

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education

May 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 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.

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.*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 55/95

GUILDFORD COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected November 1994 – January 1995

Summary

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education is the major provider of further education in West Surrey. It offers an extensive range of courses including GNVQ programmes and courses which afford opportunities for progression to higher education. The college markets its courses effectively. There is an effective board of governors. The college is well managed and has undergone major restructuring. Staff are well qualified and committed to ensuring that new arrangements continue to meet the needs of their students. There is good teaching in most subjects. Opportunities for study are flexible and are supported by well-organised work experience arrangements. A high proportion of students go on to higher education or employment related to their studies. There is a large amount of information technology and computing equipment but students' access to it could be improved. The modern library is extensively used by staff and students. The estate is well managed. The college should complete its reorganisation plans; improve the quality of management information; develop further its quality assurance procedures; improve students' attendance, retention rates and examination results in some areas of work; address inconsistencies in the quality of induction and tutorial provision; and improve the teaching of core skills.

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		3
Quality assurance		3
Resources:	staffing	1
	equipment/learning resources	2
	accommodation	2

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science and mathematics	2	Beauty and hairdressing	2
		Health and community care	2
Construction	2	Art and design	2
Engineering	3	Humanities	3
		Teacher training and counselling	1
Business and professional studies	3	Basic education	2
Leisure and tourism	1		
Hospitality and catering	2		

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INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of Guildford College of Further and Higher Education, Surrey, took place in three stages. The college enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the 1994 autumn term and specialist subjects were inspected between 7 and 18 November 1994. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected between 23 and 26 January 1995. Fourteen inspectors took part in the inspection for a total of 78 days. Inspectors visited 219 classes and examined a representative sample of students' work. They had access to college documentation for all phases of the inspection. Discussions took place with members of the corporation, the senior management team, teachers, students, support staff, parents, employers, a representative of the Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), careers counsellors and members of the college guidance service.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Guildford College of Further and Higher Education is a large general further education college. It celebrated its golden jubilee in May 1991. It is situated on the north side of the county town of Surrey, 30 miles south west of London. There are five other further education colleges in the area: East Surrey, Crawley, Farnborough, Brooklands and North East Surrey. In addition, there are eight sixth form colleges and Merrist Wood agricultural college within the locality. The University of Surrey is within two miles of the college.

3 At the time of the inspection there were 3,165 full-time and 4,266 part-time and evening students. Their age range was from 15 to 83 years. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2 and enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area in figure 3. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. In 1993-94, the college grew by 7 per cent which was below the growth target of 8 per cent agreed with the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). It is likely to achieve its targets in 1994-95. The majority of students come from the Guildford area. About a quarter come from nearby districts and the towns of Farnham, Godalming, Woking, Dorking and Cranleigh. Some travel from as far afield as London, the south coast and Kent. There are over 40 grant-maintained, independent and 11-16 schools near the college, and five schools in Guildford itself which have sixth forms. The local participation rate in education for those aged 16 is well above the national average, at 86 per cent. The introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) by schools and the entry of more institutions into further education is eroding the college's traditional market. It is now giving priority to the needs of adults.

4 Small and medium-size businesses predominate in Surrey. Nearly 90 per cent of local companies have fewer than 20 full-time staff. Most local firms are service based with skilled, managerial and professional workforces. The unemployment rate for Surrey is 6.6 per cent, the lowest in the south-east. Unemployment is highest for those aged between 40 and 59. The general prosperity of Guildford and its hinterland is marred by pockets of deprivation; there are areas of the town in which 50 per cent of the working population are unemployed.

5 The college has revised its mission statement to reflect its new circumstances. It intends to satisfy fully the needs of its customers and the community for individual and organisational development through vocational education and training. It is intensifying its work with employers and the community.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

6 Guildford College of Further and Higher Education offers a broad and flexible curriculum of over 250 programmes of study. The range and mode of delivery of its courses have been diversified to accommodate changing lifestyles and the need for adults to retrain and update their skills. Employment trends are reflected in the range of programmes offered to 16-20 year olds. Students are able to mix subjects at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) with units from GNVQs and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

7 There is a wide range of vocational and academic programmes. Vocational courses including GNVQ, NVQ, higher national diploma and degree programmes, constitute 82 per cent of the college curriculum. GCE A levels are offered in 34 subjects and GCSE in 19 subjects. They constitute 13 per cent and 5 per cent of the provision, respectively. A small range of GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects is offered. The college was in the forefront of the introduction of GNVQ programmes and participated in the pilot schemes. Currently, 10 GNVQ programmes run at intermediate level: art and design, business, built environment, catering, engineering, health and social care, information technology, leisure and tourism, media studies, and science. There are nine programmes at advanced level and this year two foundation courses have started in art and design, and leisure and tourism. The NVQ programme is comprehensive and covers all levels. Seven courses can be taken at level 1, 32 at level 2, and 10 at level 3. The Association of Accounting Technicians diploma may be taken at level 4 and a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) management diploma at level 5. In some areas, such as motor vehicle engineering, the introduction of NVQ has not been smooth and more appropriate methods of delivering the course and of encouraging employers' participation should be found.

8 To meet the needs of its students, the college is making the delivery of its curriculum more responsive. All students are offered the opportunity to take GCSE mathematics through workshops, choosing a time to suit themselves. This year for the first time, GCE A levels and GCSE can be taken by distance learning. However, the service is not yet fully established, with only two students enrolled for GCE A level and three for GCSE. The college is innovative in the delivery of its GNVQ programmes in half-yearly semesters. Additional units are taken as an integral part of the GNVQ programmes and where students have completed in three semesters they undertake further related studies in the fourth. For example, students taking the GNVQ in art and design are offered the opportunity to study GCE A level in media studies or photography. Some courses leading to professional qualifications are offered by distance learning with tutorial

support by telephone and at the college. Eleven students have enrolled for the Institute of Legal Executives membership course and six for the Association of Accounting Technicians qualification. To support these initiatives the college plans to open its library and resource centre on Saturday mornings from March this year.

9 The college organised its formal links with employers through advisory committees. This was found to be ineffective and the committees were disbanded during a general reorganisation of the college's curriculum two years ago. No other formal structure has yet replaced them; however, some programme teams have involved representatives from industry in their planning processes. Where this has taken place it has been effective. There is a college enterprise manager who works with outside agencies and companies to mount short courses for them throughout the year. In areas such as art and design, practising professionals work as part-time lecturers and set projects for students which relate to their own professional work. Some other divisions offer extensive work placements.

10 The college is seen by the TEC as progressive. The two organisations are working together closely on the local 'Learning Curve' project to attract adults back into education. The TEC is supportive of the college in establishing an outreach centre in Woking. It will serve Asian women who cannot travel far from their community and other groups requiring business courses.

11 The college's relationships with schools are constrained by the intensity of competition for 16 year old students. There is a schools liaison officer who visits them regularly and arranges for pupils to come into the college to sample student life. There is no formal pattern of partner schools through which students are ensured of progression to the college. The college makes special arrangements to work with some schools. These include franchising a nursery nursing course to one school and taking in pupils with behavioural problems from another to give them experience of vocational training.

12 The college has useful links with higher education. These include a foundation course in engineering from Surrey University and a higher national diploma in computer studies franchised from Portsmouth University. There is an innovative degree course in construction management, franchised from Nottingham Trent University, which is taught by distance learning. Kingston University approves adult access courses, degree and diploma courses in health studies, a diploma in management and a certificate in post-compulsory education.

13 The college has a well-defined marketing policy. There is a member of staff with responsibility for marketing, who works with external consultants. The marketing section responds well to customers and is redesigning the college prospectus after a survey revealed that students were dissatisfied with it. To date, insufficient consideration has been given to the content of the prospectus to make it understandable by students with learning difficulties. A wide variety of advertising outlets is used, including the local newspaper, a mobile advice centre, local radio and posters. Publicity posters are also sent abroad. Marketing training sessions are organised for all staff.

14 The college provides valuable opportunities for students with moderate and severe learning difficulties. Students are grouped according to need and ability and there is scope for progression in the college. However, the number of students going on to mainstream courses is very limited with only six out of 70 doing so last year. There is an equal opportunities policy and staff are keen to teach in a way which is non-discriminatory. The operation of the policy is reviewed annually by senior management in conjunction with the union representatives.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

15 The college has an effective board of governors. There are 16 members. Nine, including the TEC nominee, are from business backgrounds and three are co-opted. There are two members of the college staff, one student representative, and the principal. At the time of the inspection, there were two vacancies for business members. Members of the corporation bring a range of experience which is beneficial to the college. All members are aware of government policies for the further education sector and this has served them well in establishing an appropriate framework for the college's operations. The chairman and vice-chairman provide firm and prudent leadership. With the principal, the chairman has helped to preserve a network of general further education colleges in Surrey, whose members meet regularly to discuss matters of common interest. The board has established an appropriate committee structure. There is a well-planned calendar of meetings and agendas are carefully prepared. There are effective procedures to ensure that the board is able to monitor the progress of the college. The board has also initiated an evaluation of its own performance.

16 There is an effective partnership between the corporation board and the principal, and an acceptance of the distinction between governance and management. The board is supportive of the principal and the senior management team. The chairman of the corporation appraises the principal, establishes targets to be achieved and visits the college regularly to monitor the progress made in fulfilling them.

17 The college has undergone two major reorganisations in the last two years to make it more effective in delivering its curriculum and to achieve essential financial savings. Restructuring is not complete but the pattern for senior management is now set. The principal provides strong leadership of an able and dedicated team, comprising three associate principals, responsible for curriculum, resources and student services, the finance and personnel directors, and the clerk to the corporation. The senior management team works well and holds properly recorded fortnightly meetings. Each associate principal has a well-defined portfolio of responsibilities. Line management in the seven curriculum divisions is still to be reviewed and there is some anxiety about this in the college. Associate principals work closely with heads of division. The duties of the section leaders who report to heads of divisions vary widely and the principles determining the middle management organisation are unclear. There are job descriptions for senior posts but others are still being reviewed and updated.

18 The first strategic plan was largely produced by the principal and senior management team. The process has since been widened to include all staff. There is a college planning group chaired by the principal which works to guidelines determined by the corporation. It prepares a draft plan for the corporation planning committee and subsequent approval by the full board. Divisional and unit objectives relate well to corporate objectives and annual operating plans for all areas are monitored.

19 College resources are deployed effectively. Capital allocations are systematically related to college priorities. There is limited delegation of budgets to associate principals, the heads of divisions and managers of support units. The college is moving towards a bidding system for the allocation of funds to replace the existing system which is based on historical criteria. A distribution formula related to course units is being developed. The college should consider further delegation of budgets to increase flexibility and efficiency without sacrificing appropriate control. Monthly management accounts are provided for all budget holders. The college's income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £20.14 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17.

20 The membership of the academic board ensures that academic and support staff at all levels are appropriately represented. Agendas and supporting papers are efficiently prepared. Meetings are briskly chaired but members have ample opportunity to express their views. The senior management team takes full account of the advice of the academic board.

21 There are policies for health and safety, equal opportunities and student support. Responsibility for their implementation has been clearly allocated. The college charter includes appropriate reference to equal opportunities. The health and safety policy has recently been reviewed, but staff are not yet sufficiently aware of their responsibilities. The procedure for dealing with complaints from students is working successfully.

22 The majority of staff consider that communication in the college is good. Minutes of all corporation and committee meetings are published and are readily available in the library. There are termly briefings for all staff given by the chairman and vice-chairman of the corporation board, and the principal. The good relations between managers and students are helped by having a sabbatical student union president. The president is an ex-officio student member of the corporation board and the academic board.

23 Management information is fragmented and in some instances difficult to obtain. Data sometimes vary according to whether they are obtained centrally or from divisions. Student examination results are not integrated with retention data so that success is hard to measure accurately. The college uses a variety of computer software to assemble its data, and this prevents managers from having access to a coherent database. These are significant shortcomings in so large a college.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

24 Student recruitment procedures are effective, and there are good links between the college customer service unit and the curriculum teams. Prospective students are informed about the college and its courses through open days, taster programmes and the careers service. Advisory interviews are available. Interviewers work to a checklist and are given guidelines on procedures, including those for referring students to specialist tutors or to the learning support adviser. Recruitment continues throughout the year and the college meets its target of offering a place within four weeks of application. The college uses questionnaires to provide information on students who fail to enrol, but it does not evaluate its recruitment and enrolment procedures.

25 Induction programmes for full-time students are of mixed quality, although they all provide an introduction to important aspects of the college. Student reaction to induction was mixed. Some students felt that they received too much information too quickly; others felt the process was too long and wanted to get on with their courses. Late entrants who miss induction have to find out information for themselves. One student, following his third consecutive course at the college, had been inducted three times, whilst a mature student remained unaware of the information technology workshop until his second term. The effectiveness of induction for part-time students varies markedly between programme areas. The college should consider establishing and publishing a minimum entitlement for induction.

26 Accreditation of students' prior learning is being developed and some staff are receiving training in this. Several sections are making good progress; for example, 10 business administration students are being assessed for exemption from part of the curriculum. Arrangements for transferring students between courses are effective. Students are guided by tutors and careers officers. Students and parents praise the ease of transfer and the understanding and support they receive from college staff.

27 Regular tutorials are claimed as a feature of all college programmes, but their quantity and quality vary between curriculum areas. Students' perceptions of the value of tutorials are mixed, and some full-time students claim that they have had no tutorials. Where there is a regular tutorial service, it is effective and well thought of by students. The staff's perception of tutorial work is equally varied. Not all full-time and part-time staff feel equipped to be tutors. Fifty-eight staff were helped with their tutoring skills last year and this staff-development process is continuing. The recording of work in tutorials is patchy.

28 There is a strong student services team which provides a range of advice on accommodation, finance, health, counselling, learning support, careers, social and sports activities, and nursery provision. There is also a college chaplain. Student services staff play a prominent role at induction and at other events early in the academic year, but some students remain unaware of the range of services on offer. Students have access to two trained counsellors who assist both staff and students. Part-time students use the service rarely, mainly because they are not aware of it. Most of the

students who have visited counsellors have done so on their own initiative. Careers advice is readily available either with or without appointments and college careers staff maintain good links with external advisory and welfare agencies. The careers officer is monitoring the effectiveness of the service through a newly-developed student questionnaire, although this is not linked to the college's quality assurance procedures. Access to information on careers is being improved through additional databases in the study skills centre.

29 Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit screening for all full-time students is co-ordinated by a learning support adviser. Students whose core skills fall below foundation level are offered support either on an individual basis or through learning support workshops. At present, these screening tests are not related to vocational areas and this may reduce their reliability. Students whose skills are above foundation level but who still have difficulty with literacy or numeracy receive no support. Thirty-eight students attend timetabled sessions, whilst a further 21 use the drop-in facilities. Provision is adequate for these modest numbers. The learning support adviser co-ordinates applications from students to examination boards requesting that their special circumstances are taken into account. Thirty-three students with specific learning difficulties, four with physical difficulties and seven with hearing impairments, have currently made such applications.

30 Work experience placements are centrally organised by employer liaison officers who monitor all placements except those for which specialist staff are required. This is an important initiative which ensures that there is a single approach to each employer and helps in tracking students' progress during placements. Employers speak enthusiastically about these arrangements; they praise the quality of student work and the effective communications with the college. However, the service is not formally evaluated to assess its benefits against the cost.

31 Every student who enrolls on a course becomes a member of the students' union which is led by a sabbatical president, elected each year. The union has been selected by the National Union of Students as a model for further education in the south east of England. The union arranges fund-raising events for charity and a limited number of social and sporting activities. A day nursery provides a year round facility, with 23 places available to students, staff and the public. The reduction of the starting age for primary education has resulted in some places being unfilled, but the college believes this is temporary.

32 Manual registers are used for monitoring student attendance but absences are not followed up in all areas. This laxity contributes to poor punctuality and attendance on a number of courses.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

33 Sixty-two per cent of the classes inspected had more strengths than weaknesses. Less than 6 per cent of classes had more weaknesses than strengths. The following table shows the grades awarded to the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
Access to higher education		2	2	2	0	0	6
GCE AS/A level		2	16	14	3	0	35
Basic education		0	1	0	0	0	1
GCSE		0	2	2	1	0	5
GNVQ		9	23	10	2	1	45
NVQ		8	19	13	1	0	41
Other vocational		6	17	12	1	0	36
Higher education		3	8	6	0	0	17
Other		3	15	12	3	0	33
Total		33	103	71	11	1	219

34 The average level of attendance in the sessions inspected was 80 per cent. However, a mathematics class for first year BTEC national diploma in motor vehicle engineering started with only 22 per cent of the group, and increased to only 43 per cent by the end of the lesson; average attendance in GNVQ information technology classes was 62 per cent with some registers indicating a third to a half of the class were constantly missing; and there were other such examples of poor attendance across the college.

35 All study areas had comprehensive learning schemes which, in some cases, included contingency planning. In many classes, teachers ensured that earlier learning was appropriately consolidated before moving on to new topics, and there was good use of questioning to help students move from the known to the unknown. Most courses are carefully planned and staff share course aims and objectives with their students. Schemes of work are usually well written and many divisions are moving towards their own standard formats. However, there is little common practice between divisions. Most divisions have responded well to the changes demanded by NVQ and GNVQ programmes. There were good schemes of work for the part-time courses for the NVQ in catering, and for leisure and tourism courses. The college is trying to build a second language into much of its NVQ and GNVQ provision, but students are not enthusiastic.

36 Classes were well prepared. In most, students were encouraged to build upon their own experiences and teachers adapted their lessons accordingly. Good part-time staff often brought professional skills into classes; for example, the college nurse dealt with first-aid topics and a tutor in fine bookbinding showed examples of specialist techniques from eastern Europe. Work placements also helped students to combine theoretical learning with practical experience. Some simulated working environments failed to provide realistic conditions; for example, the college teaching restaurant had too few customers to give students the experience of working under pressure. Mature students often brought valuable insights to classes.

37 There are appropriate opportunities for students to work in groups, particularly on assignments and projects. However, many students receive insufficient guidance from staff to allow them to work effectively with others and to assess each other's contributions. Learning packs to support students working on their own were available in several areas. They were particularly good on electrical installation courses where students following an open-learning scheme were achieving 100 per cent pass rates.

38 Teachers employed a wide variety of teaching methods and usually made effective use of teaching aids. Overhead projectors and video facilities were available in most classroom and were well used. Videos of commercial quality had been made in the college to show construction processes. During a science GNVQ advanced practical class on sample analysis, students worked well by themselves from high-quality worksheets. Practical work was carried out safely and competently. Hygiene and safety standards were rigorously applied. In one case only, during a combustion experiment in science, was a breach of safety procedure observed during the inspection.

39 Most students' work was marked and returned promptly, although students on some vocational courses complained of having to wait several weeks to receive their work back. Assessments were fair and tutors' written comments were generally helpful but, in some cases, poor spelling was not corrected. Project briefs were well written and informative. They were set in an appropriate vocational context and included realistic deadlines for the submission of completed work. Motor vehicle engineering staff failed to ensure that students kept to the established deadlines for work.

40 In most lessons the pace of the work was effectively geared to students' abilities and students were appropriately challenged. There were mature working relationships between staff and students in most lessons. However, in some business studies classes the organisation of work was too informal and a number of students became restless and lost interest. In some motor vehicle classes, the pace of the work was too slow. Because breaks are not always timetabled, classes were disrupted by the late arrival of students who had taken an unofficial break. In some science classes, interest was maintained by tutors' deft touches of humour.

41 Students with physical disabilities were well taught. A catering student with impaired hearing was coping well with the course, and in hairdressing a lecturer used a radio microphone to communicate with her student. One course has been specially relocated in different accommodation to meet the needs of a student in a wheelchair who was unable to sit for long periods. Students with learning difficulties are helped in additional classes and tutorial sessions. There is a well-established separate specialist course which provides a continuing education programme for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Only 9 per cent of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are integrated into mainstream courses.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

42 The majority of students enjoy their work. Most students are able to develop appropriate numeracy and literacy skills. However, students' progress in acquiring core skills is not always assessed effectively by the course teams. Students do not always develop or maintain information technology skills. The college has an impressive number of computers for students' use, but students assert that access to them is often difficult.

43 In 1993, student retention rates for most GCSE subjects were over 85 per cent. In 1994, rates were lower in 11 out of 19 subjects and in some subjects, including biology, mathematics, physics and psychology retention rates fell by over 30 per cent. In 1993, retention rates in GCE A level subjects fell below 85 per cent in only nine out of 31 subjects and in 1994 they were below 85 per cent in only four out of 34 subjects.

44 In 1993, 401 students entered GCSE examinations. The average pass rate for entries achieving grades A-C was 37 per cent. The pass rates in most of the 14 subjects taken by students were below the national average for those subjects, although there was a good pass rate of 80 per cent in psychology and 100 per cent in mathematics. In 1994, a total of 392 students entered GCSE examinations. The average pass rate at grades A-C was marginally lower than the previous year, at 36 per cent. In 10 of the 19 subject examinations entered, pass rates were below 40 per cent. The pass rate was particularly low in biology (22 per cent), English literature (14 per cent), geography (8 per cent), health studies (14 per cent) and physics (21 per cent).

45 In 1993, a total of 1,137 students were entered for GCE A level examinations. The average pass rate for students achieving grades A-E was 68 per cent, which was higher than the provisional national average of 66 per cent for sector colleges other than sixth form colleges. Students achieved pass rates well above national averages in accounting, biology, business studies, English language and literature, history, mathematics, physics, political studies and psychology. There were poor results in computing (50 per cent), English literature (45 per cent), and geography (51 per cent). In 1994, a total of 1,033 students entered GCE A level examinations. The average pass rate at grades A-E was just above the provisional national average of 68 per cent. The pass rates in accounting, business studies, history, mathematics, psychology, German and Spanish were above the national average for these subjects. There were poor results in law (51 per cent) and history of art (50 per cent). The pass rate in English literature improved from 45 per cent in 1993 to 60 per cent in 1994, and in computing from 50 per cent to 61 per cent, but both were below the national average.

46 Students aged 16-18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994 scored, on average, 3.6 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. Seventy-eight per cent of students in the final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education's 1994 performance

tables were successful. This again places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

47 In 1993, students on business programmes achieved good results although the pass rates in the GNVQ intermediate course in business (45 per cent), in shorthand (57 per cent) and in the NVQ level 3 administration (39 per cent) were low. In the BTEC national diploma in computing, the pass rate was 58 per cent, and on the BTEC national certificate in business and finance it was 10 per cent, both well below the national average. Students on the BTEC higher national certificate in business and finance achieved very good results in 1993 and this was repeated in 1994. In 1994, business studies students achieved generally good results. The pass rates in NVQ level 3 administration improved from 39 per cent to 62 per cent, and at level 2 from 67 per cent to 77 per cent. Students achieved a pass rate of 70 per cent on the business GNVQ advanced course. There were poorer pass rates in the Association of Accounting Technicians examinations at foundation level (38 per cent) and intermediate level (38 per cent). The pass rate for the intermediate GNVQ in business fell even lower to 29 per cent.

48 In 1993, students on community studies courses achieved particularly good results. There was a pass rate of over 79 per cent in all but one course. In 1994, pass rates fell. For example, the pass rate for the BTEC national diploma in caring fell from 92 per cent to 78 per cent, although this remained slightly above the national average. The pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate in health and social care fell below the national average, to 42 per cent. The pass rate in BTEC higher national diploma in early childhood studies fell from 64 per cent in 1993 to 57 per cent in 1994, below the national average for both years. In 1994, students on access to teacher training courses and counselling courses achieved good pass rates of 88 per cent or above.

49 In 1993 the pass rates for creative studies and general education areas were above 80 per cent in almost every case. In the BTEC national certificate in science, the pass rate was 56 per cent, and this improved to 67 per cent in 1994, which was just above the national average. Pass rates for the BTEC national diploma in science, fell from 67 per cent in 1993 to 60 per cent in 1994. Pass rates for the BTEC national diploma in travel and tourism improved from 86 per cent to 95 per cent between 1993 and 1994.

50 In 1993, students on courses in the services to people area achieved good results, with few pass rates below 80 per cent. However, the pass rate in City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) cookery for the catering industry (part 2) was only 23 per cent. In 1994, the rate for the same course improved to 45 per cent, but remained too low. The pass rate for part 3 was only 43 per cent. Pass rates fell between 1993 and 1994 in the BTEC national diploma in beauty therapy, the national diploma in hotel and catering, and the C&G course in hairdressing.

51 The Construction Industry Training Board informs students of their examination results but does not notify colleges unless they pay a fee of £1 per student. The college has not yet obtained examinations data from the board although it provided the original details for accreditation. In 1993, in other technology courses, students achieved good pass rates of 80 per cent or more in 20 out of 45 subjects or courses. There were poorer results

in the BTEC first certificate in engineering (29 per cent), and the BTEC national certificate in mechanical engineering (50 per cent), which were both well below the national average. In 1994, there were poorer results in the BTEC national certificate in mechanical engineering, which fell from an already low 50 per cent to just 22 per cent in 1994, and in the C&G motor vehicle craft examinations where passes fell from 70 per cent to 42 per cent. Pass rates also fell sharply in C&G electrical installation and electronics servicing. The pass rate fell to below the national average in 1994 in the BTEC national diploma in engineering (71 per cent to 56 per cent), the national certificate in electronic engineering (100 per cent to 56 per cent), and the national diploma in electronic engineering (88 per cent to 59 per cent). The pass rate for the BTEC higher national certificate in engineering course rose from 36 per cent to 86 per cent. Students on BTEC higher national diploma and certificate courses in building studies achieved good results in both 1993 and 1994. The pass rates in the BTEC national certificate in civil engineering improved from 68 per cent in 1993 to 100 per cent in 1994 and in the national diploma in building and civil engineering from 56 per cent in 1993 to 83 per cent in 1994.

52 The college records the destinations of full-time students who leave the college. In 1993, of the 1,144 students who left the college, 22 per cent went into employment, 36 per cent went on to higher education, 18 per cent continued in further education, 14 per cent went on to other activities, including self employment and youth training schemes and the destinations of 10 per cent were unknown. In 1994, of the 1,454 students who left the college, 21 per cent found employment, 27 per cent entered higher education, 14 per cent continued in further education and 13 per cent went on to other activities. The destinations of the remaining 25 per cent are unknown.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

53 The college has a well-designed and comprehensive student charter. Students know of it and have used some of its provisions. The charter is informative but it lacks measurable standards for some of the services students should expect, such as tutorial entitlement and the speed with which their work is returned after marking. The contribution made by employers is recognised and the needs of the local community acknowledged. Feedback through questionnaires is invited and the responses are monitored.

54 There is a commitment to improving quality across the college and this is co-ordinated by a quality-development unit. There is a clear strategy and a number of the procedures to improve quality are working. However, outcomes vary between academic divisions. The academic board receives an annual report on quality through its academic quality assurance subcommittee, which acts as a steering group on such matters as validation, monitoring, evaluation, verification and assessment.

55 Questionnaires are put to students three times a year. The quality-development unit selects topics to supplement the core questions which are always asked. The questionnaires are carefully analysed and the findings clearly presented. Where trends are discernible term by term, or

year by year, they are shown graphically. As a result of analysis, improved retention rates and pass rates on access and foundation courses were achieved by the development of pre-course packages and the provision of additional learning support and study skills sessions.

56 Divisional managers are responsible for course reviews. They co-ordinate the conduct of the reviews and pass the results to the quality development unit for analysis. They are then responsible for any action that is required. Because there is insufficient guidance given to divisional managers on the precise configuration of the student data to be used the outcomes are inconsistent. For example, in hairdressing, the poor standards of marking of students' written work were not picked up. No remedial action has yet been taken where there are consistently low student retention and examinations results, for example, in engineering and some care courses. Many of the reviews fail to reveal trends and there is little sharing of good practice. The value of the exercise is therefore limited.

57 All students negotiate a learning agreement and an action plan at the start of their courses. Fifty-nine per cent of students aged 16-18 brought a record of achievement with them on enrolment, and they are encouraged to develop these documents. Approximately 35 per cent of students did so during their programme of study.

58 The staff-appraisal scheme is in its third year of operation. It includes all college staff. The scheme was agreed by the staff, and training for appraisers and appraisees has been provided. The outcomes of the scheme are reviewed by senior managers, working with heads of division and support services. The arrangements are working well and have ensured that staff development is linked to the college business plan.

59 The staff-development programme has nine priority areas and targets are set to identify its success. The college provides a budget of 1 per cent of its income and this meets most needs. Staff share the outcomes and formally evaluate their experience, but the college has yet to evaluate its staff-development activities against the contribution they make to improving overall institutional performance. The college is seeking the Investors in People award, which it expects to achieve this year.

60 The college produced a self-assessment report for the inspection. It has two sections: a summary which meets the requirements of the Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, and a more detailed evaluation which refers to college documentation. The self-assessment was sound and generally candid, but claims were made about the scale of the college's operations which were not always substantiated.

RESOURCES

Staffing

61 The college has a teaching staff of 242 full-time equivalents, 184 of whom are full-time academic staff, 63 are fractional full-time appointments, and 106 are sessional part-time lecturers. There are 226 support staff, amounting to 200 full-time equivalents. The ratio of students to teaching staff is 17:1, a significant rise over last year when it was 15:1.

During the last academic year, there were two early retirements and 28 staff redundancies. Of seven divisional heads who manage the curriculum, two are women and of the eight heads of support units four are women.

62 The staff of the college are well qualified and have a range of industrial and commercial experience. Eighty per cent of full-time academic staff hold first degrees or comparable professional qualifications and of these, 28 per cent have post-graduate qualifications. Eighty per cent of lecturers are trained teachers. Progress towards gaining Training and Development Lead Body certification is satisfactory; it is intended that 85 per cent of relevant staff will achieve assessor or verifier awards by the start of the next academic year. Some staff teaching on vocational programmes would benefit from secondment to industry to update their professional experience.

63 Personnel matters are the responsibility of the newly-appointed personnel director who is a member of the senior management team. There is a detailed staff handbook which sets out personnel policies and procedures. The college uses a computerised interactive system to assist in job evaluations.

64 There has been a recent reorganisation of support staff. Staff are now assigned to divisions in large enough groups to give flexible support to teaching staff, relieving them of many administrative and technical tasks.

Equipment/learning resources

65 The college is equipped with an adequate range of teaching and learning aids. Whiteboards, flipcharts and overhead projectors are standard features in most classrooms, and slide projectors, video, television and other specialist equipment are available centrally through the audio-visual aids unit. There is a programme for the purchase and replacement of equipment which meets the needs of most curriculum areas. Some areas such as hotel and catering, travel, hairdressing and beauty therapy are particularly well equipped. Engineering and photography have some poor equipment which, although functional, does not meet current professional standards. Consumable materials budgets are generally adequate. All equipment is recorded on the assets register.

66 The number of computers for students to use is extensive. There are 275 networked machines and 75 on open access. A further 160 machines are used by staff. When machines are not being used in classes, college policy is that students should have access to them, but this is not always honoured by staff. The dedicated open-access facilities are staffed at all times and are a hive of activity. Computer-aided design facilities are shared by art and design and construction and there is software of a professional standard. The provision of computers is adequate at one machine for every 11 full-time equivalent students.

67 The modern library and resource centre provides an excellent and widely-used service to students. Over 1,500 students use the facility every day and there is seating for 296. It is open 54 hours a week, and will open on Saturday mornings from March this year. The library contains 45,000 books, and subscribes to 350 different newspapers, periodicals and journals. Some of the books on the shelves are out of date and should be

removed. The centre has videos, audio cassettes, computer workstations, compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases, multimedia CD-ROM, photocopying and microfiche facilities. The centre has a revenue budget of £92,500 and 9.5 full-time equivalent staff. Three of the qualified staff now work as link librarians, who are budget holders and liaise with lecturers to ensure adequate support for courses. The library catalogue is on the college computer network and all the books are bar coded for quick issuing and control. Other college sites rely on the central library facilities.

68 The construction resource centre is a good example of specialist support for a curriculum area. The centre provides trade literature for teachers and students and is staffed half time by an assistant librarian. All books are electronically recorded on the main library catalogue available in the centre.

Accommodation

69 The main campus of almost five hectares is situated at the edge of Stoke Park in a green belt area. There are ample public transport, road and rail links to the site. Parking is difficult. There are 557 parking spaces, of which 271 are reserved for staff. The college is negotiating to rent 100 extra parking spaces nearby. The college occupies 25,200 square metres of accommodation at its main campus. The annexes at Markenfield House and Elmdon, add a further 2,000 square metres. There are 7.1 square metres of space per full-time equivalent student. The college has little, if any, spare capacity.

70 The original college building houses the refurbished reception and customer services area. A five-storey block built in 1967 is used mainly for business studies and GCE A level programmes. The most recent addition, which won an architectural award in 1992, has a purpose-built library and resource centre on the first floor and the Park Room public restaurant and auxiliary teaching areas at ground level. The construction and engineering blocks include practical workshop facilities. The hair and beauty section, which is open to the public, is situated at Markenfield House, an annexe a short distance from the main site. The student refectory was refurbished and opened as a food hall in September 1993. Work on the ground floor of the main building has improved access for wheelchair users and further improvements are in prospect. A nursery is housed a short distance from the main site.

71 Management of the estate is the responsibility of the associate principal (resources), to whom the building and estates manager reports. With the premises committee, they formulate policy and budgets before seeking approval from the principal and the corporation. Professional studies and surveys have been used to draw up an accommodation strategy.

72 Much of the college accommodation is good. There are attractive public areas which have student work on display. Some of the facilities are of a particularly high standard, including the library, the training restaurant, the hairdressing and beauty therapy salons at Markenfield House, and the food hall. Other areas are less satisfactory; for example, the engineering accommodation is unattractive and its traditional layout puts constraints on the teaching and learning. The hatted accommodation at Markenfield House needs attention. Some classes are held in inappropriate rooms; for example history of art is taught in a computer room, and theatre studies in a general purpose classroom.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

73 The strengths of the college are:

- effective marketing
- strong, open governance and management
- a wide curriculum
- effective teaching in most areas
- flexible access to study
- well-managed work experience for students
- well-qualified and enthusiastic staff.

74 If it is to build upon its existing strengths the college should:

- complete the reorganisation of the college
- improve the quality of management information
- continue to develop its quality assurance systems
- ensure that induction procedures are of a consistently high quality
- ensure that all students receive adequate tutorial provision
- improve students' attendance, retention rates and examination results in some areas of work
- improve the teaching of core skills.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area
(as at November 1994)

 - 4 Staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents
(as at November 1994)

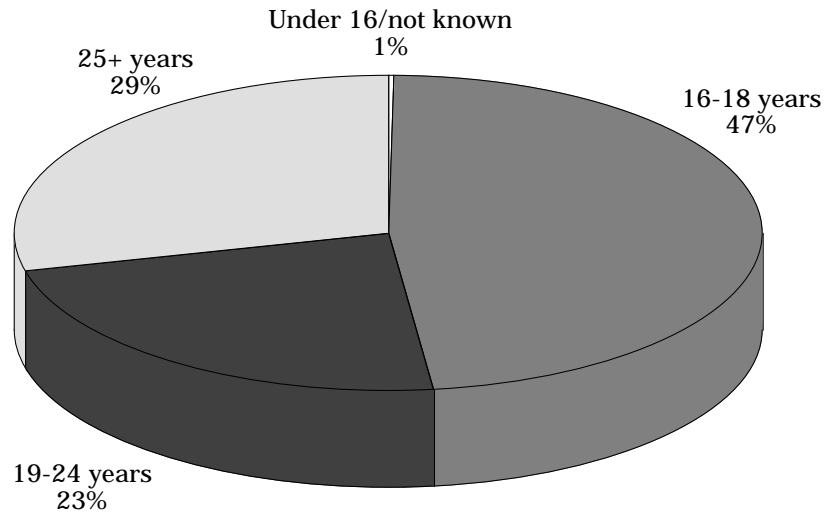
 - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

Figure 1

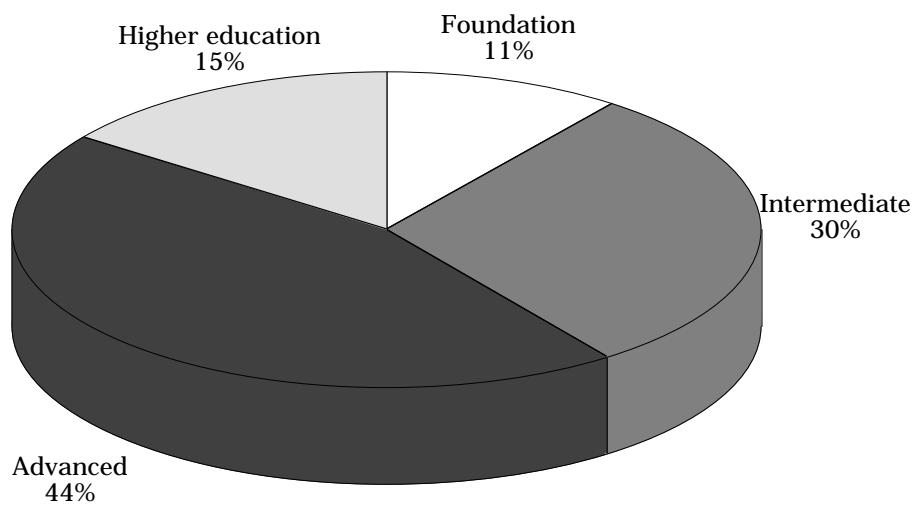
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 7,431

Figure 2

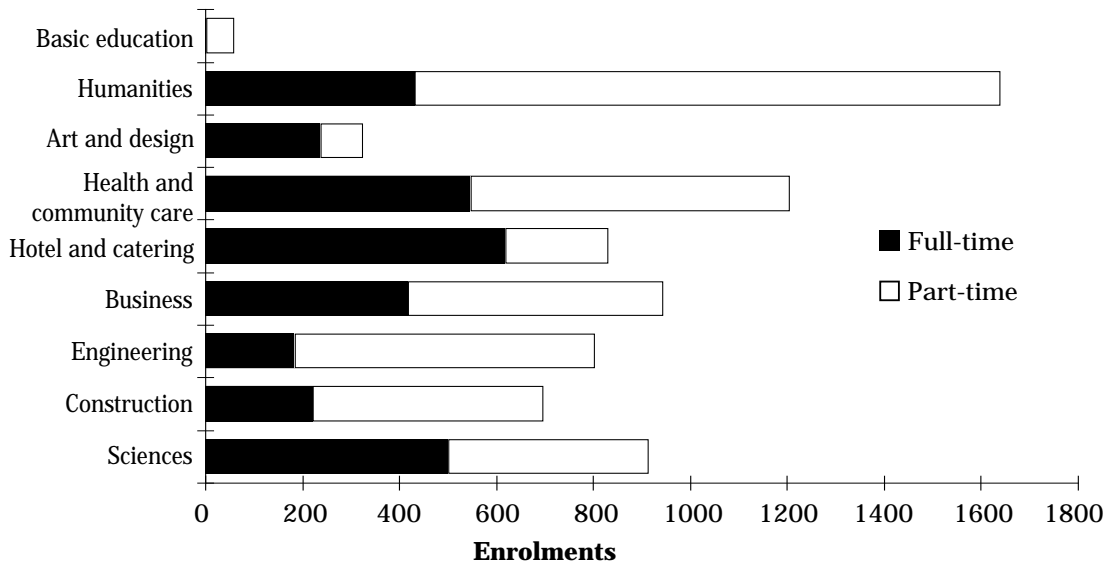
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 7,431

Figure 3

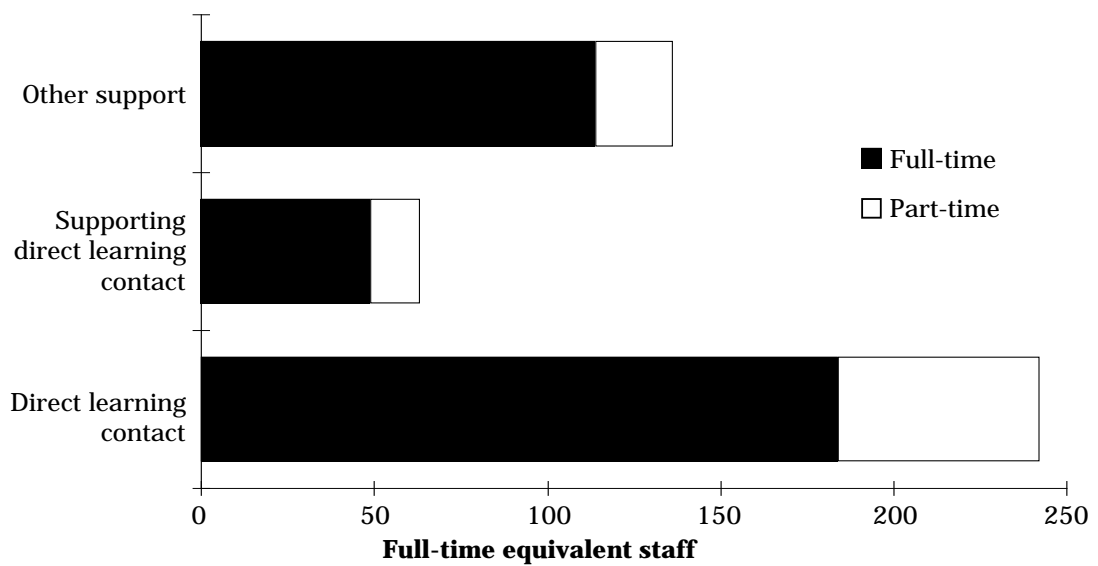
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 7,431

Figure 4

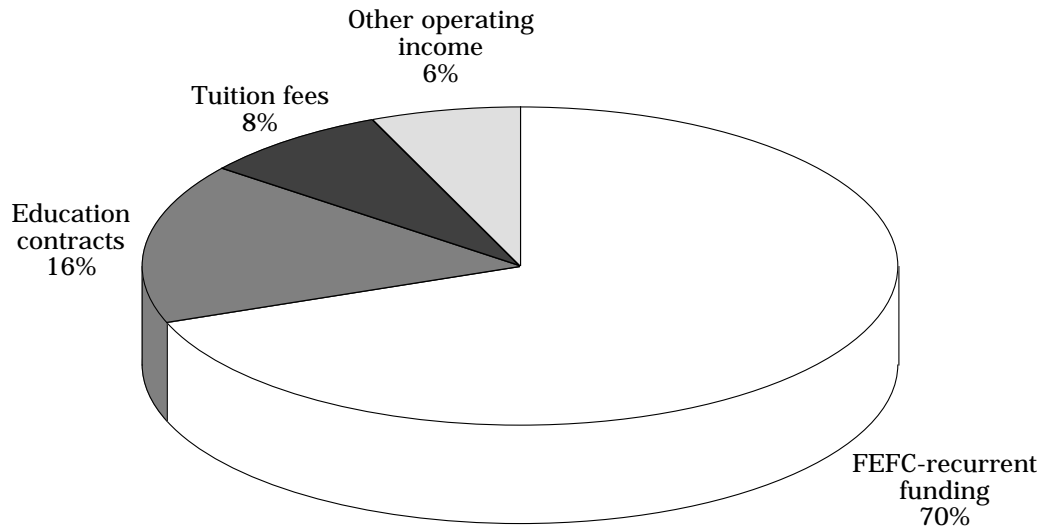
Guildford College of Further and Higher Education: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1994)



Full-time equivalent staff: 442

Figure 5

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education: income (for 16 months to July 1994)

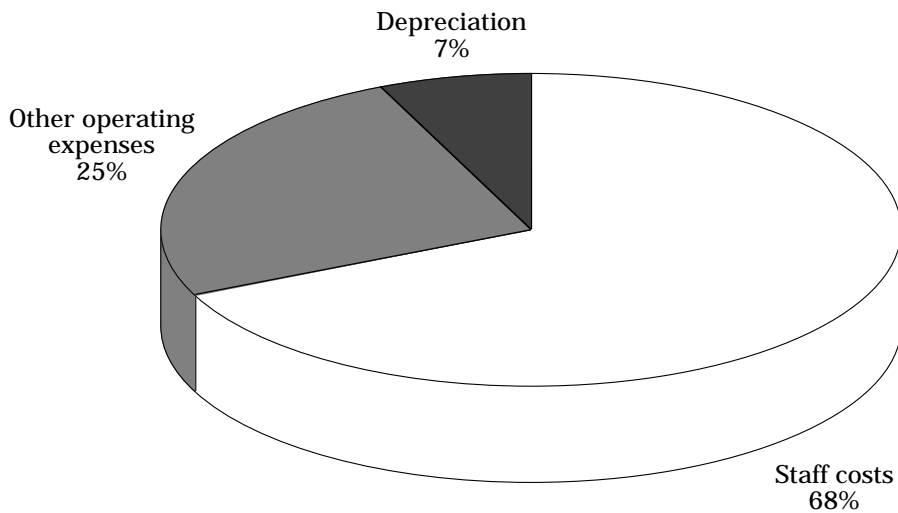


Income: £20,083,000

Note: this chart excludes £37,000 other grant income and £50,000 capital grants.

Figure 6

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



Expenditure: £20,416,000

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