

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture

May 1994

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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

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

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 0203 863000
Fax 0203 863100*

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 24/94

HADLOW COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected December 1993–January 1994

Summary

Hadlow College in Kent is the main provider of agricultural, horticultural and floristry courses in the county. Its horticultural provision is particularly strong. Part-time courses are provided at three additional centres in the county. The college is well managed and well governed and sound quality assurance procedures are developing. Members of the corporation board are heavily involved in college activities and provide considerable specialist expertise. There are good links with schools and the local community. The courses and services provided to land-based industries are valued by employers and this is reflected in employers' involvement in the work of the college. The standard of teaching, particularly practical teaching, is high. Students' practical skills benefit from the substantial contribution made by technical instructors. With few exceptions, students' achievements in external examinations are good, and there is a good record of progress to employment or to higher education. The farm and the horticulture unit provide excellent resources for learning and there is a good range of other practical facilities and equipment which includes up-to-date provision in information technology. The college should strengthen its market research in order to gather the intelligence required to review its curricula. It should also address the further development of its management information system, the provision of effective support for students experiencing difficulty with numeracy and literacy, the integration of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into the college's mainstream activities, and the timetable arrangements which result in excessively long periods for the teaching of theory.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Agriculture and rural environment	2	Horticulture	2
Extra-mural	3	Machinery	3
		Business and management	2

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	4
Responsiveness and range of provision	11
Governance and management	19
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	27
Teaching and the promotion of learning	34
Students' achievements	43
Quality assurance	53
Resources	59
Conclusions and issues	74
Figures	

INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture took place in three stages during December 1993 and January 1994. Arrangements for enrolment and induction were inspected in December 1993; specialist subjects were inspected in the period 10-13 January and aspects of cross college provision in the period 24-27 January. Nine inspectors took part for a total of 61 inspector days. They visited 60 classes attended by 661 students, and examined a representative sample of students' work.

2 Discussions took place with members of the corporation, the principal and vice-principal, heads of department, lecturers, instructors, support staff and students. Inspectors met representatives of local and national employers, parents, head teachers and teachers from local schools, representatives from Greenwich University and the Kent branch of the National Farmers' Union. They also examined college policy statements, minutes of the major college committees and of other committees within departments.

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

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

4 Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture is close to the village of Hadlow, three miles north-east of Tonbridge, west Kent. It also operates specialist centres at Canterbury and Maidstone and a joint centre at Ashford-Wye for part-time courses. The college serves the agricultural, horticultural and floristry industries of Kent and attracts students from the county of Kent and other parts of the country.

5 The college is located in 10 hectares of landscaped parkland. The grounds contain an arboretum, a garden centre which is open to the public and used for retail training, and the college sports fields. The 200-hectare farm provides mixed farming facilities to support a range of agricultural courses. It includes a dairy herd, beef, sheep, pigs, agricultural crops and hops. Horticultural units covering 60 hectares, provide a large nursery stock and a vegetable production unit. A 33 hectare fruit unit grows apples, pears and soft fruit and includes facilities for their grading and cold storage.

6 The college operates a one-hectare horticultural unit at Maidstone and a two-and-a-half-hectare horticultural unit at Canterbury. At Ashford-Wye the college uses machinery workshop facilities belonging to the South Kent College and land rented from Wye College of the University

of London to support part-time courses in agriculture and mechanised crop production. At another Maidstone centre, Kent Parks Training, there are short courses for adults in horticultural activities such as chain saw operation, the application of pesticides and grave digging.

7 The college is organised into five teaching departments: agriculture and the rural environment, horticulture, extra-mural, machinery, and business and management.

8 At the time of the inspection, the college employed 67 lecturers, 15 technical instructors and 131 support staff. Staff expressed as full-time equivalents are shown in figure 1. The college achieved its 6 per cent growth target in 1993. There were 314 full-time students and 718 students enrolled on part-time or sandwich courses. Fifty-nine per cent of full-time and sandwich students came from Kent, 37 per cent from elsewhere in the United Kingdom and 4 per cent from other European countries. Percentage enrolments by age are shown in figure 2.

9 Kent has a large and diverse agricultural and horticultural industry. The county is renowned for its fruit, hops, vegetables and livestock. Over 22,000 people work in its agricultural and horticultural industries (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Food census, 1990). The numbers employed on the land fell by 7 per cent between 1981 and 1989, and are expected to fall by a further 15 per cent between 1992 and 2002, but the floristry and garden-centre industries are growing.

10 The college's mission is to provide high quality education and training in agriculture, horticulture, floristry, countryside and land-based industries. Among the aims listed in its strategic plan are the provision of a range of full-time, part-time and continuing education courses to meet the future needs of land-based industries, and the operation and management of training units to demonstrate to students and the farming and horticultural community their effective and efficient operation.

RESPONSIVENESS AND THE RANGE OF PROVISION

11 Staff are aware of national policy and developments in further education. The college's strategic plan takes account of the National Targets for Education and Training. Staff are aware of developments in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and, to a lesser extent, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), which have yet to be introduced for land-based courses. The further education charter has been distributed to staff and students but the college has yet to develop its own charter.

12 The college offers full-time and part-time vocational courses in agriculture, horticulture and related subjects. The work ranges in level from a pre-vocational certificate to NVQ courses at level 4. The college also runs higher national diploma and degree courses franchised from the University of Greenwich. The two largest departments are the departments of agriculture and the rural environment, and horticulture. Students work

on the college farm and in other specialist units to experience real working conditions. The two small departments, machinery, and business and management, run courses in agricultural machinery and farm secretarial work and courses for the European diploma in management. Part-time students are offered a comprehensive range of vocational and recreational courses within the extra mural department. Full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3, and enrolments by level of study in figure 4.

13 Good links have been established with many of the Kent schools. College staff give career presentations at many school open evenings each year. School teachers and students visit the college to study aspects of agriculture and horticulture, and to learn about the countryside. The college also runs joint projects with schools, some developed through the Kent County Schools Farm Forum which runs a rural studies unit to assist and advise teachers in schools.

14 The corporation, management and staff have developed effective links with land-based employers and organisations in Kent. Many staff and students attend young farmers' meetings and are active members of trade organisations and employer groups. Links are further strengthened through the one-year work placement undertaken by all Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma students following courses in agriculture and horticulture. The college manages work placement programmes for students from mainland Europe. Links with the Kent Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) are good. The college has taken part in a number of TEC-funded projects and is represented on the Kent TEC training credits task group.

15 Most of the full-time courses have low student numbers. The college has developed a marketing policy but it has not yet been confirmed by the board of the corporation. Although the college uses its extensive contacts in the land-based industries to gather market intelligence the process is informal. A more systematic approach is required to provide the information on which decisions can be made about the future balance of provision.

16 The college is quick to seize opportunities to develop new courses. Several have been introduced during the current session. The college has developed a good reputation for reacting quickly to employers' needs with up-to-date short courses. Information about employer demand is sought through questionnaires. Responses have led, for example, to the development of the new green-keeping course. The college would benefit from providing a single initial point of contact which would enable employers to obtain information quickly about students and courses.

17 The college exhibits at local, national and international trade shows. During the inspection, the college was represented by staff and students at an international horticulture event in the Netherlands. The college hosts two public events each year: a lambing day in March and an open day in

June. The open day is attended by a wide range of horticultural and agricultural interest groups from the county and attracts more than 7,000 visitors. The college circulates its own newsletter, 'Hadlow Calling', and produces a good range of printed publicity material. The quality of the publicity material varies considerably and it is reviewing the procedures under which it is produced.

18 The college has policies on equal opportunities and on sexual and racial harassment. However, there are no strategies for the implementation of these policies and it is unable to determine whether they are working effectively.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19 The corporation board is active and effective. There are 19 members, including the principal, vice-principal, and a college lecturer. All of the 16 lay members are actively engaged in land-based industries. Members have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and work within the instrument and articles of government. The board performs its strategic role well and individual members make significant contributions to the life and work of the college, drawing on their experience of agriculture and horticulture. Governors chair the key agriculture and horticulture advisory groups, and this brings them into regular contact with staff, students and employers. A number of governors are members of the various annual course review meetings, and this gives them additional insights into issues of quality within the curriculum. The board works closely with the principal and his staff to achieve college objectives.

20 The board has four subcommittees dealing with employment policy and finance, audit, remuneration, and disciplinary matters relating to senior post holders. The employment policy and finance committee addresses most of the key policy issues and has been of particular assistance to the college.

21 The board receives regular and comprehensive written reports from the principal, other members of the college executive and chairs of subcommittees. Heads of department often attend meetings to present departmental reports. There are regular meetings between the principal, the head of finance and information, and the chair of the corporation to review the monthly accounts.

22 College management is effective. Staff understand the management structure. The key responsibilities and accountabilities of principal, vice-principal, and heads of department are clearly defined. Management and organisational arrangements, especially within departments, appropriately reflect the small size and closeness of the college community. However, staff should guard against the replacement of formally-agreed procedures with informal arrangements, which occasionally occurs. The continuous development of college structures has led to some variation in the internal management of departments. In particular, the roles of course

manager, course tutor, and tutor are not consistent across departments and should be clarified.

23 The strategic plan is formulated under agreed procedures which are managed by the vice-principal. College strategic objectives are established by the corporation, and, within this framework, teaching departments and operational units propose plans to the vice-principal. All staff are formally invited to make suggestions and comments. The senior management team considers draft plans, and the principal and vice-principal prepare the final document for submission to the corporation. The process works well, but the quality of planning and the clarity of aims, objectives and targets established by departments, units and programmes are inconsistent. There is still work to be done in properly directing the efforts of managers.

24 Staff and other resources are effectively deployed, using the strategic plan as the basis for decisions. The principal refers to departmental operating plans in allocating budgets on the basis of student numbers. College managers are experienced in working to budgets because of the nature of the work of an agricultural college. Preparations have been made for increased delegation of the budget by September 1994. Cost centres and budget managers have already been designated.

25 In the absence of a computerised financial accounts package, the financial management of the college has been time-consuming. Manual systems have now been replaced and a new accounting approach is intended to embrace all college activities, including the commercial training units and to provide good-quality cost management information. The college is able to calculate unit costs and this has been done for short course and youth training credit programmes.

26 The computerised management information system is largely related to the further education management information system (FEMIS) student record package. It is capable of significant development. For example, the college plans that FEMIS will be better utilised for admissions and that the finance link will become the main source of information on which senior managers base their financial policies.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

27 Student recruitment procedures work well. Information provided to applicants is clear and concise and additional guidance is available through an advisory interview. The interview is intended to ensure that applicants are aware of the demands of the course for which they have applied and of the job opportunities that follow. The college runs two-and-a-half-day taster courses to enable young people to sample practical work in agriculture, horticulture and floristry before deciding on a possible career.

28 Full-time applications are channelled through the principal to the relevant head of department. The process is effective because of the relatively small number of applications. Course tutors interview all applicants for their courses. Students applying for the national certificate

in agriculture are given a practical competence test to determine their suitability.

29 All full-time students take part in a well-planned and well-delivered two-day registration and induction programme. The first day covers general college issues and the second, conducted within departments, is specific to each course. Students are provided with well-produced course handbooks containing valuable information on course targets, the assessment and assignment programme, study skills and college policy statements detailing students' rights and responsibilities. The needs of residential students are also addressed.

30 Comprehensive information provided to students at the beginning of each course establishes a clear framework which enables them to set appropriate targets and to monitor their own progress and achievement. Tutors identify students' strengths and weaknesses through a process of continuous assessment and help them to establish individual action plans. On most courses, including those leading to NVQs, students maintain their own record of achievement. The college responded positively to a TEC-funded pilot scheme for the accreditation of prior learning and has subsequently developed its own policy. The policy has not been as successful in attracting new students as the college had hoped.

31 Full-time and part-time students are allocated to a course tutor and, in the agricultural department, full-time students also have a separate personal tutor. All tutors provide both academic advice and counselling. The college has established effective transfer routes between different programmes of study. Advice and guidance from tutors help students to change course at an early stage if necessary and students find this valuable. The weekly timetabled tutorial hour does not offer sufficient support for students who have basic numeracy and literacy problems. Student attendance is effectively monitored. Reasons are sought for absence from classes.

32 The senior warden, supported by four male wardens and two female bursars, provides a good level of advice and support for full-time students. Five lecturers hold the RSA certificate in counselling. Support from a professionally-qualified counsellor is, therefore, available for all students when necessary.

33 There is an active students' association led by an executive committee of seven students who are elected annually. The executive, with the help of the wardens, arranges sporting and social events which contribute to the general welfare of students. There are regular matches in rugby, football and hockey. A wide range of other sports and indoor activities, including clay pigeon shooting, canoeing, squash, and horse-riding is also available. The college organises trips to the London theatre and study visits to the continent. The senior warden supports the work of the executive and is responsible for the club room and college bar. The students themselves run a shop which sells stationery and confectionery.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

34 Sixty learning sessions were inspected. Of these, 62 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Number of sessions	5	32	19	4	0	60

35 Lecturers work to well-developed teaching schemes and many use written lesson plans. They are aware of students' learning needs and teaching takes place in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

36 The standard of teaching was generally high and notably so in some business and management sessions. The best lessons were well organised, resulting in work which was lively and challenging for students. Lecturers made effective use of overhead projectors to provide structure for their delivery and to illustrate key points. Students also benefited from a range of well-produced and informative handouts. Lecturers frequently reinforced learning by drawing on their own and students' practical experience. Classroom exhibits of artefacts, plants and shrubs helped to develop students' concepts and specialist terminology.

37 In a combined farm dairy class for students on the BTEC national diploma and the National Examination Board for Agriculture Horticulture and Allied Industries (NEBAHAI) national certificate, the farm manager provided information and led discussion about the developments on the college farm over the Christmas break. Statistics about lambing, sales, and other farm activities were presented in a handout. These were used to illustrate a discussion about farm performance and planning over the next few weeks. The use of real data added to the relevance and effectiveness of teaching. Students were able to use parts of the session in other theory and practical classes.

38 In a practical horticulture session, the lecturer used knowledge previously acquired by the students to build up their understanding of the ways in which fungi affect plants. The lecturer provided well-prepared handouts which the students were required to complete both as a result of the teaching and from their own direct observations of the plants. Students worked in pairs and were encouraged to share their findings with others. This was a good learning session in which students gained confidence in their ability to interpret evidence.

39 Practical work was of a good standard. Activities were conducted competently and safely. In agricultural and machinery courses, theory sessions were less popular with students than the practical work. Teaching methods were insufficiently varied and this combined with the length of theory sessions overstretched students' concentration.

40 A general feature of the weaker lessons was students' lack of involvement. Some students, for example, spent long periods copying

notes from overhead projector transparencies. The quality of teaching for part-time students was generally better on agricultural courses than on horticultural courses.

41 Most lecturers maintain good records of students' achievements and keep them informed about their progress. Students work to clear objectives and these are reinforced by the information provided in course handbooks.

42 The pre-vocational certificate in horticulture is designed for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The course is taught by two instructors who are enthusiastic and supportive. A positive model is provided by one of the instructors who himself has restricted mobility. Access to a nationally-validated qualification for students on the course is a strength. Students are able to progress to NVQs or other college courses. Whilst good relationships exist between the instructors and their students, members of the course are isolated from other teachers and students and from other areas of the college.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

43 The majority of students are well motivated and enjoy their studies. The good relations between staff and students help to make teaching and learning positive and purposeful, and the size of the college encourages a strong sense of community.

44 Students demonstrate considerable self-confidence in their individual and group activities. Oral skills are generally satisfactory and much of the written work reveals sound knowledge and understanding. Some of the less able students on agricultural courses lack adequate analytical skills and do less well in the theoretical aspects of their work. While the standard of marking is generally good, lecturers should provide weaker students with a more detailed analysis of their work to assist them with their learning and to improve their literacy. Deadlines are set for completion of students' assignments. In a small number of cases there is an unacceptable delay in the return of marked work.

45 The NEBAHAI publishes annual examination pass-rates for some of its courses, but there is generally a lack of reliable national data on examination performance in land-based industry courses and this makes the evaluation of a college's results difficult. The college has produced its own detailed performance statistics for full-time courses from which achievements can be compared year-on-year. For part-time courses, information is less reliable because of existing limitations on the college's computerised information system and the recent move to NVQs. Unless otherwise stated, the percentage passes referred to in the following paragraphs are the college's averages for the last three years, 1991-93, based on comparison of those passing with those enrolled.

46 In the agricultural and rural environment department, results are good. Although student numbers were low, the college achieved pass

rates of 100, 83 and 92 per cent in the BTEC national diploma during the three years to 1993. Students taking the BTEC first diploma achieved a satisfactory pass rate of 70 per cent. The college's NEBAHAI national certificate results have improved. The average pass rate of 78 per cent is close to the NEBAHAI national average for the past two years. The college's ranking among forty similar colleges has remained just below the mid point. Student drop-out rates in each of the three years were low on all courses.

47 In the horticulture department, the results in the two BTEC national diplomas in horticulture (amenity and commercial) are good: a 100 per cent pass rate has been achieved except in the amenity option where the pass rate fell to 89 per cent in 1991. Results for the NEBAHAI examinations in horticulture during the three-year period 1991 to 1993 were 61, 63 and 50 per cent respectively while drop-out rates increased from 0 per cent to 24 per cent. Ninety-one per cent of the passes gained were at distinction or merit level. NEBAHAI does not publish national statistics for this course. Students on the BTEC first diploma in floristry have consistently achieved good examination results with pass rates exceeding 83 per cent in each year. Students on the first diploma in horticulture, which was introduced in 1992, achieved a pass rate of 70 per cent. Drop-out rates have again been low on each of these courses. The pre-vocational foundation certificate in horticulture, introduced in 1992, achieved a pass rate of 89 per cent with only one student out of nine failing to complete the course.

48 In the extra-mural department, the change to NVQs in agriculture and horticulture has made year-on-year comparison of students' achievements impossible because the NVQ is not achieved within a set period. In addition, a significant number of mature students enrolled for NVQ courses chose not to be assessed because NVQs did not originally carry the craftsman status which leads to increased pay. Instead they took National Proficiency Test Council tests.

49 In 1991, the pass rate on the part-time City and Guilds first-year horticulture course was a creditable 73 per cent and the drop-out rate was low. In 1992, when the course became an NVQ, 51 per cent of the 79 students who started the course achieved their qualification. Twenty-three students continued with their studies into the second year. In 1993, 43 per cent of the 63 students who started the course achieved the qualification. The remaining 57 per cent are expected to gain their qualification after further study. The second-year agriculture level 2 became an NVQ level 2 in 1990. There has been a decline in the pass rate from 96 to 64 per cent, while the drop-out rate has increased from 0 per cent to 22 per cent. This is in part a result of students requiring extended time to meet all the necessary NVQ criteria. Many of the students following the course also achieve the National Proficiency Test Council awards.

50 In the business and management department, all students completing the European Diploma in Management course obtained the diploma. The

drop-out from this course has been small with only one student failing to complete in each of the last two years. Students on the NEBAHAI national certificate course for farm secretaries have numbered less than 10 in each year. Results have been good, with pass rates above 80 per cent, except in 1992 when they fell to 57 per cent.

51 In the machinery department, student numbers are again small. In the advanced national certificate (machinery) examination, pass rates have improved from 63 to 83 per cent with only one student having dropped out in recent years.

52 Student destination statistics are recorded in the strategic plan and reported to the corporation board. The statistics show almost 90 per cent of students either entering relevant employment or proceeding to higher education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

53 The college has a clear and well-documented quality assurance policy. It includes statements on course review, staff appraisal and staff development. The policy also takes into account the need to satisfy external bodies such as the Further Education Funding Council, examining and validating bodies, local TECs and partner higher education institutions. Governors and staff are equally knowledgeable about the college's quality assurance procedures.

54 Course review is thorough and follows established guidelines. Course team meetings take place at least twice each term and course reviews are conducted, with student representation, at the end of each term. The major annual review involves staff, students and employers' representatives. The resulting course reports, which include essential performance indicators, provide the basis for action and improvement in the following year. All course reports are scrutinised by a cross-college review committee which produces a synopsis and evaluation for the academic board. Most students are aware of the process and some second and third-year students were able to identify resulting improvements in the quality of provision.

55 The process of course review is still developing and its format varies between departments. There should be better co-ordination to avoid, for example, the use of questionnaires with overlapping interests which have been developed independently by two departments. The present reviews are course-specific. There is no similar evaluation of the college-wide structures that underpin course provision: pastoral support, learning support, careers guidance, recruitment and marketing.

56 Annual course reports and the minutes of termly meetings provide evidence of the influence of staff, students and employers. Action notes for implementation have been followed through and executed at the earliest opportunity. Issues highlighted in 1992-93 included proposals to review the length of the national diploma in agriculture, the choice of options in

amenity horticulture, procedures for setting assignments and general timetabling arrangements. In all cases, except concern for the prompt return of some marked assignment work, appropriate action has brought about improvement.

57 The college has a well-structured and effective induction programme for new staff who work to an agreed programme under the supervision of a senior colleague. There are two well-developed staff appraisal schemes, one for lecturers and another for support staff. The schemes are similar but the support staff scheme is linked to performance-related pay. The objectives for both schemes are clearly documented. Implementation has been effective, although the intention to appraise all staff during the past twelve months has not been fully achieved. The schemes were introduced after careful consultation and appropriate staff development, and staff express confidence in them. Appraisal interviews include the setting of agreed targets for future performance. The introduction of class observation is valued by lecturers although the current practice is to observe teachers with one class only. It is a strength of the appraisal schemes that lecturers and support staff are appraised by the same line manager.

58 The overall budget for staff development is measured against the needs analysis set out in the strategic plan. All staff interviewed during the inspection had received the training requested or required. The appraisal process is an effective means of establishing staff development needs within a framework that balances the priorities of the college, the course and the individual. Personal action plans resulting from this process are realistic. Progress is reviewed after six months. A summary of staff-development activities is presented annually to the academic board by the staff development officer.

RESOURCES

59 The college's unit of funding for 1992-93, as recorded in the FEFC report, *Funding Allocations 1993-94*, was £4,743 per weighted full-time equivalent student. The median for colleges of agriculture and horticulture was £3,585. Summaries of the college's recurrent income and estimated expenditure for 1993-94 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

Staffing

60 All lecturers are appropriately qualified for the teaching they undertake. Forty per cent have a teaching qualification. Several lecturers are currently studying for a certificate of education.

61 There are 14 technical instructors who provide practical training, supervision and instruction for students. They enable students to be instructed in small groups on the farm and on the nursery. In addition there are 58 other technical and clerical support staff and 74 manual support staff. There is a shortage of technician support in science,

information technology and in the amenity horticultural machinery workshop.

Equipment

62 The college farms are well equipped with agricultural and horticultural equipment and machinery. They provide a valuable teaching resource enabling students to be taught modern and progressive practices.

63 There is a good range of tractors of various sizes and specifications and a selection of attachments. There is a rolling programme to enhance and replace farm machinery and the college is able to borrow additional items of machinery and equipment from neighbouring farmers and from specialist suppliers.

64 The farm livestock consists of a Friesian dairy herd, a beef herd, a pig herd and three sheep flocks. The milking parlour is appropriate for the size of herd and has accommodation for two student observers. There is an excellent pig-fattening unit in which the sows are fed through a computer-controlled system. The farrowing sheds are approximately 20 years old and are in need of replacement.

65 The fruit farms cover 33 hectares. Apples, pears and some soft fruit are grown. The nursery includes 1.3 hectares of single and double-glazed glasshouses. These provide an excellent range of heating, ventilating, feeding and lighting conditions, mostly computer controlled, to enable flowers and crops to be produced in commercial quantities. The unit produces plants and shrubs of the highest quality which are supplied to major national retailers. The nursery also produces a range of cut flowers, plants, shrubs, trees and vegetables.

66 The college information technology suite is well equipped with 42 computers. Twenty-six are of the latest specification, and under the replacement programme, all computers are scheduled to be to this specification by the end of the academic year. The 1:8 ratio of computers to students is good. There is a wide range of software which includes vocationally-specific packages to assist students with their work in agricultural and horticultural subjects. The library is short of computers. Laboratories at the main campus and the nursery are generally well equipped.

Accommodation

67 Teaching takes place in three buildings surrounding a large lawn. Classrooms provide suitable accommodation for teaching although some require minor maintenance and re-decoration. All rooms are well furnished and equipped with a good range of teaching aids. Laboratories are of a satisfactory standard. Student recreational and leisure facilities are located in one of the original village buildings adjacent to the halls of residence.

68 Residential accommodation for 150 students is provided in single study-bedrooms in five halls of residence on the main campus. The halls, built in the mid 1960s, provide spacious and comfortable accommodation. They are arranged in blocks of 10 bedrooms and each block is adequately equipped with toilets, showers, baths and a kitchen.

69 The new retail training centre, which sells to the public, is an excellent facility providing an authentic environment. In addition to the indoor sales area, there is a spacious outdoor display, demonstration gardens and classrooms, offices and a customer car park.

70 Teaching for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities takes place in specialist accommodation at the main plant nursery. The unit is modern and provides easy access for those with restricted mobility. It enables students to learn in an authentic horticultural setting.

71 There are three machinery workshops located around the college estate. They are well maintained and provide a safe and stimulating environment for practical activities. The workshops house agricultural machinery, welding and amenity horticultural machinery. There is no suitable all-weather driving area at the site where tractor driving instruction is given. Most driving is taught on grassed areas which, at the time of the inspection, were unsuitable for use because of the prolonged wet weather.

72 Accommodation at the centres in Canterbury, Maidstone and Ashford-Wye is of uneven standard. There is good accommodation for horticulture at Canterbury but at Maidstone and Ashford-Wye, although facilities for practical instruction are good, classrooms provide poor environments for teaching and learning.

73 The library has been extended recently but it is still too small for student numbers. There are 7,000 books and subscriptions are made to 150 periodicals in addition to statutory instruments and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food publications. Periodicals are a particularly important source for student projects and assignments. The 16 study carrels and 20 other spaces provide a quiet and pleasant environment for study. Access to the library for students who are wheelchair users is difficult.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

74 The college is making steady progress towards achieving its aim of providing a quality service for education and training in the land-based industries. The strengths of the college are:

- good management
- supportive and knowledgeable governors
- effective quality assurance procedures
- strong links with land-based employers, schools and the local community
- the college's high reputation with industry

-
- positive staff-student relationships and a developed sense of community
 - good teaching and practical instruction
 - effective use of technical instructors
 - good examination performance in the majority of courses
 - the excellent range of facilities for practical instruction
 - good information technology equipment.

75 If the college is to maintain and strengthen the quality of its work it should address the following issues:

- further development of the management information system
- systematic market research and analysis
- diversification of the curriculum as land-based employment falls
- effective learner support for students experiencing difficulty with numeracy and literacy
- the integration of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into the college's mainstream activities
- excessively-long blocks of theory teaching.

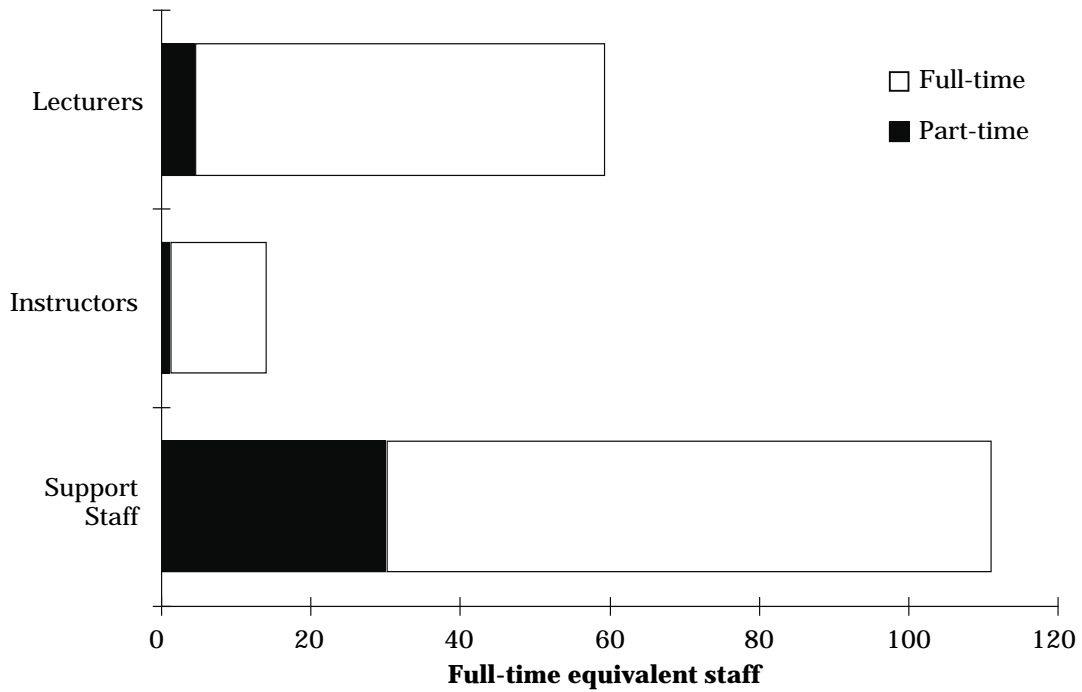
FIGURES

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- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Staff profile-staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94) |
| 2 | Enrolments by age (1993-94) |
| 3 | Full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (at October 1994) |
| 4 | Enrolments by level of study (1993-94) |
| 5 | Recurrent income (for 16 months to July 1994) |
| 6 | Estimated expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994) |
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Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

Figure 1

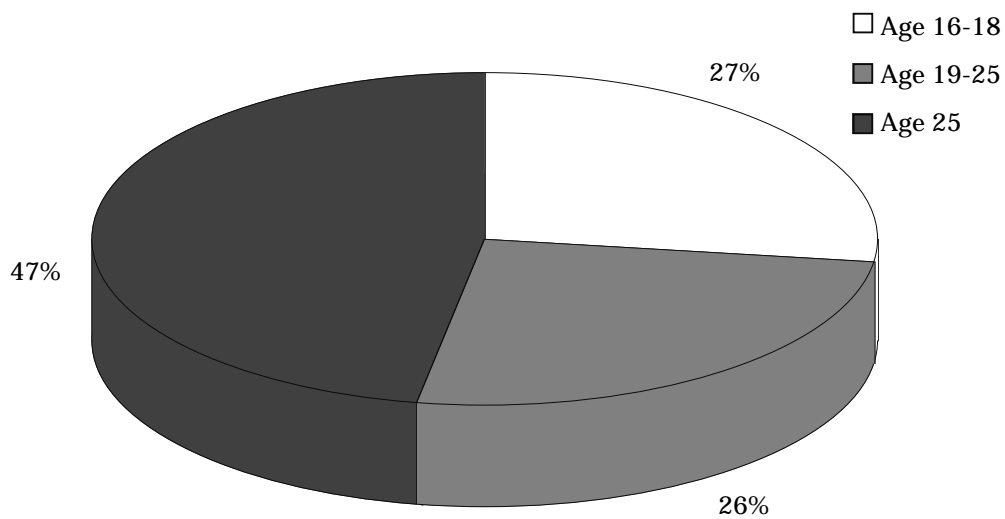
Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture: staff profile-staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent staff: 185

Figure 2

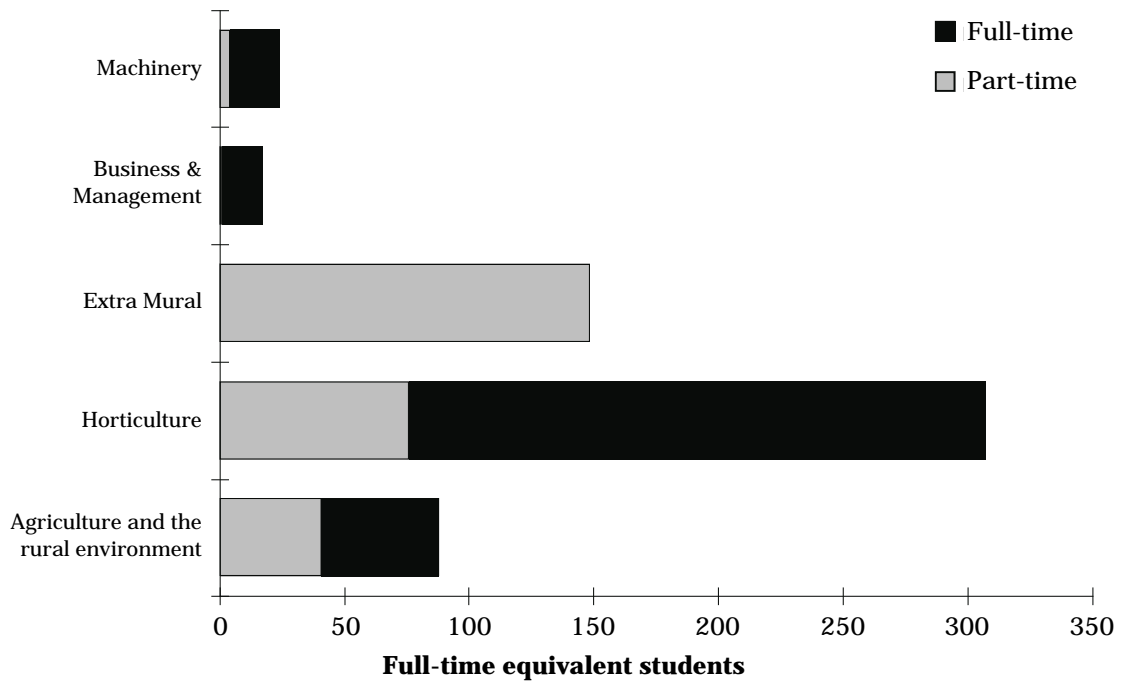
Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture: enrolments by age (1993-94)



Enrolments: 1,032

Figure 3

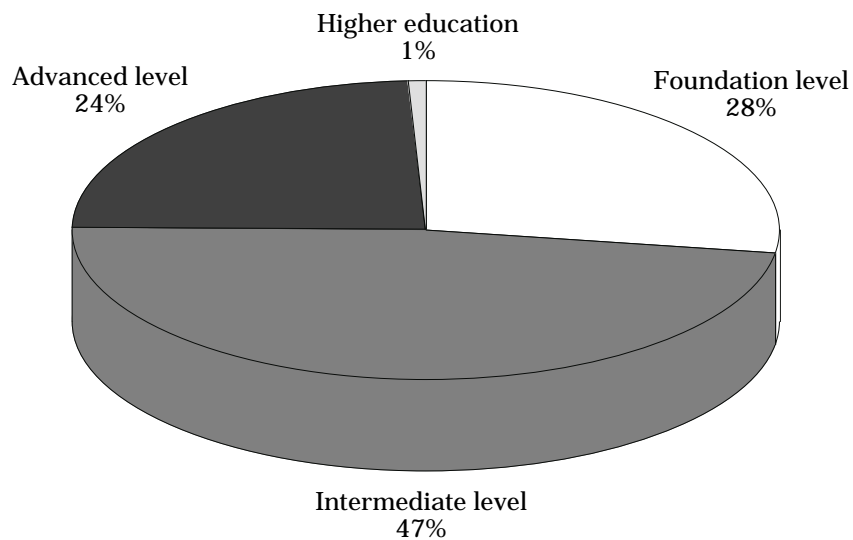
Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture: full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (at October 1993)



Full-time equivalent enrolments: 585

Figure 4

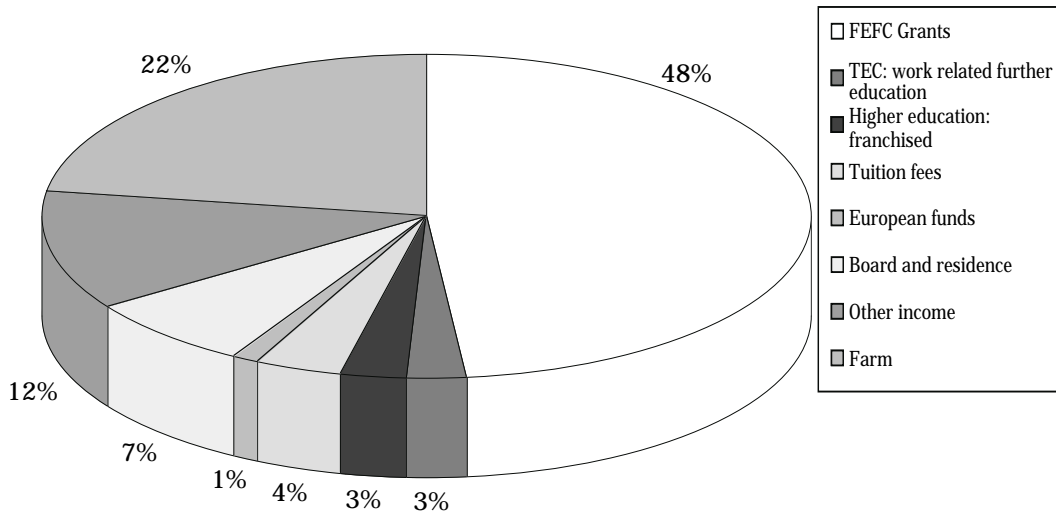
Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture: enrolments by level of study (1993-94)



Enrolments: 1,032

Figure 5

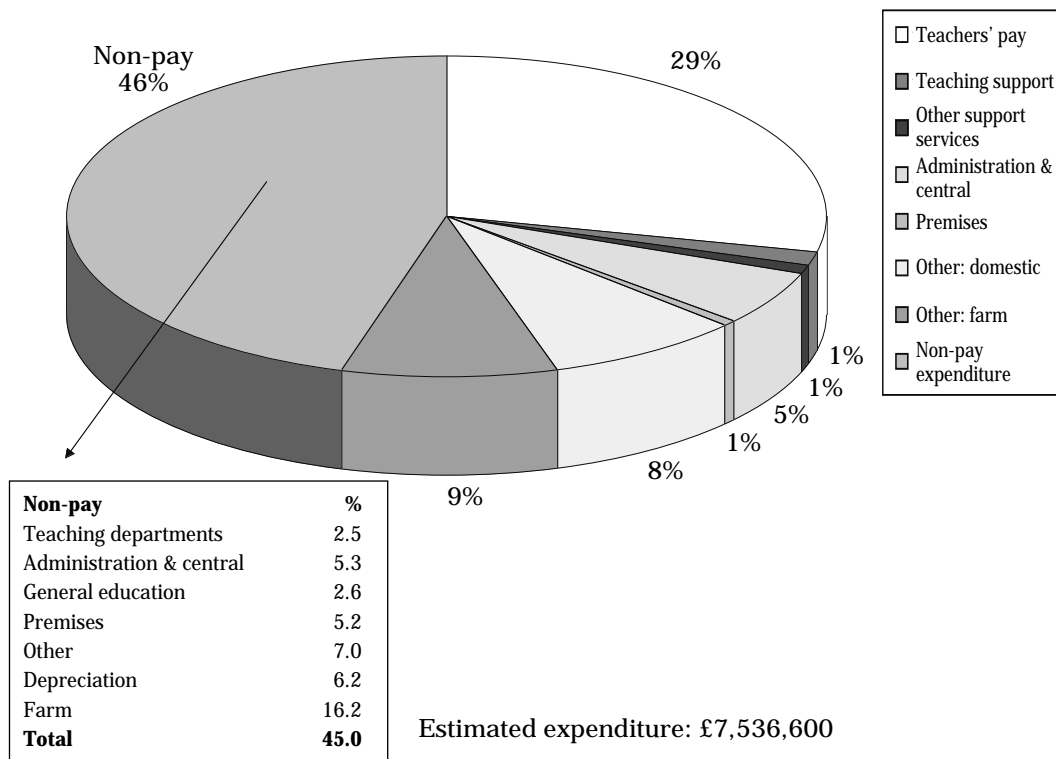
**Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture: recurrent income
(16 months to July 1994)**



Recurrent income: £7,123,300

Figure 6

**Hadlow College of Agriculture and Horticulture: estimated expenditure
(16 months ending July 1994)**



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