it is placed, but recognise the need to increase their understanding of the work of the college in order to monitor the quality of provision more effectively.

19 The senior managers have been in post since the college was formed from the merger, in 1990, of two Haringey colleges which were very different in culture, catchment area, type of provision and efficiency. The college is organised into three faculties: building and engineering education; continuing, creative and health education; and professional, business and service education. There is a corporate management committee which comprises the principal, three directors, three heads of faculties, the head of finance and the recently-appointed head of human resources. The three directors are each responsible for one of the following: college services, including human resources; strategic services, including finance, information services and marketing; and learning quality, including curriculum development, staff development, student services, admissions and learning resources. There is some overlap of responsibilities particularly in the areas of human resources and finance. A strong team of three heads of faculty is responsible for the efficient and effective management of each faculty within the college's strategic framework. Within the faculties, heads of eight departments are responsible for curriculum and quality, and course managers are responsible to them for one or more courses. Heads of section, operating within a matrix, are responsible for staff and resources within the faculties. Heads of teams are responsible for cross-college services.

20 There is strong leadership from the principal who is committed to incremental change, clear and firm decision-making, and efficient resource

and financial control. Most departments function well, although there is a tension in the management matrix as presently conceived since those responsible for curriculum planning and monitoring do not have control over resources. Not all staff clearly understand the lines of communication or the different roles and responsibilities of the directors and some of the cross-college curriculum co-ordinators. There is particular uncertainty over responsibilities for core skills and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are a few members of staff who are resistant to the changing circumstances in which the college finds itself and this is hindering the implementation of management procedures.

21 The college's strategic plan contains clear targets and action plans which are reviewed regularly. The annual review clearly influences strategic planning. All the work of the college is assessed against criteria which include quality, equality, marketing information and resourcing implications. As a result of this scrutiny, the corporate management committee is able to advise the governing body on whether particular areas of provision should be expanded or reduced. All staff are informed and consulted about the process and most understand and support the aims of the college. Most course teams felt happy that they had contributed to the strategic planning process while others felt they had been less involved.

22 The corporate management committee is aware of the difficulties in providing good communication in a large and complex organization existing on so many sites. These difficulties have been partly addressed through the regrouping of cognate courses at particular locations and through appropriate siting of course teams. Communication at key points in the college's life, such as incorporation and the introduction of the strategic plan, has been strengthened through planned and systematic briefings at all levels in the institution. The strategic plan was presented at a conference for all staff, although many staff felt that this was informative rather than interactive. A fortnightly newsletter produced by the head of staff development is distributed widely. It contains information about staff training events but is also used as a vehicle for communication by senior managers and other members of staff. There is a well-publicised annual calendar of meetings for course teams, college committees and course review boards.

23 Figures 4 and 5 respectively show the college's recurrent income and estimated expenditure for 1993-94. The FEFC report, *Funding Allocations 1993-94*, records the unit of funding received by The College of North East London from its local authority in 1992-93 as £3,566 per weighted full-time equivalent student. This compares with a median of £2,436 for all general further education and tertiary colleges.

24 Following three years of budgetary constraint since the merger, the governors and the corporate management committee have been at pains to try to establish the accuracy of the budget inherited from the local education authority. The college has been working on a project concerning

unit costs, aimed at producing a system of formula funding for distributing resources across faculties. Presently, the financial allocations are based on a system of estimates and bids, the final allocation being determined by the principal, the director of strategic services and the head of finance and subsequently considered by the governors finance and general purposes committee. Most course managers are aware of the importance of resource implications when planning provision.

25 Aspects of the college management information system relating to courses and students are well developed and responsive to managers' needs. Information is efficiently collected and disseminated to senior managers and to admissions, marketing and quality assurance managers who utilise it for planning. It is not yet readily accessible to, or sufficiently used by, all staff. Plans are underway to provide a functional database and more ready access to essential information.

26 Enrolment targets are set, monitored and used to inform decisions on course planning. Systems are in place to monitor attendance, retention and progression. Many staff are rigorous in implementing these systems although practice is not consistent across all courses.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

27 There are coherent systems to promote recruitment and to support students in ways which will enable them to achieve their potential. The central admissions unit operates well. A strong student services and admissions team works closely with curriculum teams. Prospective students gain information through publicity events, regular advice sessions, promotional newspapers and course literature. The college's prospectus gives a good overview of academic and other provision. Most students expressed satisfaction with the level of guidance given during recruitment. The practicalities of recruiting and enrolling large numbers of students are not handled as well as they might be. The inappropriate use of space causes avoidable delays which detract from the overall effectiveness of the procedures. There is also a less rigorous application of guidance procedures for the large numbers of late entrants and evening students.

28 Interviewers are given clear guidance, including procedures for students to be referred to other agents in the support system. Tutors conduct basic skills testing to assess students' needs so as to ensure they are able to cope with their courses. Diagnostic screening is carried out in a sensitive and unhurried manner. Analysis of the results obtained using the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) screening shows that 50 per cent of students have basic literacy needs, compared with the national average as quoted by ALBSU of 40 per cent for further education colleges. Training is being provided to enable lecturers to teach basic skills. As yet it is too early to evaluate the success of the project.

29 There is a policy for the accreditation of prior learning, which has not yet been fully implemented. The college aims to have trained assessors in each curriculum area, supported by advice and guidance staff. Meanwhile,

departments are given the flexibility to allow their staff to interpret entry criteria and to allow students to take a course if they are deemed capable of benefiting from it.

30 The induction procedures for full-time students are generally effective, and provide a supportive introduction to the courses and the college. Tutors make good use of a guidance pack, provide well-planned sessions, complete administrative procedures efficiently, and reinforce the information about the support available to students. The induction of part-time students is less thorough.

31 The college has recognised the problem of non-completion on some courses and is attempting to address this by improving guidance and support. All full and part-time students now have an assigned tutor. Students spoke warmly of the support provided by their tutors and said that their self-esteem had increased as a result of the encouragement they had been given. A weekly tutorial is provided for all full-time students and also for part-time students taking GCE A level and GCSE courses. The college should monitor this new development carefully and address the issue of whether improved guidance for all students at initial entry would reduce the amount of guidance required later.

32 A well-run student services team, trained in counselling skills, provides accessible counselling and welfare advice for staff and students. Most of the team also have a major teaching commitment. Their function is to support tutors, who provide the first contact for students with problems. In recognition of this, the college is attempting to provide training in counselling for all tutors who need it. Students may also be referred to the student services team whom they can consult on a drop-in basis or through an appointment. The detailed records of its activities reveal high usage.

33 Careers advice is freely available from recruitment onwards, both through referral by tutors and from the open-access careers library. The imminent relocation of this latter facility to the student services area will create an integrated advice centre at Tottenham which should improve the support available to students.

34 Students are required to sign a contract with the college stating their commitment to standards of attendance and other disciplinary requirements. They are also given a students' code outlining their rights and responsibilities. Attendance is monitored at all classes and occasions of lateness are noted. The college has clear procedures to deal with persistent absence and lateness, although the extent to which these are implemented varies from one department to another. A high level of absence was observed in a number of classes. Lateness was often condoned, sometimes to the disadvantage of students who had arrived on time and whose studies were delayed or interrupted.

35 Individual action plans are negotiated between students and tutors at the beginning of courses, with the intention that progress should be

reviewed at regular intervals. A group of staff working on a project called Tutoring, Achievement and Student Charter, launched in September 1993, is developing a system for the introduction of national records of achievement which is to be implemented in September 1994. The project will also evaluate the tutorial system and examine the ways in which information technology can support and enhance it.

36 The well-resourced and attractive open learning centre at Tottenham Green has enrolled 210 students for individualized learning periods of between 4 and 16 hours per week. Some attend the open learning centre only. Others use the facility for learning support. There are good links with local hospitals and the local council who employ some of the students. The centre has a good range of learning support materials, primarily for the development of basic skills, and experienced tutors provide a thorough induction and diagnostic screening. The progress of students using the open learning centre for learning support should be more carefully monitored in relation to their main programme of study, and information passed back to the course tutor. There is a further network of open-learning facilities within the faculties, providing access for a wide range of students.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

37 The strengths of the work inspected outweighed the weaknesses in the majority of classes. Of the 169 learning sessions observed, 32 were GCSE and GCE A level classes and 137 were vocational and other courses. The following table shows the grades awarded.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Number of sessions
A/AS level		4	7	5	3	0	19
GCSE		0	7	3	3	0	13
GNVQ		1	5	5	0	0	11
NVQ		1	6	6	1	1	15
Other: vocational		7	38	35	3	0	83
Other: non-vocational		0	9	14	4	1	28
Totals		13	72	68	14	2	169

38 Courses are, on the whole, carefully planned. Clear schemes of work have been developed by course teams in business studies and in computing and IT. The modular provision in creative arts and in electrical installation is particularly well developed. The modular schemes offer a wide range of learning opportunities to a variety of clients on a full-time and part-time basis. Information on courses and their assessment programmes are

made available to students at the beginning of their studies, but the level of guidance and detail provided in the course booklets vary considerably.

39 Most lessons are well prepared and offer students a range of appropriate activities. Creative studies courses (art and design, media and performing arts) are innovative and of a high quality. Good practice was seen in a number of curriculum areas: electrical installation, computing and IT, English and French. The extent to which core skills are being developed on GNVQ and NVQ courses is adequate in most areas. However, opportunities to develop communication and mathematical skills are being missed in business studies and in computing and IT courses. There is only a limited use of IT outside those areas where it is a course requirement. Development work is required to ensure that the college policy on IT is delivered, and action is required now to ensure that core skills will be firmly embedded in the comprehensive programme of GNVQ courses to be offered next session.

40 The best practice in teaching students of different levels of ability is found in creative studies where the mixed groups of students sometimes include qualified and mature students together with younger students, some of whom have learning difficulties. The innovative approaches in the workshops and classrooms are supported through a tutorial programme which offers both group and individual sessions. Academic and pastoral support are provided and students have the opportunity to review regularly their academic progress. The approach to teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of a high standard in this department.

41 Most students are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning and to work independently. In electrical engineering and some access provision, well-organised classes and well-prepared assignments enable students to do this effectively. In other areas, such as health and social care and building crafts, students are not given sufficient assistance in the development of their study skills to ensure that they are able to manage their own learning. In some classes, the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had not been identified and support was unco-ordinated. The discrete courses for these students offer few opportunities for independent learning. However, the use of personal records of achievement is being developed to enable them to assess their own progress. The college should ensure that students with learning difficulties, and speakers of languages other than English who find the language of their courses difficult, have effective learning support and that their progress is monitored.

42 Appropriate assessment programmes have been developed in line with the requirements of examination and awarding bodies. Where there are no formal requirements, practices vary considerably. The college has recently introduced procedures for ensuring that internal assessment details are publicly available within the institution and that there is consistent recording of students' progress against individual action plans.

Teachers are required to update the progress records of students in course files which are centrally located. A number of course teams operate a system of internal moderation by cross marking a sample of students' work. Students can appeal if they believe there has been an error or irregularity in the academic or administrative process relating to assessments. Good practice in internal assessment was not consistent. In some GCSE and GCE A level provision, and in hairdressing and beauty courses, students were not given a sufficiently clear idea of their progress as measured against identifiable aims. In health and social care there was limited information for students on the assessment schedule. In built environment and science courses, homework is not always marked and returned within a reasonable timescale.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

43 Students are well motivated and appear to enjoy their studies. They display appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding as indicated by their responses in class, their files of notes and homework, and their assessed work. High standards of work are achieved in creative studies, floristry and engineering technology. The standards of students' work in business studies, health and social care, environmental health and housing are invariably satisfactory and sometimes good.

44 The examination pass rates and completion rates vary considerably both across the college and within departments. On the whole, the success rate amongst students who attend regularly and complete their courses is satisfactory and in some cases good. The average retention rates for each of the eight departments range between 69 per cent for GCE and GCSE, and 95 per cent for environmental health, housing and administration.

45 On vocational courses, the average retention rate, at approximately 80 per cent, is good, but the achievements of students vary considerably. According to the college's published information on students' achievements for the academic year 1992-93, 59 per cent of all students on full-time and part-time courses attained NVQs at level one, two or three; 73 per cent gained intermediate or advanced GNVQs or their equivalents, and 62 per cent gained other vocational qualifications. Excellent results are achieved in plumbing, floristry, environmental health and art and design. There are good results in many other courses, with 80 per cent or more of students achieving a full award in the minimum amount of time. According to the national survey of achievement recorded at November 1992, conducted by the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), the percentages nationally of students gaining full awards for first certificate and first diploma were 62 and 69 respectively; the percentages for national certificate and national diploma were 60 and 72 respectively. The policy of offering a flexible service enables many students to gain accreditation for one or more units of a course without achieving a full award within the minimum time period. In advanced painting and decorating, housing, accounts and hairdressing the results were less satisfactory.

46 In 1992-93, there were 306 examination entries in 31 subjects at GCE A level by students of all ages studying full-time or part-time, and 233 (76 per cent) who sat the examination gained passes at grades A-F. This is not far short of the national average of 79.8 per cent for all candidates in schools and colleges. Good pass rates were achieved in a number of subjects including performing arts, biology and sociology where the rates were over 90 per cent. The college has a difficulty retaining students on these courses. The number enrolled at the beginning of the two-year A level course in September 1992 was 280. Only 51 per cent of these remained at the time of the inspection.

47 There were 626 subject entries for GCSE in 1993. Thirty-eight per cent of those entered for the examinations gained grades A-C; 79 per cent were awarded grades A-G. Few students enter the college with the intention of taking four or five GCSF subjects. The pattern is for students to choose one or two subjects in addition to their main programme of study. Again, retention rates are a cause for concern. Thirty-three per cent of the students who enrol fail to complete their studies.

48 Many students are known to leave their courses for financial reasons or because of domestic circumstances. The college has recently reviewed its entry criteria for both courses and examinations. This, together with the introduction of a tutoring system, is intended to address the problem of low completion rates and to improve success. The following tables give an example of pass rates as a percentage of those who enrolled at the start of the course and as a percentage of those who entered for the examinations.

GCE A level 2 year course		
	A-E grades per cent entered	A-E grades per cent enrolled
Biology	100	46
French	100	45
GCSE one year course		
	A-G grades per cent entered	A-G grades per cent enrolled
Biology	90	53
French	90	53

49 The college recognises that its failure to collect precise information about students' qualifications on entry makes it difficult to evaluate its own contribution to the value added to students' learning, particularly in the GCSE and GCE A level programme. This matter is now being addressed.

50 Destination statistics are generally well documented and are reviewed as a part of the college's quality assurance procedures. In 1993, 71 per cent of the students leaving building crafts progressed to employment. In

building and engineering technology, 64 per cent progressed to further or higher education with another 27 per cent moving into employment. In a sample taken of GCSE and GCE A level students, the college had information on the destinations of 52 per cent of those targeted. Twenty-seven per cent progressed to further education, 22 per cent to higher education and 3 per cent to employment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

51 There is a clear policy and framework for quality assurance across the college which have been in place for one full academic year, 1992-93. Their purpose is to ensure that the aims as stated in the college mission are achieved. The system is underpinned by information recorded in comprehensive standard files which are co-ordinated by the course managers. Courses are monitored and reviewed by course review boards whose reports are submitted to faculty boards of study and subsequently considered by the quality and validation standing committee. The college quality assessment report which emerges from this process is used internally for planning.

52 The roles of those responsible for the monitoring and reviewing, as part of the quality assurance process, are defined in the procedures document. In practice, the distinction between some of these roles is not clear, particularly the relationship between heads of department, heads of section and course managers. A temporary post of quality assurance co-ordinator was created last year for the purposes of training course managers and co-ordinating responses to quality assurance questionnaires. This post is due to be phased out by September 1994. It has not yet been decided how the responsibilities of the post, which are important to quality control, will be covered after this date.

53 Most, but not all, of the course files are thoroughly completed but their standard is variable. Some reports are descriptive rather than evaluative and, in some, insufficient use is made of statistical evidence to highlight success and explore issues of concern. Surveys of students' views on the college and their courses are conducted by tutors twice yearly. The results are intended to inform action plans but the analysis of student questionnaires is not sufficiently systematic. There are plans for the purchase and implementation of a computerised system which will assist this analysis. The format of the questionnaires is common to all courses but for some courses, such as access and English as a second language (ESOL), additional specific information is required if the questionnaires are to be used effectively for quality assurance.

54 The course files contain a section for recording feedback from employers. Various attempts have been made to secure regular, formal contributions but employers are reluctant to make such a commitment of their time. Most courses have not been successful in obtaining formal feedback from employers, whose involvement with the college is usually limited to the provision of work experience places.

55 The senior management expects the course teams to set up performance indicators. Targets for enrolment are set, and attainment of targets or failure to attain targets are used as a basis for decisions on expanding or reducing provision. Little use has yet been made of targets for success with retention rates or student achievement.

56 A students' charter was already in place in the college before the national charter for further education was published. It is being piloted on seven courses from different departments in the college. The attainment of standards set in the college's charter is intended to be used to monitor quality. The college's charter is the subject of a review to evaluate its effectiveness and to bring it in line with the national charter.

57 The current budget for staff development is £140,000 which represents 0.77 per cent of the staffing budget. Staff development is well organised within a comprehensive policy framework. This year it has been a priority for 30 members of staff to acquire assessor awards in preparation for NVQs. There is, in addition, a wide range of in-house developmental activities, available to all staff, through which individual needs can be met, provided they can be shown to be linked to the college's priorities.

58 The college maintains an information system on staff development which provides complete data on the training undertaken by staff. A scheme for the appraisal of teachers is currently being piloted and managers are being trained. When implemented, it should provide more reliable identification of the developmental needs of individuals and better inform the college on what should be provided. There is a well-structured programme for the induction of all new staff.

59 The college has committed itself to attaining the Investors in People award. It has already prepared its action plan, which is now being implemented.

RESOURCES

Staffing

60 Of the 322 full-time equivalent teaching staff, 245 are full-time or on associate lecturers' contracts. Most are well qualified and suitably experienced for the work they undertake. Many have teaching qualifications and a significant proportion has experience outside education. Female staff comprise half the total and many are in senior positions. Women hold just under half of the appointments on both the executive team and among the heads of departments. Approximately 15 per cent of teaching staff and 37 per cent of support staff are from ethnic minority backgrounds. About 25 per cent of the teaching is delivered by over 400 hourly-paid part-timers (77 full-time equivalents). Technician support is adequate in most areas of work. The exceptions are environmental health and some aspects of art and design.

61 The college has started to develop its personnel policy and procedures in accordance with its stated aim to develop human resources to the full. A new recruitment and selection procedure has been developed for full-time staff. Turnover of teaching staff has reduced from 13 per cent in 1990-91 to 6 per cent in 1992-93. Heads of faculty bid for additional and replacement staffing resources through the annual review and estimates.

Equipment/learning resources

62 Media and library services are provided through a cross-college learning resources team. There are adequate library and learning resource centres at Tottenham, Bounds Green and Muswell Hill. The Muswell Hill library is located on a first floor and access for those with impaired mobility is difficult. All libraries have a stock of books related to the courses taught at that centre, a range of general and reference texts, a selection of journals and newspapers and multi-media teaching and self-study resources. Additional reference materials include databases contained on CD-ROM, and the North London College's European Network Information Centre, based at Tottenham. The latter provides staff and students with information on the European dimension in a range of vocational areas. The integrated computerised catalogue linking the three libraries is a valuable step towards a fully-integrated catalogue and loans system. The book stock in some of the curriculum areas is limited, and in some cases out-dated. Areas of weakness include business studies, computing, floristry, hairdressing and beauty, construction, environmental health, housing, health and social care, and art and design. There is restricted early-evening opening, particularly at Bounds Green and Muswell Hill.

63 The Tottenham site has additional faculty-based learning resource centres. These vary in their stages of development and range of materials. The largest, in construction, is well resourced with reference texts and technical material, mainly for students on technical and professional courses.

64 There is an adequate provision of IT equipment, where the use of such equipment is a formal part of the course. Some IT facilities are of a high standard. Those for business and computing students, located in the newly-refurbished computer rooms at Tottenham, are accessed through a booking system. There is also a new suite of computer rooms for art and media courses. In construction work, IT equipment for technician and housing students is of a good standard but access for general use is restricted owing to the use of the specialised accommodation for timetabled classes. There are no dedicated IT facilities for building craft students. The quality of computer-aided design and IT facilities for electrical installation and engineering technology is good, but resources are insufficient to cover effectively the core skills in GNVQ health and social care. Keyboards and screens have not been adapted to meet the needs of students with co-ordination or visual difficulties. There are no networked IT facilities for students, and this limits the application packages which can be used.

65 Generally, the range of equipment and materials available to support teaching and learning is adequate. The college's strategy of locating specific aspects of provision at designated centres has helped to minimise duplication. Construction craft workshops are well equipped with a good range of tools and there is an extensive amount of capital equipment for timber trades and mechanical services engineering. The electrical installation centre and the electronics laboratory are valuable resources. There is a well-equipped language laboratory. In some curriculum areas, equipment is inadequate: for example, there is insufficient laboratory equipment for students on environmental health and built environment courses, the science laboratory is out of date, and there is no materials-testing laboratory.

Accommodation

66 Overall, the accommodation has an even balance of strengths and weaknesses. The college occupies eight sites at Tottenham, Tottenham Green, Bounds Green, Muswell Hill, Mattison Road, Falklands Road, Tetherdown and the Blanche Neville Nursery site. The buildings are diverse in their size, age and state of repair. The accommodation at Tottenham was purpose-built at the end of the last century. Most other centres were originally designed as schools. There are lifts that provide access to upper floors at Tottenham and Bounds Green but at some of the other centres access for people with impaired mobility is limited.

67 A strong start has been made in the preparation of an accommodation strategy. A thorough review has been carried out which has identified the scope and scale of the college's accommodation. In addition, the college has conducted a comprehensive survey of room usage. The findings have been incorporated into a computerised database through which improvements and progress towards targets established by the college can be monitored. The database also informs decisions about the change of use of rooms.

68 Teaching rooms for some curriculum areas are dingy and unattractive. Examples are the accommodation used for some GCE A level and GCSF classes, beauty and therapy classes, ESOL work at Muswell Hill, building crafts at Tottenham, technician and housing studies, and discrete and link courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college's own review identified 38 per cent of the accommodation as being in a poor state of decoration. It also drew attention to heating, lighting or ventilation difficulties in a number of buildings: for example, the staff accommodation at Bounds Green and Tottenham, the accommodation used for housing studies and the workshop used by students on the craft electronics courses.

69 Since incorporation, the work carried out on buildings has had a clear focus on health and safety and on assisting the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of students. For example, accommodation

for the four building crafts at Tottenham has been brought together into the same area, and an additional learning resource area for independent study, which will facilitate the delivery of NVQs, has been provided next to the craft workshops. The refurbishment of the lift in the tower block at the Tottenham Centre has provided safe access for students with impaired mobility. Uncertainty over the future of some sites has led to minimum expenditure on renovation pending the outcomes of negotiations. The uncertainty is also delaying decisions about the use and development of certain rooms and buildings. One of the buildings at Muswell Hill is derelict and completely closed, and the gymnasium and changing rooms at Bounds Green are unused.

70 The centres at Tottenham, Bounds Green and Muswell Hill have canteens offering hot meals and snacks. The lack of any catering provision in the evening has been criticised by students. At Tottenham Green there is a limited catering facility and the other centres offer only tea and coffee-making facilities. Students are concerned by the shortage of social areas at Tottenham and women students expressed concerns about safety at Muswell Hill at night because of the absence of outside lighting.

71 There is nursery, playgroup and creche provision at five sites. Muswell Hill and the Blanche Neville Nursery site have purpose-designed facilities, although those at Muswell Hill are housed in a building with poor external fabric. Some of the creche facilities on other sites are in need of improvement and repair.

72 Despite the difficulties, the college is making progress with refurbishments and renovations. Improvements include a new hairdressing salon and computer suites at Tottenham, a major refurbishment of rooms at Bounds Green, re-roofing of a number of flat-roofed buildings, replacement and improvement of fire safety doors, and a new roof for the sports centre at Muswell Hill.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

73 The College of North East London is making progress towards achieving its mission. The particular strengths of the college are:

- the breadth of the curriculum offered in a variety of modes of attendance
- effective governance and strong management
- strategic planning clearly linked to review and evaluation
- clear systems to promote the effective recruitment of, and guidance and support for, students
- good developments in tutorial support
- high standards of teaching in some areas
- a clear policy and system for quality assurance
- the review of accommodation and learning facilities and the subsequent actions to effect improvements.

74 If it is to succeed in achieving its aims, the college has to address the following issues:

- the lack of clarity over some management roles and responsibilities
- the implementation of management systems and procedures at all levels in the organisation
- unsatisfactory levels of student attendance
- low course retention rates
- students' lack of success on some programmes of study
- inadequate co-ordination of core skills and learning support, especially for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for speakers of other languages
- the less than satisfactory quality of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the replacement of equipment and learning resources which are outdated
- continuing improvement of accommodation and learning facilities.

FIGURES

1 Students expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)

2 Percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)

3 Staff expressed as full-time equivalents (January 1994)

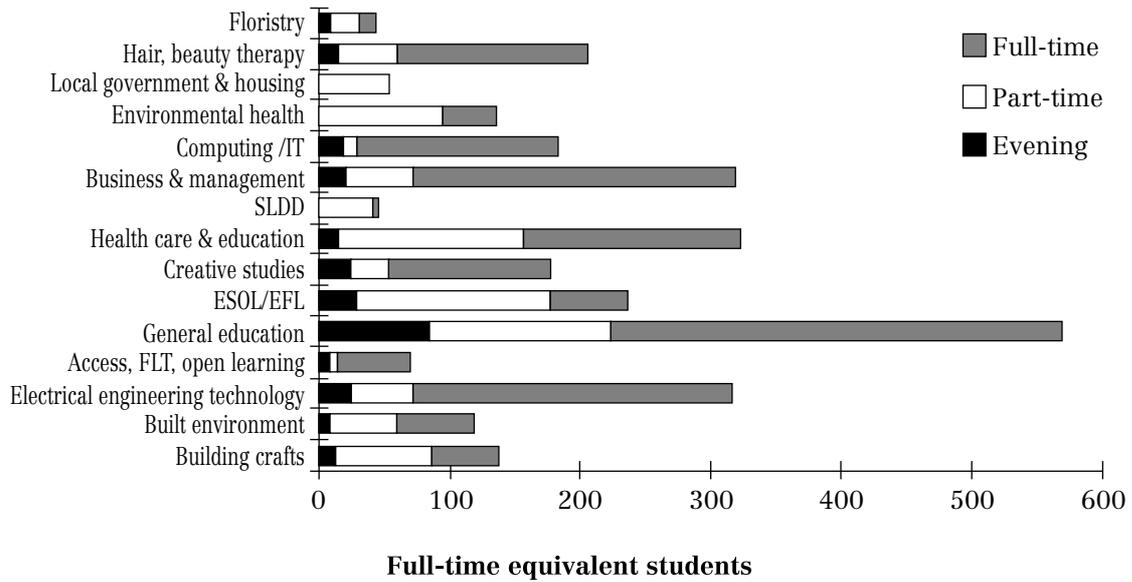
4 Estimated income (12 months to July 1994)

5 Estimated expenditure (12 months to July 1994)

Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

Figure 1

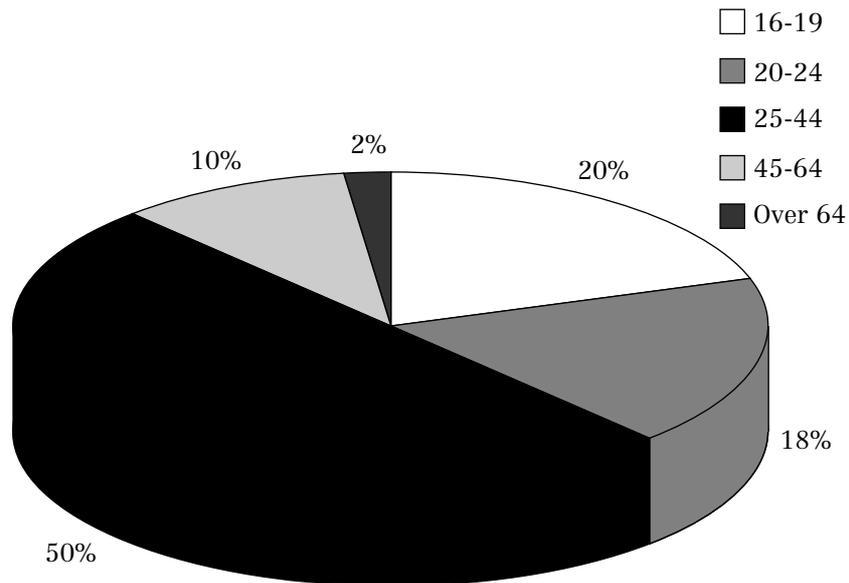
College of North East London: students expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)



Number of full-time equivalent students: 2,986

Figure 2

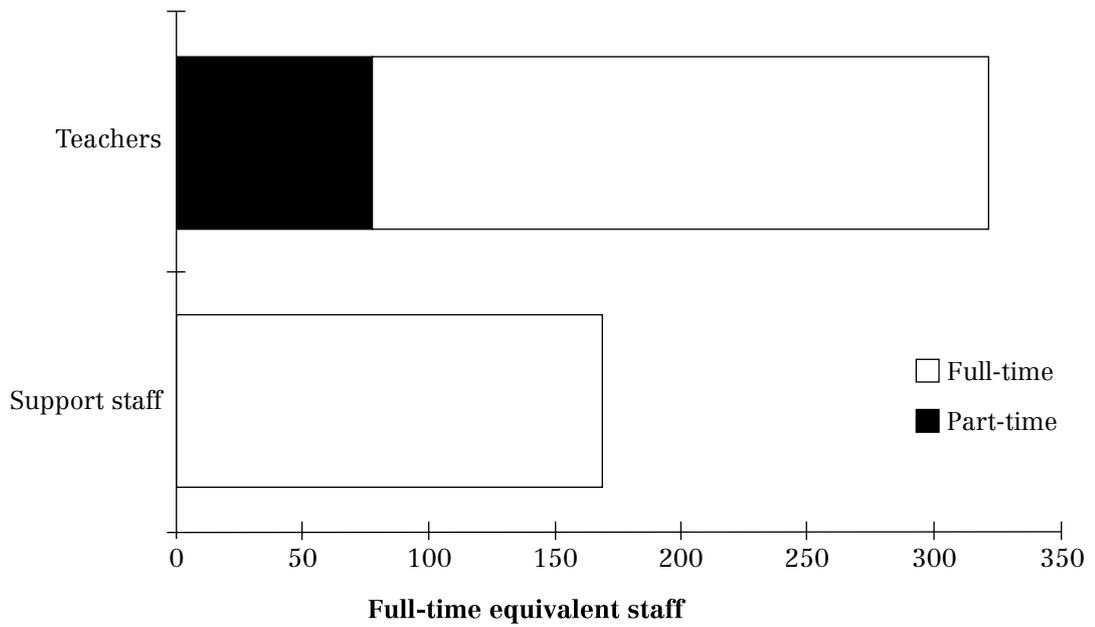
College of North East London: percentage enrolments by age (1992-93)



Number of enrolments: 13,469

Figure 3

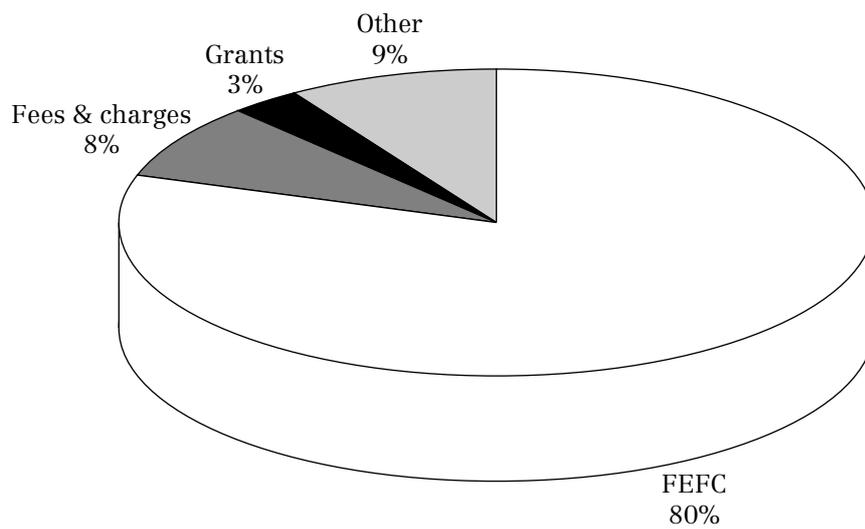
College of North East London: staff expressed as full-time equivalents (January 1994)



Full-time equivalent staff: 491

Figure 4

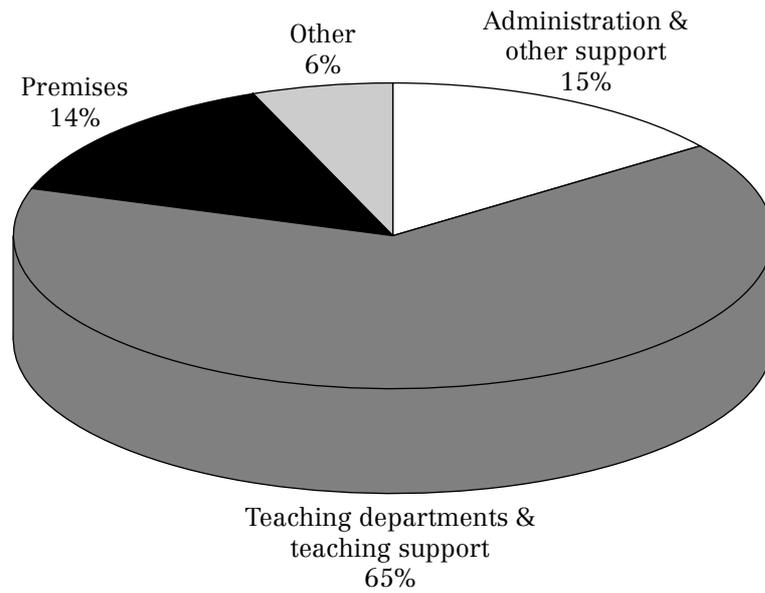
College of North East London: estimated income (12 months to July 1994)



Estimated income: £15,430,000

Figure 5

College of North East London: estimated expenditure (12 months to July 1994)



Estimated expenditure: £15,430,000

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