

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Ealing Tertiary College

May 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education every four years. The inspectorate also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum and gives advice to the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge and experience in the work they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member who does not work in education and a member of staff from the college being inspected.

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the Council Circular 93/28. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also use a five-point grading scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

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.*

By June 1995, some 208 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 208 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-95

Activity	Inspection grades				
	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	60%	28%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	13%	51%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	11%	56%	29%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 67/96

EALING TERTIARY COLLEGE

GREATER LONDON REGION

Inspected September 1995-February 1996

Summary

Ealing Tertiary College offers a wide range of vocational, academic and adult education courses which are responsive to the needs of the local community. The college is effectively governed and managed, although the co-ordination of some courses between sites should be improved. There are effective arrangements for enrolment and induction. Students have access to good-quality personal counselling and learning support, and most tutoring is effective. There is some good teaching in all curriculum areas, but there are a number of courses where teaching and learning methods need to be improved. There is some good practice in review and evaluation of courses, but there is a need for an increased focus on the quality assurance of teaching and learning in the classroom. Examination results on vocational courses are satisfactory overall, although those for 16 to 18 year olds on vocational courses have deteriorated in the last two years. GCE A level results are improving while GCSE results overall are below average and some are poor. Resources for learning are generally good, especially in information technology and within the learning resource and support centres. If the college is to continue to advance it should: increase retention and attendance rates and the levels of achievement on some courses; improve procedures for the referral of students to the learning support centres and ensure that students attend; and improve teaching equipment for some courses.

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	3
Resources: staffing	3
equipment/learning resources	2
accommodation	2

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Art and design, performing arts and media	3
Horticulture and floristry	3	EFL, modern and community languages	2
Construction	3	English, access to higher education and other humanities	2
Engineering	3	Adult basic education/SLDD	3
Business and office systems	3	ESOL	3
Health and community care	2		

INTRODUCTION

1 Ealing Tertiary College was inspected between September 1995 and February 1996 by 22 inspectors who spent a total of 82 days in the college. Inspectors visited 224 classes attended by more than 2,400 students and inspected a range of students' work. There were meetings with members of the corporation, senior and middle managers, teaching and support staff, students, employers, and representatives of the West London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), the community and local schools. An inspector visited a secondary school which offers courses franchised from the college. Inspectors also had access to documentation relating to the college and its courses.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Ealing Tertiary College was created in September 1992 by the amalgamation of three existing colleges and the borough of Ealing adult education service. It is based on four main sites: the Acton centre in the east of the borough; the Southall centre, in the west; Norwood Hall which is situated in its own grounds at Norwood Green, near Southall; and a fourth site in central Ealing. When the college was set up it was intended that the work of the sixth forms in 13 local schools would be subsumed within the tertiary college. However, six schools successfully applied for grant-maintained status, and preserved their sixth forms. A further two voluntary-aided schools have also retained their sixth forms. The five remaining schools completed the transfer of their sixth forms to the college in 1993-94. In 1994, 76 per cent of 16 year olds in the borough chose to continue in full-time education; of these, less than one-third entered further education. The college competes with 10 other FEFC-funded colleges within travelling distance of the borough. Nearby, Thames Valley University also offers some further education courses.

3 The population of Ealing at the time of the 1991 census was 275,257. The proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups in the borough is 32 per cent, which is higher than the 20.2 per cent for London as a whole. The largest single minority group is of Indian origin, forming 16 per cent of the population, followed by Caribbean, forming 4 per cent. In October 1995, the unemployment rate was 9.6 per cent compared with 11.4 per cent for London. Market research carried out by the West London TEC has established that children from the local community achieve less well at key stage 4 of the national curriculum than those from the rest of West London. There is a concentration of social and economic deprivation in the South Acton and Southall areas. However, the Park Royal Trust Partnership, a project designed to regenerate local businesses, and also Heathrow Airport, offer employment opportunities. Although manufacturing industry is declining, increased opportunities for employment are forecast in hotel and catering, transport and communications, finance, business and public services.

4 On 1 November 1995, there were 8,095 students at the college. Of these, 38 per cent were attending full time. Fifty-five per cent of students are over 25 years of age. Student numbers by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Forty per cent of students identified themselves as being of minority ethnic origin, the two largest groups being Indian (18 per cent) and African (9 per cent). The college employs 448 teachers, representing just over 238 full-time equivalents. There are 208 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. Thirty per cent of staff have identified themselves as being of minority ethnic origin, and 58 per cent are women.

5 The curriculum is provided through three faculties. In addition, the college has departments dealing with administration, estates and services, marketing and customer services, registry, finance, human resources and community development. The faculties are divided into 12 teams which provide a broad range of vocational further and higher education courses; General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses; training courses for industry; courses in English for speakers of other languages; adult education courses and courses providing access to higher education.

6 In its mission statement, the college states its intention to be the first choice employer and provider of further education opportunities in West London. It intends to achieve this by working with partners to contribute to the economic development of West London, constantly improving access to all potential customers who could benefit from its training, education, social, cultural, leisure and recreational services and facilities.

7 During the inspection, the college began the first phase of a restructuring process, which will become fully operational in August 1996. Heads of faculty and service departments have been allocated directorships linked directly to the objectives within the strategic plan. For simplicity, the present structure is referred to in this report.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8 Twenty-seven GCE A level subjects are offered in day or evening attendance modes, including Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu to serve the needs of the large Asian communities. Nineteen GCSE subjects are offered in the evenings and English, mathematics and psychology are available during the day. In addition, the college provides a full-time repeat programme with a choice of 11 GCSE subjects for students who have gained a minimum of three GCSE subjects at grade D in the summer prior to their commencement at the college. Students on any course are entitled to join a two-hour weekly programme in one of four modern European languages.

9 General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) are offered at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in art and design, information technology, business, science, leisure and tourism, and engineering. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are offered in

many curriculum areas, including construction, motor vehicle engineering, and horticulture. National certificates and craft qualifications accredited by the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) are also available. Access courses leading to higher education are offered in science, social science, computing, business studies, teacher training and nursing.

10 A wide range of adult basic education courses is offered which allows maximum flexibility of attendance. The college also delivers adult education provision funded by the local education authority (LEA) in 29 subject areas at nine sites across the borough, reflecting the demands of multi-ethnic client groups. In addition, outreach centres have been set up in community venues such as halls and schools, particularly in South Acton, in order to meet the educational needs of people living on outlying housing estates. The college has established a community development agency to form links with adults, especially minority groups and refugees, and to co-ordinate the outreach programme. The provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is made through a mixture of separate specialist provision and support for students on curriculum area programmes. The extent of the need for these courses has not been accurately assessed.

11 The planning of the curriculum is directly linked to the college's mission statement. Good progress has been made towards achieving the aim of having the whole curriculum reorganised into modules by 1998 to increase flexibility and the efficient use of resources.

12 Detailed plans for liaison with schools are implemented by a team of three staff under the direction of a co-ordinator. In partnership with the LEA, the college has set up the Ealing Vocational Education Centre to encourage joint initiatives with schools on the 14 to 19 curriculum. The centre is developing a programme of joint training for college and school staff for Training and Development Lead Body assessor awards. Plans are being developed for collaboration in the development and delivery of GNVQ programmes. In response to a perceived gap in provision identified in the north of the borough, the college has established the Northern Centre which operates in a secondary school with 55 students on GCE A level and GNVQ programmes. Much of the work with schools is at a developmental stage. The college has few formal links with higher education institutions, although the staff-development unit has a franchise arrangement with the University of Greenwich for a Certificate of Education by distance learning.

13 The marketing division of the college actively promotes college programmes. In Southall, advertisements have been broadcast on the Asian community station, Sunrise Radio. Posters and leaflets in English and four community languages are used to promote courses. The horticultural programmes at Norwood Hall recruit from a wide area of south-east England and, as a result of market research, this provision is advertised separately. Copies of the college prospectus are widely

circulated and a leaflet detailing college courses is put through every door in Ealing. The general effectiveness of marketing is monitored. Direct links between marketing activity and college planning need to be strengthened. This will ensure that new courses, and the content of existing courses, can be further developed to meet local demand.

14 The college has established a division, Training ETC, to develop and manage the college's income-generating education and training activities. In the last year, Training ETC has co-ordinated bids to the West London TEC and has organised and run the college's first national conference. The division also successfully bid for local authority training contracts from the London boroughs of Hounslow and Islington. High levels of customer satisfaction were recorded in a recent survey. Training ETC has employed a variety of effective methods for raising awareness of the college in the business community, and comprehensive plans have been produced for the future of this work. The division co-ordinated a project through which the senior management team sought to increase the college's links with business and test the validity of the strategic plan by exposing it to a wide audience. Senior managers attended meetings with representatives of 150 businesses across west London. The information gained is being used to plan the range of training offered.

15 The college works closely and effectively with the West London TEC on a wide range of projects and initiatives. The TEC regards the college as highly responsive to community needs, for example, in its collaborative development with the TEC of outreach centres for community education and training. The college has been a co-operative member of the West London Colleges Consortium and has collaborated with three other further education colleges in an ambitious competitiveness fund project. Plans for other projects are developing in other areas, such as an NVQ in sport which involves four London professional football clubs. Involvement with community groups, businesses and employers is extensive. The college has active membership of several consortia and partnerships, including the Park Royal Partnership and the Ealing Education Business Partnership. A small number of employers and representatives of community groups working with the college met with inspectors and expressed a positive view of college responsiveness. The college is committed to developing these links further. The degree of contact with employers, by curriculum areas, is variable and, in some cases, is ineffective.

16 The college co-ordinator for European links has been successful in developing a wide portfolio of contacts and initiatives. Successful European Social Fund bids across most curriculum areas have generated considerable income for the college and many of these offer further examples of the college co-operating with the West London TEC, local authorities, the London borough of Ealing and other further education colleges. There have been successful bids to other funds such as Lingua and Socrates which support vocational exchanges for students. There is an active programme of European links and exchanges for students and

staff. France, Germany, Italy, Finland and Greece are amongst the countries involved and joint projects between academic institutions in Europe and the college have provided a positive experience for many students. The college hopes eventually to offer opportunities for exchange to all full-time students.

17 An equal opportunities project team was established early in 1995. This group has examined various aspects of equality of opportunity, for example in relation to teaching and learning, the students' charter, students' awareness, personnel procedures and monitoring. Equal opportunities conferences were held by each programme and service area during the summer term of 1995 to discuss the project team's recommendations. As a result, the college has now developed policies on equal opportunities.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

18 On incorporation, the initial challenge for the governing body was to secure the college's financial strength and give appropriate strategic direction. Although the planned status of the new college as the tertiary provider for the borough did not materialise, the governors, under able leadership, have been effective in responding to this situation and giving strong strategic direction.

19 The corporation board has 16 members, many of whom have served since incorporation. There are two vacancies among the eight independent business members. The board aims to secure replacements for these vacancies who have business, services and manufacturing experience, so as to broaden its already wide range of professional, educational and commercial experience. One business member represents the West London TEC. Other members include a local headteacher and councillors, the director, members of the teaching and support staff of the college and a student. There are five women and four members from minority ethnic backgrounds on the board. Members give robust, well-informed but not uncritical support to the college, and make good use of their collective experience. The full board meets at least four times a year. Meetings are open, and non-members are able to attend, except for confidential items. Attendance at meetings of the board and its committees is good.

20 There are four main committees: policy and resources; remuneration; audit; and a newly-created search and review committee. The latter brings together responsibilities for recruitment, induction and training of governors. The policy and resources committee meets eight to 12 times a year and meetings are open to non-members. It gives close scrutiny to management accounts and reviews significant developments closely. Training takes place regularly; for example, legal aspects of governance have been the subject of training led by lawyers who specialise in this work. New members are inducted and the student member has been prepared for her role by a staff governor. Focus groups have been set up

in which governors, together with staff and students, devote at least half a day a year to look at areas of the college. Three members of the board provide the steering group for this activity which has begun to identify issues for improvement, while at the same time making board members better known throughout the college.

21 Documents and papers for the corporation and its committees are efficiently prepared and maintained under the direction of the corporation secretary. He also maintains a register of members' interests and a record that all members have signed the College Employers' Forum code of conduct. The members regard the college's performance against its strategic objectives as the key indicator of their own success.

22 There is a good working relationship between the corporation and the college's senior management team. The team, which comprises the director, the corporation secretary and six senior academic and service staff, meets fortnightly. One of its number is female. Under the director's leadership, the team has a clear vision of the college's future direction and an operational plan for achieving it. It is effective in developing and monitoring policies, directing the staff and managing the college. The health and safety policy is monitored closely. The equal opportunities project team reports directly to the senior management team.

23 The college's well-developed strategic plan for 1995-98 was prepared after wide consultation and training. Advice was taken from a senior employee of the local TEC who has expertise in strategic planning. Governors played a key role in steering the planning process and the original draft of the plan was reworked at their direction. There were planning workshops for the governors and the senior management team and a range of staff were able to contribute to the development of aspects of the plan. All staff have been provided with a summary of the plan and many are aware of the link between targets and funding. The operational plan, derived from the strategic corporate objectives, has been devised in consultation with middle managers. It includes targets and timescales. Middle managers have produced local plans which fit within the operational plan.

24 The academic board has 25 members, including the director, senior managers, programme managers, elected teaching staff, support staff, representatives from the cross-college services, students and a member of the staff-development team. The board's meetings are open to observers. The board advises the director on academic matters, such as whether the college should expand its GNVQ portfolio or maintain its provision of BTEC national courses. It has an important role in the college's quality assurance process through the academic standards committee. The role of the board has been reviewed and reported on by a task group with the intention of improving its effectiveness. Based on the report, the board has considered ways to increase its members' participation in decision making on academic matters. Ways of improving communication of the board's operation to the staff of the college have also been considered.

25 Heads of faculties and programme area managers are aware of their targets for recruitment, retention and success. Curriculum and service managers, 50 per cent of whom are female, hold regular meetings to plan their activities and minutes for action are taken. Detailed management accounts are provided monthly for budget holders by the finance department which is moving towards providing unit costings of activities. Business plans, which include resource implications, are prepared for new courses and these are evaluated by the finance department. There has been training for managers in the handling of budgets. It is intended that the share of overhead costs attributable to each programme area should be made more apparent, so that allocations to managers can be better understood by all staff.

26 Communications, and the management of courses and services, are generally effective. However, there are some instances of insufficient co-ordination of course delivery between sites. This results in duplication of effort, variable practice and insufficient opportunities for the sharing of good practice. Considerable efforts are made to keep all staff informed through regular staff bulletins and communication by line management. The new management structure is designed to improve further the communications within the organisation and to increase the involvement of staff at all levels in decision making.

27 Well-established systems provide reports for internal customers with regard to finance, payroll, personnel, student records, estates and marketing. Not all systems are fully effective. Inspectors found it difficult to obtain staff curriculum vitae in some programme areas and there were difficulties in obtaining whole-college information on students' achievements. Access to information about students is available on a computer network at faculty level and information systems co-ordinators are located on all sites. Targets for the retention of students and course outcomes are set and monitored. There are also surveys of students' destinations. Rapid progress has been made in improving the availability and reliability of records about students since 1994-95, although some gaps remain due to the lack of historical data. There have been briefings on aspects of the individual student record. Staff confidence in the data, although widespread, is not yet universal.

28 The average level of funding per unit for the college for 1995-96 is £19.23. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £17.84 per unit. The college achieved 85 per cent of its performance target of funding units during 1993-94. In 1994-95, however, 106 per cent of the target units were achieved, not including the units the college has claimed for student' achievements. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29 There are effective procedures for the recruitment and admission of students. The college's information centre provides the first point of

contact for enquirers and the customer services unit undertakes an initial screening of all applications. Where support needs are identified, the student is offered an interview with guidance staff. All full-time applicants are interviewed, usually by specialist staff from the programme area. The guidance given is generally of a high standard and students are directed elsewhere if the college does not provide an appropriate course. Inspectors found that a few students had been enrolled on unsuitable courses. Enrolment procedures, supported by good-quality documentation, are standardised across all sites. Advisers specialising in careers, welfare, accreditation of prior learning and adult education attend the enrolment sessions at each site, and staff who speak community languages are also at hand.

30 There is a well-planned, cross-college induction programme. Part-time students receive an intensive induction in their first session, after which tutorial support is given by their course teachers. The programme for full-time students is based on an exemplary tutor's handbook which includes mandatory induction elements and supporting documents. Tutors can decide to add extra materials designed specifically for their students. There are brief induction sessions each week in September for students who enrol late. Induction is monitored by senior tutors. The college expects all course transfers to be completed within five weeks, at the end of which period a learning agreement is signed by the student and the tutor. This document confirms the students' learning programme and the mutual responsibilities of the student and the tutor.

31 There are examples of good practice in the accreditation of prior learning in some parts of the college, although there is no formal whole-college procedure currently in operation. Students on NVQ administration courses, and some external candidates, attend weekly sessions to develop portfolios of evidence so that their prior learning can be assessed. The college has received funding from the West London TEC for a project to accredit the skills of unpaid workers, such as voluntary workers. A co-ordinator has recently been appointed to disseminate good practice. She supports staff in developing the accreditation of prior learning and in preparing for the relevant Training and Development Lead Body qualification.

32 The systems for identifying students' needs for extra learning support are not fully effective. All full-time students are expected to undergo a foundation skills assessment test as part of their induction, but approximately 1,100 out of a group of 1,500 were assessed this year. Teachers are encouraged to refer students to the learning support centres for help with communications, numeracy, information technology or study skills as they identify problems from coursework. However, in practice, most students who attend refer themselves. Many students are not receiving support from which they might benefit either through their own reluctance or because not all teaching staff refer students to the centres.

The centres are well resourced and staffed by specialist support teachers. Students have easy access to them through an appointments system or drop-in sessions. Students negotiate an action plan to address specific weaknesses, records are kept within the centres and reports are sent to tutors on progress and attendance.

33 Students are well supported on specialist courses in English for speakers of other languages. Interviews are held each week for these courses throughout the year, and applicants' language needs are assessed by specialist teachers to ensure that they are placed on suitable courses. Students assessed as having the appropriate skills are able to enter for a qualification in English as a foreign language. Many students with language needs are enrolled on mainstream courses. If their needs are identified, either through the initial screening tests or through their coursework, they are referred to the learning support centres for additional diagnostic testing. They are then provided with an extra hour a week of language teaching, usually in groups of six to eight.

34 Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is arranged by a co-ordinator who is informed of entrants who indicate special needs on their application forms. Students' needs are assessed during a guidance interview with a specialist teacher and an individual learning programme is agreed. Eighty-seven students with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enrolled on separate specialist courses, while 140 others are integrated within mainstream courses. A particular strength is the college's expertise in helping dyslexic students. Another is that a specialist technician can create Braille transcriptions and other forms of learning materials for the partially-sighted. There have been separate lines of management for those teaching students with special needs, staff teaching English for speakers of other languages and general learning support staff. This has made co-ordination difficult and has sometimes led to overlap of provision. Within the new management structure, these members of staff will all be managed by the director of learner support.

35 The customer services unit provides services to students on all three major sites. These services include welfare advice, personal counselling, career and educational guidance and assistance with childcare and personal finances. The unit administers the access and welfare funds. The unit promotes itself vigorously and about 1,000 students use its services each month. Liaison with teaching staff is good. An adequate level of careers guidance is provided by college advisers and staff from the borough careers service. Personal counselling is given by a team of qualified counsellors. The college provides help with childcare through grants towards the cost of registered childminders or nursery places for 35 children of students. Additional help with childcare has been made available over the past year to more than 40 students through European funding. Students on part-time day courses in English for speakers of other languages at Southall can use the creche facilities in the community

centres. All the services are carefully recorded, monitored and reviewed. Students expressed a high level of satisfaction with them.

36 Full-time students generally receive good support from personal tutors. At least one hour a week is allocated for tutor groups to meet. Each student is expected to receive at least three individual interviews annually to review progress against action plans. The tutors' handbook includes a timetable for the mandatory elements in tutorial programmes and information on college support systems. A team of senior tutors, each of whom monitors the work of about 10 tutors, provides good support in disciplinary matters. The senior tutors take action on identified problems. For example, they produced an explanatory booklet on records of achievement and provided training in the use of the supporting software. Tutors do not always attend training sessions provided on aspects of tutoring and some do not cover all the core elements in the tutorial programme. Although most students value the work of their tutors, there is poor attendance at some tutorials.

37 Students are able to make their views known through elected representatives on course forums and also through the students' association which has liaison officers at each site. The students' association produces bulletins encouraging students to bring issues to its attention, although little response is received. The association's main role is as an organiser of social and sporting events such as fashion shows, discos and badminton competitions. The association is supported by a member of staff who is also responsible for co-ordinating the college's recreation programme. This programme offers students the opportunity to participate, free of cost, in sporting and other activities, generally during the lunch hour and on Wednesday afternoons. Participation is well monitored. There were 592 members of the scheme in 1994-95. The football team is particularly successful: a college team has won the Middlesex under-19 football championship for 1995-96. Cricket is always oversubscribed in the summer. Participation by women students is low, although they are encouraged to attend a women-only session on one afternoon a week. The co-ordinator responds to requests from students regarding the activities provided each year and also helps them to organise events such as day trips to France.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

38 In 57 per cent of the 224 sessions inspected, the strengths clearly outweighed the weaknesses. However, the weaknesses clearly outweighed the strengths in 13 per cent of classes. The following table summarises the inspection grades awarded to the lessons inspected. Overall attendance in these lessons was 66 per cent.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		15	14	8	2	0	39
GCSE		1	5	2	2	0	10
Basic education		6	12	14	11	2	45
Access to higher education		0	13	1	0	0	14
GNVQ		4	8	13	1	1	27
NVQ		1	10	11	4	1	27
Other vocational*		12	21	16	5	1	55
Other non-vocational		1	4	2	0	0	7
Total		40	87	67	25	5	224

**includes BTEC and C&G courses.*

39 Teachers generally showed sound knowledge of their subjects and in many sessions established good relations with students which contributed to successful learning. Courses were generally well organised to cover the syllabus requirements, although schemes of work varied in quality from brief lists of topics to more detailed documents which indicated teaching methods, assessments and resources. In the best practice, the objectives of the sessions were shared with students and the lessons were structured to include opportunities for learning to be reinforced and checked.

40 There were some comprehensive schemes of work in science which provided a balance of theory, practical and tutorial work. Many courses were enhanced by visits, work experience, field courses and the use of information technology. Classroom activities were well managed and there was effective discipline during laboratory work. There was a wide range of assignments for the advanced GNVQ in science. On some courses, teachers did not always seek ways to encourage the participation of all students. In mathematics, students on GCE A level and access to higher education courses were well motivated. GCSE students were, in contrast, poorly motivated in many cases and this was made worse by the lack of variety in classroom activities and the limited use of visual aids. The time allocation for GCSE mathematics was low for the abilities of students enrolled and individual classes were too long for them to maintain concentration. The setting and marking of work was consistently good for GCE A level students, but should be improved for GCSE students. In computing, lessons were generally well planned and supported by handouts of good quality. In the better sessions, staff gave clear explanations and made effective use of question and answer techniques. In some lessons, students lost motivation because of the limited range of activities being undertaken, or because they were insufficiently involved in whole group work.

41 In the best sessions observed in horticulture and floristry, the enthusiastic approach of the staff increased the students' motivation. The staff made good use of their commercial experience in both theory and practical sessions and learning was supported by well-produced handouts. In some sessions, teachers managed time poorly and did not always check that students understood the work. In some instances, teachers provided insufficient feedback on marked work. Not enough use was made of visual display on some courses.

42 In construction, the teaching and learning methods observed were varied. Independent learning was encouraged and there were some good supporting materials. In the better sessions, the work challenged students' abilities and their understanding was tested. In some workshop sessions, students were not well managed. In the craft theory and practical activity classes, the pace of the work was too slow. Some schemes of work were inadequate, failing to link practical work to the underpinning theoretical knowledge. A good feature of the NVQ programmes was the regular testing and assessment of students' competence.

43 The teaching in engineering was generally effective, although there is scope for increasing the range of teaching methods used. Most staff were supportive of less able students in their teaching methods. Practical assignments were well designed. Assignments on GNVQ courses were clearly explained to students and well supported with documentation. The computer-aided design facility offered a flexible approach to study which was appreciated by students, especially adult students. Effective use was made of the learning resource centre. In some sessions, course handouts were out of date or contained inaccurate information and topics were poorly introduced.

44 In business studies, the sessions observed were well prepared. In the better sessions, students were encouraged to participate and course content was linked to students' personal and commercial experience. In some classes, there were prolonged periods when students' activities were confined to listening and note taking. In some instances, the pace of teaching was slow and few opportunities were provided for discussion. In office systems, most lessons were well planned, competently taught and supported by well-produced learning materials. Staff demonstrated a caring approach which was much appreciated by the students. There was good reinforcement of basic skills, particularly in English. Keyboarding skills were neglected for some students on modular programmes. There were inadequate opportunities for real work experience within the college, although staff provided simulated alternatives.

45 The quality of teaching on health and community care courses was good and sessions contained a variety of activities. Marking of written work was consistent, prompt and generally constructive. The theme of equality of opportunity featured strongly in course content. In one session, students of six nationalities worked in small groups, comparing their own

experiences of early education. This task drew successfully on the cultural diversity of the group. The language used in some course materials was difficult for less able students. In some instances, the work was too easy for more able students. Assessment and verification on GNVQ courses should be developed further to improve consistency. Assignments in the application of number did not always meet GNVQ requirements.

46 On courses in art and design, performing arts and media the most successful teaching styles offered choices and responsibility to students, encouraging them to make their own way through a project. In some instances, however, the teaching was pitched at too high a level and some students needed more direction.

47 In modern foreign and community languages, the standard of teaching was good. Schemes of work allowed students to influence some aspects of their courses. GCE A level courses were well planned. There was rigorous assessment of coursework and good practice in examination preparation. Extensive use was made of the language being learned in the lessons observed, although in some beginners' groups there was unnecessary use of English. Many teachers used a variety of methods to address the varying levels of ability within their groups, but on part-time courses only a limited range of teaching aids was used. Adult students make good use of the learning resource centre, but younger students are not attending for the hours required. In English as a foreign language, enthusiastic teachers had worked co-operatively to produce course and lessons plans and teaching was of a high standard. There was regular setting and thorough marking of homework. In the lessons seen, good use was made of handouts and audio-taped material. In one beginners' class, the teacher played an extract from a popular music tape and supported this with a handout containing short, written prompts to develop aural skills. The students responded with interest and a discussion in English ensued on musical preferences.

48 The GCE A level English literature course was well planned and allowed for thematic study across a range of texts. Literary techniques and study skills were systematically introduced. In the best practice seen at GCE A level and GCSE, effective use was made of structured approaches and reinforcement through note making. In less successful sessions, some students did not participate constructively. In history, psychology and sociology there were coherent programmes of study, although schemes of work varied in quality. The treatment of contentious issues was balanced and careful in the sessions seen. There was scope for teachers to extend the difficulty of the work, particularly for the more able students. In some classes, there was too much reliance on note taking when the use of handouts would have been more effective. The marking of students' work was fair and there were some good examples of written guidance to students on how to improve their work. In other instances, the guidance was too brief. On access to higher education courses in humanities, lively,

stimulating teaching provided students with a sound knowledge base. Teachers employed a range of methods and emphasised the development of study skills. A good rapport between staff and students enhanced the learning and confidence of students, although some students did not participate in classroom activities as fully as they might have done.

49 In adult basic education and the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there was some high-quality teaching which was well planned and appropriate to the needs of the students. There were some well-presented materials to reinforce learning, especially for students with severe learning difficulties. There were good learning facilities on open access. Good use was made of workshop sessions in which there were differential activities to suit students with different levels of ability. However, some teaching methods and materials were not adapted to the students' needs. Some courses or their components were not assessed or accredited. The use of education support assistants and volunteers in the classroom was not always managed effectively.

50 Courses in English for speakers of other languages were well planned by committed staff and there was some high-quality teaching. The better sessions were taught at a lively pace and students were well motivated. Students had clear personal targets and received positive feedback and high levels of support from teachers. Displays of students' work promoted a positive learning environment. However, in some sessions teachers were poorly prepared and tasks were not set clearly. Teachers were not always able to deal effectively with students of different abilities and subject matter or teaching materials were not always suitable for particular students. Course content on some higher level courses did not focus sufficiently on the language required for academic or vocational purposes.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

51 Most students were well motivated, enthusiastic about their work and valued the relevance of their studies for possible careers or entry into higher education. In general, students responded well to their teachers and some achieved high standards in coursework and examinations. Many had acquired appropriate knowledge and practical skills and were able to apply these to a range of problems. In science, students confidently employed theoretical concepts in their experimental work and acquired appropriate laboratory skills. Students on media courses showed a high level of technical skill in the use of video cameras and television recording equipment. Students on NVQ courses in motor vehicle engineering demonstrated a high level of competence in workplace skills. On construction courses, most students carried out practical work competently. In GCE A level English, students demonstrated creative writing skills and a good grasp of the literary concepts and techniques they had been taught.

52 Most students were acquiring organisational and note-taking skills which allowed them to study effectively. Some students demonstrated good levels of skill in written and spoken English, but the progress of others in their chosen vocational area was hampered by difficulties in communication. For example, students on health and social care courses communicated well in a range of contexts, but the progress of some students on construction courses was hindered by weaknesses in reading and comprehension. Some students showed a good appreciation of the role of computers in storing, presenting and analysing data, and demonstrated competence in their use, but others had limited skills in the use of information technology.

53 Retention rates on courses vary widely. The college has set a target of 85 per cent of students on each course completing their studies. In 1994-95, 79 per cent of enrolments ended in completion of courses. All students completed their course on the BTEC national diploma in media studies, on some of the access programmes and on the BTEC national diploma in computer studies at the Acton site. In contrast, there were low retention rates on the NVQ in floristry course (38 per cent), on the GCSE English course (42 per cent) and on the GCSE mathematics course (61 per cent). Seventy-four per cent of the students on the GCE A level programme completed their course in 1994-95.

54 Examination results for vocational courses are variable across the college. Some compare favourably with national figures, but many are low. In 1995, 57 per cent of the 169 students aged 16 to 18 in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the tables published by the Department for Education and Employment were successful. This places the college in the bottom 10 per cent of further education sector colleges on this performance measure. This was lower than the figures of 86 per cent and 67 per cent achieved by students in 1994 and 1993, respectively. However, the majority of the college's vocational students are aged 19 or over. Pass rates on some courses were high. For example, all students passed the C&G autocad certificate course at Acton and the C&G NVQ level 2 in sports turf management. Pass rates on the same courses offered at different sites varied widely. Eighty-eight per cent of students passed the BTEC national diploma in computer studies at one site, but only 44 per cent at another. Pass rates were low in a number of courses in engineering, construction and computing. For example, only 33 per cent passed the C&G certificate in electronics servicing.

55 Pass rates at GCE A level are improving. Some 600 students entered for GCE A level examinations in 1994-95. The 188 students aged 16 to 18 scored, on average, 4.0 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college in the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1995 performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment. The 1995 figures for points score per entry were higher than those for 1994,

when students aged 16 to 18 scored, on average, 3.2 points per entry. In 1995, 74 per cent of the 180 students aged 19 or over taking GCE A level subjects were awarded a pass at grades A to E, and 44 per cent were awarded grades A to C. This compares favourably with average rates of 63 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively, for all further education colleges in England, excluding sixth form colleges.

56 In 1995, the pass rates in individual GCE A level subjects varied widely. In biology, chemistry, media studies and Urdu, students achieved pass rates of 90 per cent or over. In sociology, the pass rate for students aged 16 to 18 was 84 per cent, and 51 per cent of these students obtained grades A to C, as compared with average figures of 61 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively, for general further education colleges. Above average results were also achieved in mathematics, economics and French. In contrast, results in history, psychology and computer studies were below national averages. Results in law, where only 29 per cent passed, were well below national figures.

57 The college has carried out a substantial amount of work to assess how students perform at GCE A level in relation to their GCSE entry qualification. This analysis indicates that the proportion of students who did as well or better at GCE A level than might have been expected from their GCSE performance, rose from 45 per cent in 1994 to 56 per cent in 1995, accompanying the general improvement in pass rates.

58 In 1995, there were 1,080 entries in GCSE subjects. Twenty-nine per cent of the 680 entries by students aged 16 to 18 were awarded grades A to C as compared with a national figure of 37 per cent for general further education colleges. Of the 400 entries from students aged 19 and over, 41 per cent gained grades A to C, compared with a national figure of 60 per cent. Results in biology, French and Italian were higher than the national average. In English, 48 per cent of students aged 16 to 18 gained grades A to C, above the national figure of 44 per cent. By contrast, in mathematics, only 15 per cent of students aged 16 to 18 obtained grades A to C, below the national figure of 26 per cent

59 The college has recently begun to carry out systematic surveys of students' destinations. In 1995, 35 per cent of those students whose destinations were known went on to higher education, 23 per cent to other further education courses, 31 per cent went into employment and 11 per cent were unemployed. Comprehensive information on the destinations of students from particular courses was not always available for inspection. Among those available, the figures for the access programme showed that 84 per cent of students who completed the course went on to higher education. In contrast, progression from pre-access courses to access courses is relatively low. On the course offering general education with language support, for which the intended progression is into GCSE courses, only 59 per cent continued in further education. However, students frequently progress to the higher levels within the college's range of courses in English as a second language.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

60 The overall responsibility for quality assurance lies with a head of faculty who is supported by the academic standards subcommittee of the academic board. A clear policy has been established for the quality assurance of courses. This has led to a range of procedures designed to improve quality. Each course is subjected to an annual review and evaluation and it is planned that there will be a more comprehensive review of each course every three years. The college has recognised the need to extend its quality assurance system to include cross-college services, although policy and procedures have not yet been fully established. Several cross-college departments have introduced measures to improve the quality of the services which they provide. For example, the estates and services department has devised a range of performance standards for aspects of its work and managers monitor adherence to the standards in their own area of responsibility. Other cross-college areas would benefit from the development of similar quality assurance procedures.

61 GCE A level and GNVQ courses franchised to a local school are included in the college's annual review and evaluation procedures. There is close liaison between school and college staff. School staff attend course team and faculty meetings at the college and use the same schemes of work for GNVQ as college teams. Most of the school staff teaching on GNVQ courses have achieved Training and Development Lead Body assessor qualifications and there is a system of internal verification of assessment. Course teams at the school need to gain more experience in completing the formal documentation which the college's quality assurance procedures require and in carrying out the review and evaluation process.

62 The annual course review and evaluation procedure includes an analysis of enrolments, retention and students' achievements in relation to targets. There is a review of some aspects of teaching and the promotion of learning; an assessment of the effectiveness of course team management arrangements; and an action plan to improve quality. The extent to which course teams critically evaluate the way in which students are taught is limited. Specialist inspectors identified a number of weaknesses in teaching and learning. There is a need for course teams to use the annual review process to focus more sharply on the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods. The college's staff-development unit has produced resource material to enable teachers to assess their own performance. This could form the basis for an analysis of teaching by course teams.

63 Faculty boards of study and the academic standards committee of the academic board seek to ensure that course teams carry out the annual review and evaluation process in a rigorous and detailed manner. The faculty boards scrutinise the review and evaluation reports and have sometimes referred them back to course teams for further information or clarification. The reports, together with summaries prepared by the faculty

boards, are then scrutinised by the academic standards committee. This group reports to the academic board on the overall quality of the provision and on general issues arising from the review and evaluation process.

64 Overall, the quality and comprehensiveness of the 1994-95 review and evaluation documentation show a significant improvement over the previous year. Some reports clearly demonstrate a team approach to the management and development of the course. They analyse experiences over the year in a rigorously self-critical way, and indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and the actions designed to improve overall quality. Action plans include details of those responsible for ensuring that action is taken and target dates. Despite the improvements which have taken place, a substantial number of reports are still compiled in a cursory manner and include little detailed analysis of the quality of the course. The academic standards committee recognises that action planning by course teams could be substantially improved.

65 The college draws extensively on the views of students when considering developments in courses. There are regular institution-wide surveys to measure how satisfied students are with their courses and the facilities offered by the college. Some course teams issue questionnaires to find out in more detail what students think of particular aspects of their course. Student forums are organised regularly by each programme area. These are well attended and elicit views on a broad range of course specific and more general issues.

66 While all courses have been subject to the annual course review and evaluation process, the procedures for the approval of new courses contained in the policy on quality assurance have been applied less consistently. Some courses introduced over the past two years have not undergone the full process of internal validation and approval required by the policy.

67 The staff-development programme for the college reflects the priorities established in the strategic plan. Particular attention is focused on improving customer care procedures amongst support and administrative staff; making best use of the college's extensive learning resources; developing GNVQ and NVQ programmes; enabling staff to gain appropriate assessor and verifier awards; and providing management training for supervisors and middle managers. The staff training budget for 1995-96, excluding staff costs for managing the programme, is approximately £150,000 which is 1 per cent of the college's budget.

68 Programme area and service managers produce annual training plans. These incorporate individual training needs identified through the annual performance review process, introduced in 1994, which applies to full-time staff. The process does not include classroom observations of teachers. Some staff-development activities are identified through the course review and evaluation process. A training panel, which includes academic and support staff, prioritises staff-development needs and

decides upon a strategy for meeting them. An extensive array of training programmes is organised. There are sound arrangements to induct new teaching staff into the college. Staff who do not already possess a teaching qualification are required to undertake a programme of teacher training during their first year.

69 There has been steady progress towards gaining Investors in People status. The college wishes to ensure that its annual performance review process becomes fully established and accepted by staff before Investors in People accreditation is sought.

70 The college's charter is clear and fulfils most of the requirements of the national charter for further education. However, there are few specific commitments in relation to teaching and learning and to the needs of employers. In view of the substantial number of students whose first language is not English, there would be value in publishing the college's charter and complaints procedure in community languages as well as English.

71 The college has produced a self-assessment report on its operation under each of the inspection framework headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. Although the report is brief, in line with the guidelines, and identifies some strengths and weaknesses confirmed subsequently in the inspection, it does not address important issues such as the effectiveness of the course review process, the strength of the partnership with the West London TEC and the quality of cross-site co-ordination in some subjects. A self-critical stance is adopted towards those aspects of the college's work covered by the report.

RESOURCES

Staffing

72 Of the 448 teaching staff, 179 are on full-time or fractional contracts, and 269 are part time. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, the weaknesses in teaching on some courses demonstrate that the teaching staff resource is not being used to its full effect. Fifty-one per cent of the teaching staff have a degree or higher degree and 70 per cent have a teaching qualification. Most others have relevant craft or technical qualifications and many teachers have significant commercial or industrial experience. The achievement of Training and Development Lead Body assessor and verifier qualifications in some curriculum areas has been slow, for example in health and social care, computing and the sciences. Some teachers lack recent relevant industrial or commercial experience. Part-time teachers make a significant contribution to the work of many programme areas. However, in languages and in some computing provision, the reliance on part-time staff sometimes causes additional administrative work for full-time course co-ordinators. Some staffing problems have also been caused by difficulties

in recruiting teachers with expertise in the scientific aspects of health and social care and with experience in working with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

73 A good level of support is provided by qualified technical, library and other support staff. The college employs 22 full-time technicians. Professional library staff work in each of the three main learning resource centres and information technology support staff assist staff and students across the college. The college has developed new personnel policies and procedures since incorporation. A number of key support functions, including estates, finance and personnel, are managed by staff with professional qualifications and experience. Analyses of age profiles, length of service and staff turnover assist in the planning of staffing needs.

Equipment/learning resources

74 The college has invested heavily in developing new learning resource centres at each of its three main sites. The centres are well equipped with books and other resources, including information technology. The centres have adequate spaces for individual and group study. By comparison, the library at Norwood Hall is small and poorly stocked. Links between learning resource centre staff and programme areas are variable.

75 Students have good access to a wide range of high specification information technology equipment, both in the learning resource centres and in open access rooms. This reflects the college's strategic commitment to the development of information technology as a central resource. The strategy embraces the role of information technology in teaching as a key learning resource and in the management of the college as a means of efficient administration. The total network includes some 600 personal computer workstations, with modern software and peripheral equipment. There is a ratio of 7.6 full-time equivalent students to every workstation. The college is committed to a continuous programme of upgrading and replacing information technology equipment. Capital expenditure since incorporation, including computers, software and special projects, has been £1.7 million.

76 There is a good range of teaching equipment in most classrooms. Most rooms have whiteboards, screens and overhead projectors, and there is good access to audio-visual equipment. Some specialist accommodation is very well equipped. For example, multi-purpose media and performing arts facilities have been developed at Ealing Green; biology, chemistry and physics laboratories have been re-equipped; and new electrical installation and plumbing workshop facilities have been provided. Some engineering and construction workshop equipment, however, needs replacement. The business training offices at Acton and Southall need improved equipment to provide realistic work environments. The college should also assess the need for industrial-standard computers in art and design, and develop an improved range of materials at the Acton site for courses in English for speakers of other languages.

Accommodation

77 All sites contain a range of attractive, comfortable and well-furnished general and specialist teaching rooms, which are well maintained and in good decorative order. These include a large studio theatre and television recording studio, a design studio at Norwood Hall, accommodation used for courses in English for speakers of other languages and modern science laboratories at Ealing. A number of teaching rooms, however, await modernisation or refurbishment. Classrooms adjacent to the construction workshops are drab and uninspiring; the training office in Southall is cold and uninviting; and the Woodlands Annexe on the Acton site is in poor decorative order.

78 The accommodation strategy is clearly linked to the strategic plan and contains detailed information on the size and state of buildings, an assessment of future space requirements and a summary of development proposals. The college has made imaginative use of rooms to provide more flexible teaching accommodation. Utilisation remains low, the college having inherited a stock of buildings larger than its initial needs. The college has made arrangements to ensure a secure and welcoming environment. Work undertaken to improve access for wheelchair users includes the installation of ramps, lifts, chair lifts and toilet facilities throughout the main sites. A few areas remain inaccessible, but appropriate measures are taken to ensure that students using wheelchairs are not precluded from participating in lessons.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

79 Ealing Tertiary College is making good progress towards achieving its mission. The strengths of the college are:

- a wide range of vocational, academic and adult education courses, responding to the needs of the community
- strong, effective governance and good management
- senior managers with a clear vision of the college's future direction and an operational strategy for achieving it
- effective arrangements for enrolment and induction
- good personal and learning support for students
- committed teaching staff
- improving GCE A level results and some good results on other courses
- good procedures and some good practice in quality assurance
- good resources in information technology.

80 If the college is to continue to raise its standards it should:

- improve the co-ordination of some courses between sites
- improve the referral of students to the learning support centres, and the monitoring of their attendance and progress in the centres by tutors
- improve the quality of teaching and learning on a number of courses
- improve attendance and retention rates on some courses
- improve GCSE results and results on some GCE A level and vocational courses
- develop an increased focus on teaching and learning within the quality assurance process
- improve teaching equipment for some courses.

FIGURES

-
- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)

 - 2 Percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)

 - 3 Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)

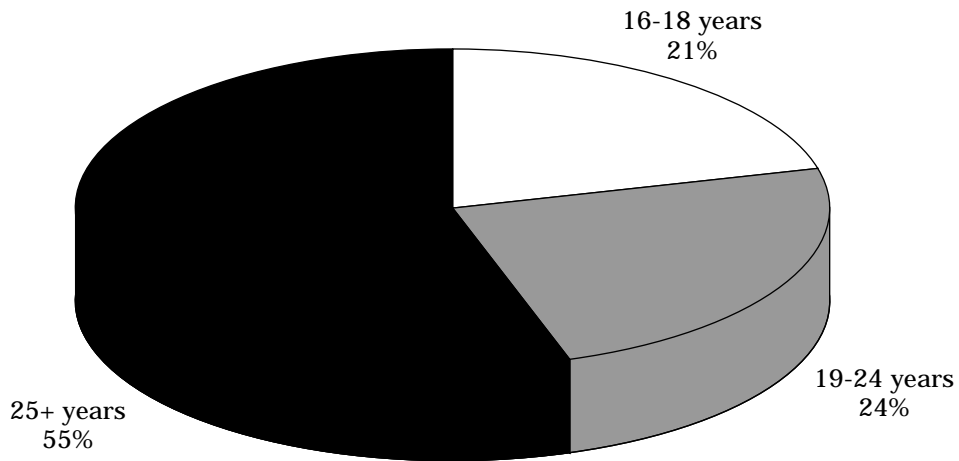
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

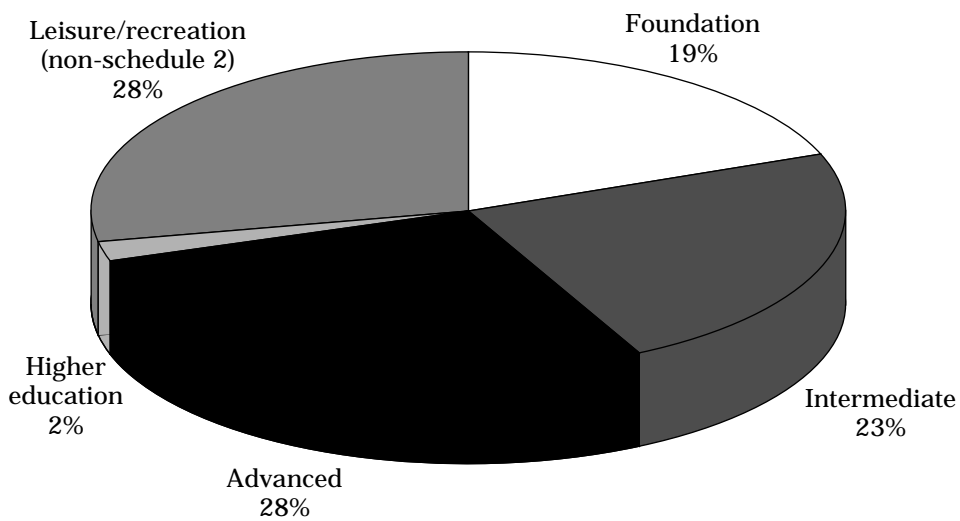
Ealing Tertiary College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 8,095

Figure 2

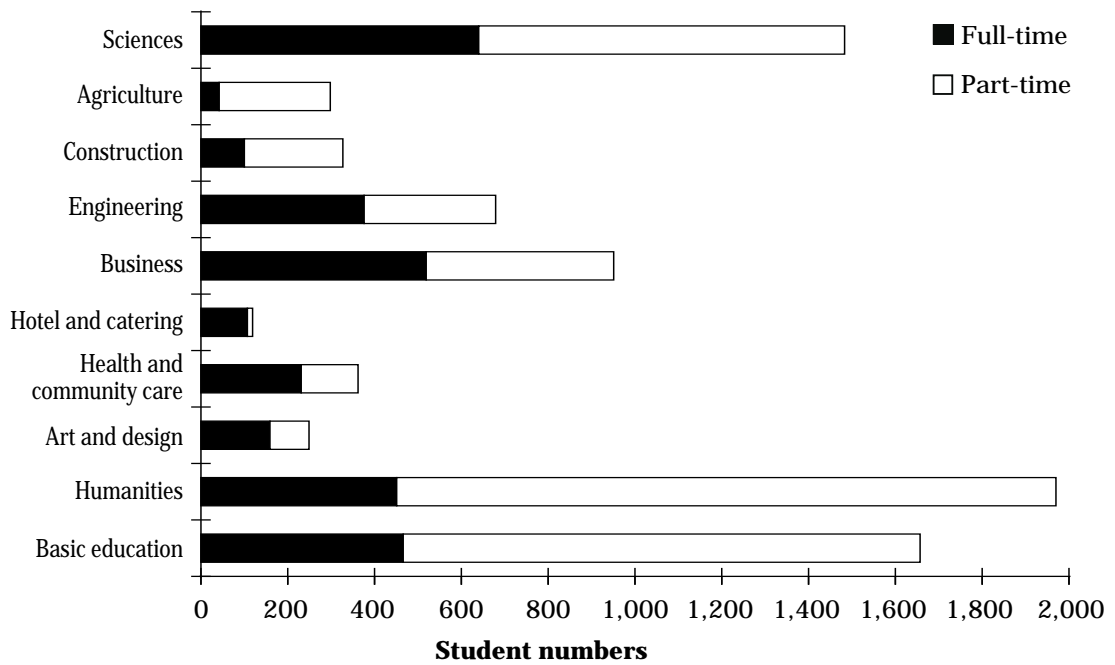
Ealing Tertiary College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 8,095

Figure 3

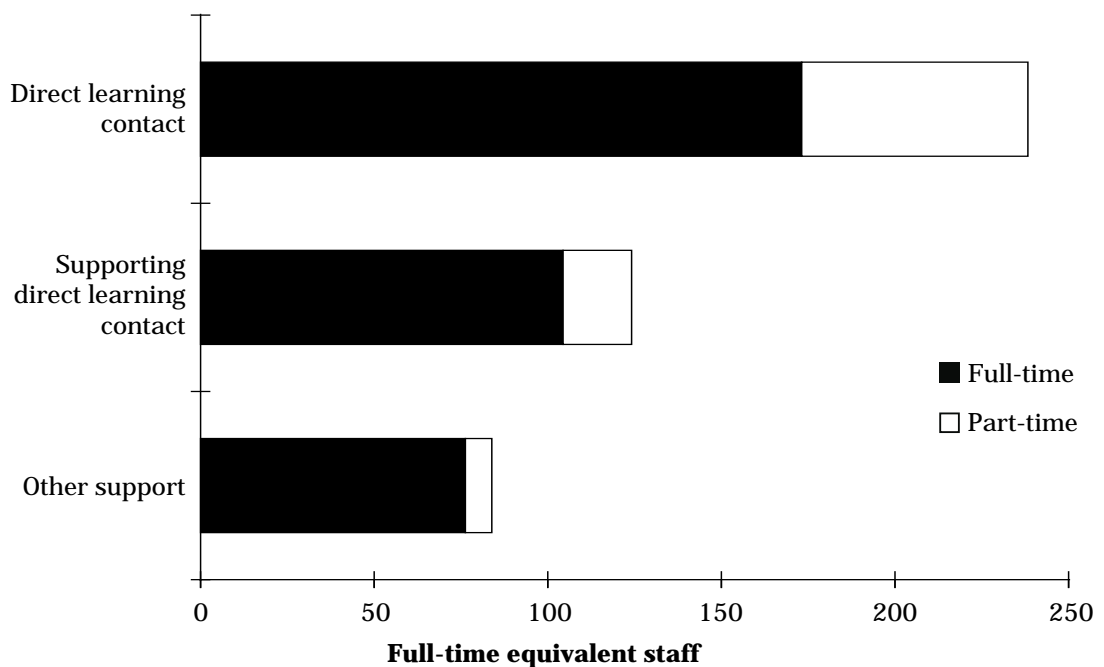
Ealing Tertiary College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 8,095

Figure 4

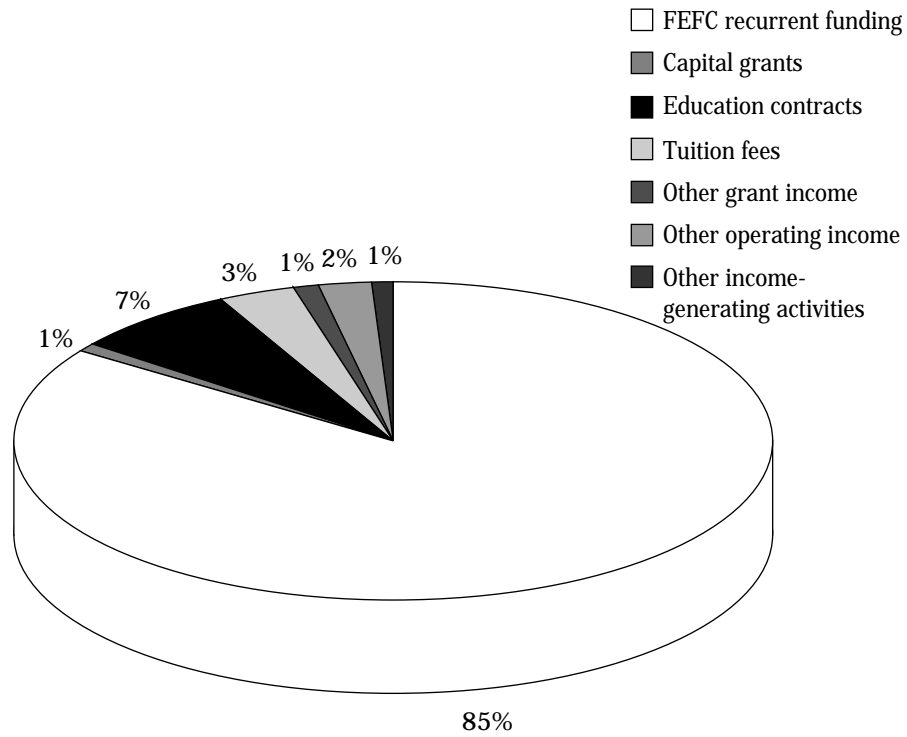
Ealing Tertiary College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 446

Figure 5

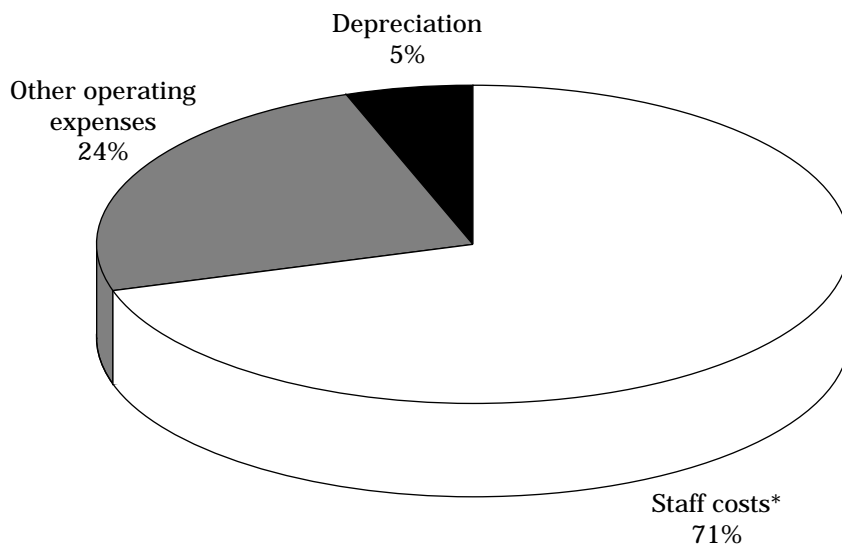
Ealing Tertiary College: income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Income: £14,661,000

Figure 6

Ealing Tertiary College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £14,651,000

**includes cost of restructuring.*

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