Mackworth College

THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education every four years. The inspectorate also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum and gives advice to 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 10/95

MACKWORTH COLLEGE
EAST MIDLANDS REGION
Inspected September – October 1994

Summary

Mackworth College, Derby offers an extensive range of vocational and academic courses for school leavers and adults including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are good links with local schools, including a thorough programme of guidance for prospective students. The college is well governed and managed. Comprehensive strategies have been developed for staffing and accommodation and the college provides excellent childcare facilities. Students benefit from good teaching and from strong support and guidance services. Examination results are generally satisfactory. The college liaises effectively with the local TEC, community organisations and other education providers. There are well-established links with major employers, but employers are not used sufficiently in curriculum development and review. The college should also be more active in identifying local training needs. Management information is collated centrally, but the dissemination of information is inadequate and this limits the effectiveness of middle managers. There is a commitment to quality assurance although the system is still developing; implementation varies across the college and there is limited evaluation of performance. The college should formally monitor the progress of students receiving additional academic support.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	2
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	1
equipment/learning resources	2
accommodation	2

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Sciences	2	Art and design	2
Engineering	3	English and communications	3
		Foreign languages and English as a second language	2
		Other humanities	2
Business and office administration	2	Supported learning programmes	2
Health and community care	1		

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INTRODUCTION

1   Mackworth College, Derby was inspected during the autumn term, 1994. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term. During the period 26 September to 14 October 1994, 14 inspectors spent 34 days on specialist subject inspections. A total of 161 classes were inspected, involving approximately 2,200 students. A broad sample of students' work was examined and inspectors looked at a variety of documentation relating to the college and its courses. During the week beginning 31 October 1994, six inspectors spent a further 23 days inspecting aspects of cross-college provision. During the inspection there were meetings with representatives of the governors, the local training and enterprise council (TEC), local employers, the community, parents, students and staff.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2   Mackworth College, Derby was created as a result of the tertiary reorganisation in Derby in 1989. It was formed from Derby College of Further Education and school sixth forms in the area and was initially named Derby Tertiary College, Mackworth. It was renamed Mackworth College, Derby at incorporation on 1 April 1993.

3   It is one of two further education colleges in Derby which serve a population of approximately 530,000 within the city and parts of southern Derbyshire. Enrolments have increased in conjunction with the completion of a major building programme and increased curriculum provision. In 1993-94, there were 6,981 students on roll of whom 2,272 were full time and 4,709 part time. Forty-six per cent of students were aged 25 and over. Sixteen per cent of students came from minority ethnic groups. Enrolments by age and level of study are given in figures 1 and 2, respectively. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 3.

4   The college is located on three sites. The main Mackworth campus is on the northern edge of Derby. It has four main teaching blocks, a purpose-built nursery, sports hall and youth centre. The larger of the two inner city sites is at Normanton Road. It houses the second college nursery. Refurbishment is under way at Normanton Road to meet changes in curriculum provision and to increase education and training opportunities for inner-city residents. The third site, a large inner-city workshop area at Sidney Street, is being developed for training in manufacturing.

5   Traditionally the city of Derby has been dependent on the engineering industry. Employers include Rolls Royce and British Rail. In 1993, the Toyota Car Company opened its factory, some five miles from the college's main site providing a welcome boost to the local economy. The college has co-operated closely with the company in a number of initiatives over the last three years.

6   The college mission is to 'seek to increase the range and quality of choice for all of its clients. A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum will

provide new opportunities for participation and achievement. The active partnerships and liaison necessary to ensure curriculum continuity and progression are key objectives'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7　Staff are aware of the national targets for education and training. The range of programmes continues to expand to meet these. The college provides a range of academic and vocational courses which cater for students of all ages and abilities. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 4.

8　There are 23 vocational programmes ranging from General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) foundation level to Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) higher national awards. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) have been introduced in nine vocational areas and GNVQs in five areas. The GNVQs are gaining in popularity with the 16-19 age group. More students are now registering for GNVQs than for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses.

9　The college's vocational provision covers eight of the Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC's) programme areas: science (including mathematics and computing), engineering, business, hotel and catering, health and community care, art and design, humanities and basic education. The training offered in information technology attracts a wide cross section of local students. There is an appropriate range of craft and technician courses, including NVQs, in motor vehicle and general engineering. A wide range of secretarial provision, integrated with NVQs, is particularly suited to adult returners. Nursery nursing courses for the National Nursery Examination Board and BTEC are complemented by NVQ programmes in childcare and social care. BTEC national diplomas in art and design and graphic design are well established. GNVQ in art and design has been introduced recently.

10　There are no formal structures which enable employers and industrialists to contribute to the development of vocational courses. The college intends to address the issue through its curriculum development groups. There are some instances of positive and helpful employer influence on the Association of Accounting Technician and motor vehicle courses but these are the exceptions.

11　The college offers 48 General Certificate of Education advanced level and advanced supplementary (GCE A/AS) subjects and 33 GCSE subjects. These are timetabled so that students can choose from a broad range of subjects and, if they wish, combine GCE A levels with GCSEs or GNVQ programmes. For example, GCE A level psychology and sociology are offered in combination with GNVQ advanced caring courses, and GCE A level or GCSE mathematics are timetabled so that they can be combined with most GNVQ programmes.

12   There is an extensive range of foreign language courses, and the college language centre is well resourced, offering opportunities for interactive learning in 15 languages. French, German, Spanish, Italian, Punjabi and Urdu are available as GCE A levels. Minority languages, including Japanese and Polish, are offered at evening classes. English for speakers of other languages is well developed and has a high profile with its own base in the town centre. Students of English for speakers of other languages are encouraged to take part in a range of activities on the main campus at Mackworth.

13   For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the college makes an effort to ensure that there is an individualised learning programme for each student. There are good links with supporting agencies and schools, including co-operation with the Royal School for the Deaf in Derby to support hearing-impaired students. A wide range of abilities are catered for throughout the college and there is an increasing interest in supporting students with mental health problems. There is a clear understanding that the full-time separate specialist provision offered to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is transitional and leads to integration into other college courses when appropriate. However, there are limited opportunities for adults studying part time to make the transition from supported learning provision into other programmes.

14   Liaison with the TEC is becoming more effective. In common with other colleges in the area, the college has developed with the local TEC a strategy to increase the opportunities for young people to achieve national qualifications. This work has led to the creation of a programme for young people who have decided not to stay on in full-time education. The college has also developed a programme, to begin in January 1995, to provide contact between students and employers.

15   There is a businesslike relationship with the community education service of the local education authority (LEA). There have been co-operative ventures such as the literacy support which the college provided for the LEA's multi-cultural centre, and summer school taster courses for community education students from the basic skills unit. The college has withdrawn some of its outreach provision for adults and consolidated this work on the main site. This has reduced access to such courses in the community and runs counter to the college's mission 'to provide new opportunities for participation'. There are interesting and popular courses in modern and early modern history, which include excellent self-study units, and open-learning support facilities are available until 20.00 hours each evening. In other areas, such as English and communications there is insufficient flexibility in the methods of study and attendance to attract maximum numbers of part-time students.

16   The college is taking the opportunity to build on community projects and to support its mission by providing accredited training for groups who would not have thought of attending a further education college. Limited

learning and training opportunities are currently provided at Sydney Street for students from the Peartree Craft Centre. The centre was established by the Padley Group to offer therapeutic activities, pre-employment and employment training to people from the inner city of Derby who are disadvantaged through various disabilities and long-term unemployment. The college is now working closely with the centre to widen opportunities for clients of the centre, including gaining national qualifications. The Asian Women's Centre is located on the college city centre site at Normanton Road. The college has helped in setting up this provision and is represented on the management committee.

17 There are productive and valued working relationships with Derbyshire Constabulary. Assistance has been given to the Derby Domestic Violence Group, an inter-agency organisation which ensures support is available to people experiencing domestic violence. The college is now a member of the steering group and provides resources and administrative support. This service includes the translation of taped and written material into minority ethnic languages.

18 The college has good relationships with some major local employers. It responds flexibly and efficiently to requests for assistance with training. For example, Courtaulds commissioned the college to design training materials, and this has proved to be a successful project. The college continues to be a major provider of elements of the Rolls Royce training programme. Individual training courses are provided for a range of clients including the Royal Mail, Toyota and ABB Transportation. However, the college lacks a strategy for finding out about employers' training needs and the nature of the local labour market. Further development in this area would support the college's priority of 'securing and enhancing the college's market position locally, regionally and nationally'.

19 There are effective relationships with four local schools; Murray Park, Bemrose, Littleover and High View. The relationship with Murray Park is particularly strong. The two institutions have collaborated to design a curriculum enrichment programme with the aim of developing links between the school, the college and nominated industrial partners. The initial pilot project is for pupils at national curriculum key stage 4 who have some learning or motivational difficulties. Eighteen school pupils will embark on the programme of NVQ modules in automobile engineering in December 1994. Information is provided to schools on the pupils who enrol at the college, and who subsequently go on to graduate in higher education.

20 The college is an associate college of The University of Derby. Strong links have been developed through its courses to prepare students for higher education. Other developments have included programmes which enable students to gain credits which are recognised by the university and which can count towards a degree. This has encouraged adult students who would not normally have considered working towards a degree to do so.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

21   The governing body has an agreed membership of 20. There are currently three vacancies. Members represent a comprehensive cross-section of interests. Ten occupy senior posts in industry, the caring sector and the TEC. The other seven comprise community, staff and student nominees and the college principal. The governors are committed to the college and rigorous in fulfilling their responsibilities. Meetings are well attended, and committee papers are clear and informative. There are three subcommittees of the board: audit, remuneration and finance and general purposes. The finance and general purposes committee has additional responsibility for employment matters.

22   The audit service of the FEFC recently reviewed the college's financial management and internal control arrangements. The college is responding to the recommendations of the report. Terms of reference for committees have been clarified, management accounts regularly reported to the finance and general purposes committee and governors have agreed to strengthen the audit committee.

23   Governors and senior managers have worked together to produce a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan. Other members of the college, whilst satisfied with the broad aims of the plan, have little involvement in its development or understanding of how they specifically contribute to the successful achievement of its aims. Where programme area plans exist they sometimes fail to take account of the strategic plan.

24   The present management team has been in post since the establishment of the college in 1989. A policy of not replacing managers who have resigned or retired has reduced the number of director posts in the senior management team from nine to six. The senior management team now comprises the principal, deputy principal, two curriculum directors and four directors with responsibility for resources, student services, personnel and support services. There is a clear allocation of responsibilities among senior managers and they work closely together to develop common approaches to issues. A feature of the senior management structure is the rotation of roles by directors and deputy directors. Most of the post-holders have had at least one change of post. The rotation of posts emphasises shared responsibility, enables senior managers to gain an understanding and experience of a variety of college roles, and encourages the development of fresh approaches.

25   The structure of middle management was changed in September 1994. Thirty-eight curriculum leader posts were created and 26 have so far been filled. While the vacancies remain there are difficulties in ensuring consistent communication and accountability across the organisation. In engineering for example, it is intended to have two curriculum leaders. At the time of the inspection these posts had not been filled. This has resulted in uncertainties about responsibilities at programme and course level.

26   Management information is collected centrally but is not disseminated widely or used effectively throughout the college. Information on students and finance is regularly supplied to senior managers and governors to assist them in their respective roles. There is no regular distribution of student data to assist curriculum teams in their planning and evaluation. As a consequence, there are inconsistent approaches at curriculum team level and duplication of the information collected at central and team level.

27   Enrolments are planned at a college level and together with retention rates and student destinations these are monitored by the senior management team and governors. There are no specific enrolment targets at the course team level, and the monitoring of year-on-year retention rates and destinations at curriculum team level is variable.

28   The college is taking action to reduce expenditure and increase income through a financial review which includes staffing costs. Efficiency in terms of unit costs are considered at a college level and compared with national figures. Unit costs are not calculated at other levels within the organisation. Only in reviewing the use of space are internal comparisons made. The college's income and expenditure for the 16-month period to July 1994 are given in figures 5 and 6, respectively. The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £18.85 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17.

29   There are a wide range of policy statements on the operational activities of the college. The responsibility for the implementation and monitoring is, in most cases, clearly identified and effectively managed. Responsibility for equal opportunities is shared by all senior postholders. Existing procedures for implementing the equal opportunities policy are successful.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

30   The central student services unit is located at Mackworth and is responsible for student admissions, guidance and support and for promoting the college programmes to school leavers and the community. The unit is open every weekday and four evenings each week until 20.00 hours. There is also an office at Normanton Road which is staffed by an administrative officer throughout the day and by a guidance adviser in the mornings.

31   A well-established programme of visits, guidance interviews, information and open evenings and taster programmes is arranged for school leavers and their parents. Aspects of the programme are supported by informative literature. Opportunities for adults are described at formal evening presentations. The college does not publish a prospectus but produces annual summaries of study opportunities for full and part-time students. There are leaflets for each of the programmes which briefly describe their aims and arrangements for assessment.

32   Potential students are encouraged to visit the student services unit. Reasons for the selection of GCE A level subjects and their relevance to a student's career intentions, or the choice of vocational programmes, are fully explored during early consultations to ensure that students are placed appropriately. Those who expect good grades and express an interest in proceeding to higher education are directed to GCE A level programmes while those with lower GCSE expectations or who do not wish to enter higher education are recommended to proceed to a GNVQ programme.

33   The college operates an admissions policy which respects the students' choice of study programmes and places the minimum of restrictions on entry. Students are strongly counselled against entering programmes which, in the opinion of student services staff, are unsuitable. There are instances of a lack of communication between staff in the student services unit and staff in curriculum areas. For example, some student services staff are unaware that profiles have been developed for students most likely to be successful in GCSE and GCE A level mathematics courses.

34   Assessment for entry to some programmes is referred to subject specialists. These include GNVQ art and design, nursery nursing, hairdressing and beauty therapy. The assessment includes an interview and practical and written tasks, and may result in students being referred back to student services for further counselling. Staff are not consistent in the use they make of assessment and, on occasions, unnecessary restrictions are placed on students' access to courses.

35   Accreditation of prior learning has developed in a number of curriculum areas, particularly where NVQs are available. It is used on caring and hairdressing courses. It is also an integral part of the Association of Accounting Technicians course. Elsewhere, however, there is limited awareness of accreditation of prior learning, and little literature is available in student services.

36   Most students are enrolled over a three-day period. The process is well organised. Specialist teaching staff enrol students to specific courses and provide appropriate advice and guidance. Teachers are supported where necessary by staff from student services. Signing, for those with hearing impairment, and language support are provided. Nursery staff are available to care for children and provide advice on the college nursery. Enrolment data are entered onto the computer information system immediately and this enables tutor groups to be formed within a few days. Two levels of induction are provided; a general induction, managed by personal tutors, and a programme-specific induction. Both kinds of induction are well planned. The content of induction sessions is appropriate and supported by good-quality guidance notes. However, students are not always given sufficient opportunity to raise questions or discuss issues.

37   There are a number of good examples of early, thorough assessment of students once they are enrolled on programmes. A pilot 10-day induction

and guidance programme for the GNVQ health and social care was completed in 1993-94. This assessed students' suitability for the foundation or intermediate level and provides an effective model for the appropriate placing of students within this and other GNVQ programmes. Students also undertook Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit reading and mathematics screening tests to identify those needing additional support in these areas.

38 All full-time students, sponsored part-time day-release students and others, including those who have expressed an interest in proceeding to higher education, are allocated a personal tutor. Weekly meetings are timetabled. Students not automatically allocated a personal tutor may request one. Almost half of the teaching staff are personal tutors and most, but not all, teach members of their tutor group.

39 Advice and support is available to tutors from identified deputy directors in student services and there are regular, short, staff-development events which tutors find valuable. Formal and informal links between student services staff and personal tutors are effective. Personal tutors have a wide brief. Their role is to provide personal support and guidance for students, and to help administer and record key data relating to the students' progress at the college. Tutor groups vary in size up to 20 and this can make it difficult for tutors to provide an appropriate level of individual support within the weekly time allocation. The individual interviews often take place in a classroom and lack privacy.

40 Tutors are committed to their students, who appreciate the personal support they receive. All teachers provide personal tutors with progress reports on individual students five weeks after the start of the session and these are discussed with the students concerned. Students are made aware that they can change course during the first half term. A system for notifying personal tutors of unsatisfactory progress or attendance works well. Good support is provided to enable students to complete application forms for entry to university or college.

41 Considerable importance is attached to the college's relationships with parents. A consultation evening is held early in the year at which parents are invited to make appointments to meet personal tutors. Further consultations are held throughout the year and are well attended. Parents value the opportunities for discussion which these arrangements provide.

42 On vocational courses, tutors make effective use of tutor contact periods. Students' programmes are discussed, and activities such as portfolio development and completion of records of achievement, take place. However, some tutorial groups, particularly those involving GCE A level students, lack a clear focus, and contact periods are not always used effectively.

43 The student services unit maintains information on a variety of external agencies which can be contacted to help students with their personal and social problems. Good use is also made of the staff of the

youth club on the college campus, who provide independent advice on a range of personal problems.

44   Students have the opportunity to declare sensory impairments, physical disabilities and learning difficulties during the pre-entry consultation process. There is good support from the county service for the hearing impaired. The college also seeks guidance from schools on the special needs of pupils. Guidelines are issued to teaching staff that include details of support for hearing impairment and physical disability. They are less informative on dealing with other disabilities.

45   In the past, personal tutors have been the main providers of careers education and guidance. From this year, the college has an agreement with the LEA careers service which includes the provision of in-service training for staff, individual counselling for students, including specialist counselling for students with disabilities, and open seminars on specific career matters. There is, however, an expectation that personal tutors will continue to give careers education and guidance. Curriculum notes are being developed by student services staff but no materials are currently available to support tutors in providing careers education. The library is developing a careers section which includes student access to computer-based careers information. Student services also contains a range of up-to-date careers reference material and access to relevant software.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

46   Of the 161 sessions inspected, 56 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses. The distribution of inspection grades is shown in the following table:

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCSE A/AS level	7	22	18	13	0	60
Basic education	1	4	1	1	0	7
GCSE	0	1	7	1	0	9
GNVQ	2	10	4	3	0	19
NVQ	4	3	5	1	0	13
Other vocational	3	8	6	2	1	20
Other	8	11	6	1	0	26
Access to HE	1	5	1	0	0	7
Total	26	64	48	22	1	161

47   Most students are enthusiastic and committed. In particular, students taking courses in art and design, health and community care, and engineering studied hard and were generally well motivated.

48   In most study programmes, there are clearly-stated aims that are shared with the students. The planning to ensure coverage of the syllabus is in most cases supported by written schemes of work. There is good practice in secretarial courses where there are clearly-laid-out programmes and high-quality supporting materials. However, on other courses, there were instances where the written schemes of work lacked sufficient detail to be effective planning documents.

49   The level of information on courses, provided to students, varies across the college. In social care courses, there are informative, appropriately-worded and attractively-produced course booklets, and an accompanying course induction, which enhance students' understanding of their study programme. At the other extreme, students studying GCE A level design communications were unclear about the requirements for their course.

50   In computing and science, students are able to talk knowledgeably about the content of their programme. High-quality teaching was observed in computing, mathematics and science. In specialist computing courses, project and case-study work is well planned, carefully prepared, commercially relevant and supports successfully the development of professional attitudes and practices. Students on the BTEC national diploma course were learning a new programming language and using the benefits of previously-acquired knowledge of the principles of logic, and of professional design practices, to discover and overcome some of the difficult aspects of the new language. In science, work of an appropriate standard is regularly set, marked and returned. Practical lessons are generally interesting and stimulating but safety techniques are not always given sufficient emphasis and opportunities are missed to make appropriate use of information technology. Most students studying mathematics receive good support from committed staff. The pace and level of work is appropriate for these students. The exception is a small minority of GCSE mathematics students who struggle with the level of work. These students are not sufficiently self-motivated and do not have sufficiently well-developed study skills to take advantage of the study packs used to support the teaching.

51   There is an appropriate range of motor vehicle and general engineering programmes. Much of the NVQ work is well supported by comprehensive learning and assessment material developed by college staff. The material allows students to work at their own pace and is used to record progress. The quality of teaching varied. In one class, the time was used inefficiently by making students copy extensive notes from the board. In contrast a computer-aided design class in which students used previously-prepared tutorial booklets was well structured and lively. A number of classes began with a review of the previous lesson, but in some cases only a handful of students were prepared to talk about what they had learned. Relationships between staff and students were generally good. There was effective support of hearing-impaired students in lessons.

Assessments were set at an appropriate standard. There was an effective mix of assessment styles; some assessments were designed to check recall of knowledge; others the development of research and writing skills. In all but one case, assessment criteria were available to grade the work as pass, merit or distinction. The quality of marking varied. In some cases it was thorough; in others, the work was marked without comments or corrections. The grades awarded were of an appropriate standard.

52   In business and secretarial courses many of the programmes have clear objectives and well-developed schemes, and the work is appropriately challenging. The secretarial programmes are particularly well planned and implemented, and there is good teaching of mixed-ability groups. Lessons are supported by well-designed teaching materials. The GNVQ business advanced programme is well planned and effectively taught. In the BTEC national diploma and some GNVQ business courses, students were not given enough opportunity to question and discuss and there was an over-reliance on their receiving dictation. The three GCE A level business studies programmes are not planned or delivered in a way that takes account of the range of students' previous experiences.

53   In community care courses, the organisation of teaching and learning is excellent. Staff are knowledgeable and confident, and work well as a team. There is an emphasis on ensuring that students understand the language and complex assessment processes associated with GNVQs. In class, the work progresses at an appropriate pace, is presented in a variety of ways to maintain students' interest, and is suitably challenging. Good use is made of attractive up-to-date resources, including guided-learning packages for GNVQ programmes.

54   In the general art areas, the quality of teaching and the promotion of learning is good and at times excellent. Teachers used varied and effective techniques, and assignment briefs were comprehensive. Good working relations were established between staff and students, particularly on vocational courses. Work is assessed at an appropriate standard and grades and comments are returned promptly. In a small minority of cases, poor planning led to inappropriately-paced work and inefficient use of the teaching time available.

55   Teachers make effective use of modern technology in the teaching of modern languages. There are lively lessons where the onus is placed on the students to respond in the language they are learning. Coverage of topical issues is ensured through the effective use of periodicals and media programmes. The overall quality of the teaching and the promotion of learning in psychology and sociology is good. Most staff are well prepared and well organised. Where students do not receive written handouts, staff prepare notes in advance on the blackboard. Students experience various methods of working. Group work is a major strength but there are also many examples of good work between the teacher and individual students. In the best classes, teachers set a challenging pace, constantly check students' understanding and are sensitive to the needs of the different

groups and individuals. For example, an excellent rapport has been established with adult students on the course preparing them for entry to higher education. Teachers provided the right amount of praise and encouragement, especially at the beginning of term. In some sessions in the humanities, there was too little variety in the teaching methods, an over-emphasis on students taking notes and a failure to involve all the students in class activities. In English and communications there was little attempt to provide for students' differing abilities, and there was insufficient checking of students' learning and progress during lessons.

56   On separate specialist courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities there are good examples of staff using students' own experiences. One-to-one interventions between the lecturer and the student were used effectively to give clear instructions, check learning and provide reinforcement. Computing staff have developed expertise in supporting the learning needs of a variety of students, including those with hearing and visual impairments. However, those requiring basic numeracy and literacy support are not well supported by the self-instructional manuals on information technology, which they find difficult to follow. Where students are attending mainstream courses there is effective integration. Hearing-impaired students are effectively supported in sessions by a pool of skilled signers. In social care courses, hearing-impaired students contributed effectively in discussions. Several students are progressing satisfactorily through NVQ and BTEC national diplomas in engineering. There was some poor practice in groups which included hearing-impaired students, where lecturers failed to talk distinctly, or talked to the signer and not the student.

57   There is good support for students taking GCE A level mathematics. They undergo an early diagnostic test which leads, where required, to a planned programme of support through a voluntary bridging course. This helps students making the transition from national curriculum mathematics to GCE A level mathematics. A pilot project in which all GCSE mathematics students and some GNVQ students were screened for numeracy and communication skills was undertaken this year.

58   The college has a number of drop-in workshops that provide learner support for mathematics, information technology and communications. Students have access to mathematics and communications workshops at both the Mackworth and Normanton Road sites and in some cases may be referred to them by personal tutors. The mathematics workshop at Mackworth is in good, well-resourced accommodation and mathematics staff are present at set times during the week. The workshop was under used by students at the time of the inspection. Information technology resources were well used by students to support their assignment work. The communications workshop was still being developed and was poorly resourced. At the Mackworth site, referrals to workshops are not formally logged; recording of progress is either inadequate or non-existent, and there are no follow-up reports to tutors.

59   The monitoring and recording of student progress varies between courses. In art and design, assessment records are comprehensive. Effective recording systems for GNVQ have been developed across the college. The GNVQ records for core skills in computing and health and social care provide useful information on students' progress and achievement. In GCSE mathematics the formal assessment is not sufficiently frequent to provide staff with useful indications of the progress students are making. The tracking of students who use the workshops was inconsistent and the information collected about this was therefore unreliable.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

60   High standards of work were observed in the projects and course assignments in computing, art and design, GCE A level science, the science access course, GCE A level history, and oral communication in modern languages. In all other courses standards were generally found to be satisfactory although there were variations within individual subjects. Geographical standards were sometimes good but there were also examples of poorly-presented project work where the analytical aspects were weak. In a number of areas such as engineering, the standards of literacy and numeracy in assignments were very variable. There are opportunities for students to improve on basic skills, and some students in engineering and health and social care courses were taking advantage of these opportunities to study City and Guilds numberpower and wordpower programmes.

61   The results achieved by students on some vocational programmes, particularly BTEC national diploma awards, were good. In the 1992-93 academic year, all final-year students achieved their BTEC national diplomas in engineering and diploma in graphic design. On the BTEC national diploma in business and finance courses the pass rate was 94 per cent. All the other BTEC national diploma and certificate courses had pass rates in excess of 88 per cent. The BTEC first diploma results were more variable. In leisure studies the results were acceptable with 67 per cent of those enrolled gaining the award. Of the 25 students who registered for the BTEC first diploma in information technology, 44 per cent gained the full award. The results of the NVQ 2 in business administration were poor with only 17 per cent achieving the full award.

62   In 1993-94, results were variable. In art and design, results were good with generally high retention and success rates of about 90 per cent. The exception was the BTEC first diploma where the retention rate was 66 per cent and the pass rate 76 per cent. In business studies, there was low retention on the GNVQ intermediate course and a low completion rate of 60 per cent for portfolios. The success on the NVQ 2 business administration course was also low with only 45 per cent of the students successfully completing the programme. There was also a significant mismatch between the internal and external assessment results for the

Association of Accounting Technicians programmes and internal standards should be raised.

63   Eighty-seven 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 places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector in this performance measure.

64   In 1992-93, there were 981 examination entries in 32 subjects for GCE A and AS level by students of all ages studying full time or part time and 657 (67 per cent) gained a grade A-E. This is above the national average of 66 per cent for all candidates in general further education and tertiary colleges. In 1993-94 the number of individual entries rose to 1,078 and those gaining a grade A-E improved to 70.5 per cent. Good pass rates were achieved in a number of subjects at GCE A level including textiles, fine art, graphic design, and photography all with 100 per cent pass rates at grades A-E. Other subjects with good results included communication studies (92 per cent), English literature (81 per cent) and biology (82 per cent).

65   The 365 students aged 16-18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1993-94 scored, on average, 4.0 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.

66   There were 900 entries for 22 GCSE subjects in 1993. Forty-two per cent of those sitting gained grades A-C. The average pass rate at grades A-C for all general further education and tertiary colleges was about 50 per cent. In 1993-94, there were 718 entries and 40.5 per cent gained a grade A-C. The reduction in numbers reflects the change away from students having a whole programme of GCSEs to one where some GCSE subjects form an addition to the students' main programme. Retention rates are poor in some subjects. For example, in mathematics retention is only about 50 per cent and there are some subjects where a large number of students who were entered did not sit the examination. In English, 29 per cent did not attend the examination.

67   Destination data are particularly well documented and the destinations of 80 per cent of full-time students were collected for 1992-93. The majority of students (86 per cent) from GCSE, BTEC first and GNVQ intermediate programmes enrol on further programmes in further education colleges. Higher education is the destination of 59 per cent of BTEC national, GNVQ advanced and GCE A level students. Twenty-five per cent of GCE A level students stay in further education. The overall destinations of full-time students is 6.6 per cent into employment, 37.5 per cent into higher education, 47.8 per cent staying in further eduction and 8 per cent to other destinations including unemployment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

68   The production of a college charter has been given a high priority. Student representatives were able to contribute through their membership of the task group that produced the charter document. The college charter has made effective use of cross-referencing to indicate other sources of relevant information such as the student handbook. There is room for further development of the charter to broaden its relevance to the community that the college aims to serve and to strengthen the links to quality and standards.

69   Quality is identified as a key factor by the college in the corporate plan which sets out the commitment to a quality system, 'to ensure quality provision by enhancing, monitoring and evaluating systems'. There is a curriculum review policy that states 'curriculum review and evaluation will occur regularly to an agreed time schedule, will result in recommendations to the academic board, the governors and other bodies as appropriate'. However, there are examples where quality issues have been identified and debated by the academic board but have not resulted in timely action.

70   The college does not have a quality manager. Quality is the responsibility of all staff and is intended to be an integral part of all college activities. However, the aim of creating a quality culture has yet to be fully realised. There is no specific reference to quality in the job descriptions for curriculum directors or deputy curriculum directors although they are heavily involved in the quality review process. Curriculum directors, for example, consider themselves responsible for the quality of the annual reviews.

71   A self-assessment report was produced by the college for the inspection as required in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report provided a commentary on all the required areas and indicated sources of evidence but there was no rigorous analysis and little evaluation.

72   An executive task group was set up to design and implement a quality and review system for the curriculum. The pilot system was approved by the academic board and introduced in 1993. It has operated for one complete academic year. The quality review system formally linked programme teams and students in the review process. This was in line with the college's equal opportunities policy which offers all members of the college the opportunity to participate fully in curriculum review. The annual reports are expected to include a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The use of quantitative indicators at programme level is, at present, limited. No clear targets are set for year-on-year comparison. The central information system provides insufficient data and analysis to the programme review groups.

73   A staff-development programme successfully raised staff awareness of the quality process. The accompanying documentation was clear and there were concise terms of reference and guidelines for the review groups.

However, implementation has been variable across the college and some managers have been more successful than others. In the information technology programme review group, there is a well-managed process where operational detail is covered in course team meetings, and programme review meetings are used for strategic planning and review issues. In other instances, the programme review groups are overwhelmed with detailed day-to-day issues and the review part of the process is obscured.

74   There are examples of excellent practice in psychology where there is an annual evaluative review leading to the identification of strengths and weaknesses and an action plan. In mathematics, the evaluation of examination results has included some value-added analysis, comparing students' achievements with their qualifications on entry, which has been used to inform the recruitment and guidance process. However, the college has taken the decision not to record or use any value-added calculations to identify the progress made by students during their GCSE or GCE A level studies. It consequently has difficulty in analysing the progress that results from students spending further years in study.

75   The different formats used to record examination results, the award of qualifications and retention rates across the college creates difficulties in monitoring and analysing them. Some programmes have produced no annual review. In other annual reviews the evaluation is limited.

76   A report on the pilot curriculum quality review process has been produced after one year of operation. Resulting developments have included extending the involvement of employers, and representatives of higher education and the local TEC on curriculum development groups. The report identified that there is no indication of action having been taken on issues raised in some curriculum development group minutes. It also identified that student representatives were not fully participating in the system, and training by the student union manager is now planned. Directorate meetings now include reports from curriculum review groups.

77   Teams supplying support services within the college have developed various methods for gauging the quality of the services provided. The catering team and nursery/creche group have carried out useful customer surveys. A survey has been conducted of the ways in which various groups of students use the library, and recommendations arising from the survey are being implemented.

78   A positive feature of the curriculum review system is the requirement to identify staff-development needs. Requests for staff development may be made to support college objectives, team goals or personal development objectives. The system is well documented and encourages the clear identification of the objectives. Objectives are more clearly stated by some staff than others and some coaching in writing objectives is required. The category of request is now monitored against corporate and other objectives to enhance the effective management of staff-development

activities. There has been a range of activities to support the development of the college objectives. For example, mathematics staff have been involved in GNVQ development and attended staff-development events to support this. The introduction of the GNVQ in art and design has also been accompanied by a range of supportive staff-development activities.

79   There are other college initiatives to assist in the development of staff. An effective and productive initiative is the college's involvement with the Understanding British Industry project, sponsored by the Confederation of British Industry education foundation, and undertaken in conjunction with the TEC and other colleges. Staff were found industrial placements to help update their knowledge of current commercial practice. The withdrawal of TEC support has inhibited the further development of this useful activity.

80   Staff are required to make a written evaluation of all development activity in which they are involved. The quality of these evaluations is variable. Staff-development activities are not always evaluated against the objectives set out in the original request. Internal staff-development events are not all accompanied by an evaluation by the staff involved, although the organiser provides a report.

81   There is an effective one-day induction programme for all teaching and support staff including part-time staff. There is also a mentor system for new staff which can last for several months and which provides a method of resolving queries as staff develop into their appointments. Recently-appointed staff valued the system.

82   There are sufficient funds available in the college to meet the priorities for staff development. Staff development is available and used by all staff. There are opportunities for support staff to gain a range of qualifications where these are relevant to college objectives and provide good personal development. Activities range from supervisory management qualifications at NVQ level 3 for the nursery manager to signing courses for refectory staff to improve their ability to respond to deaf students.

83   The college has a voluntary annual review system that enables staff to review their training needs. The system is voluntary and does not involve all staff. This is currently weakening the system for identifying personal staff-development needs.

RESOURCES

Staffing

84   The college has a clear strategy, policies and procedures for the management of staff. At the moment, the personnel function is adequately supported by a number of manual and computer systems which are currently being brought together in an integrated computer-based system.

85   The majority of the full-time teaching staff were appointed to the college as a result of the tertiary reorganisation in 1989. Teaching staff

are appropriately qualified. Most have significant teaching experience. Only five of the teaching staff are without a teaching qualification.

86   Full-time staff in many of the curriculum areas, including business, science and information technology, have little recent industrial experience. The limited experience of the full-time staff is to some extent balanced by the more recent industrial experience of part-time staff. Part-time staff are increasingly relied upon in some curriculum areas and yet there have been occasions when new equipment, new courses and changes in accreditation have been introduced without their involvement.

87   There is a low level of staff turnover. In the 1993-94 academic year, only 5 per cent of support staff and 12 per cent of teaching staff changed through retirement or resignation. Staff from minority ethnic groups are under-represented in established posts at the college; only 3 per cent of academic staff and 4.5 per cent of support staff compared with 23 per cent of full-time students come from minority ethnic groups.

88   The college support staff provide competent technical and administrative services. Care assistants work as equal partners alongside teachers and skilled signers are available to work with hearing-impaired students. The staff-development programme is increasing the flexibility of support staff and improving their effectiveness. For example, technicians are now able to take on roles in more than one curriculum area. However, there are still variations in the level of available support. There is a good level of support from well-qualified science and information technology technicians. Redeployment, retraining and some recruitment are addressing deficiencies in other areas.

Equipment/learning resources

89   In most areas of the college, there is sufficient industrial-standard information technology equipment to support the curriculum, and appropriate common software and menus to help students use the equipment. Excellent self-study materials are available in fully-supported, open-access workshops throughout the day and the evening. Information technology equipment is scarce in science, and there is limited equipment to support graphic design, mathematics and some humanities teaching.

90   Science laboratories are well resourced with modern equipment. There is an appropriate range of basic equipment available in the art and design studios. Specialist equipment to support fashion is of a high standard, but photographic equipment is inadequate.

91   Mechanical engineering workshops are generally well equipped. Many of the machine tools are less than 10 years old. Pneumatics and hydraulics equipment is adequate and there are sufficient hand tools. The gas welding equipment is of good quality and the mechanical science and measurement equipment is adequate. There are well-equipped motor vehicle workshops with six petrol cars, one diesel car and two modern motor cycles, but there is a general shortage of small diesels. Sufficient

electrical test equipment and microprocessor training kits are provided. There is an adequate computer-aided design facility, but the equipment is unable to run the most recent software. There are insufficient quantities of machine tools for motor vehicle engineering.

92   Staff can use the audio-visual aids service to produce high-quality teaching aids. Much of the material is relevant, topical and of high quality. In many areas excellent open-learning material is available. Not all teachers take advantage of the facilities available and there are instances when poor-quality transparencies and handouts are used in lessons. The quality of whiteboards, chalkboards and overhead projector equipment is poor in some of the teaching areas.

93   The library and learning centres on the Mackworth site provide a valuable resource. Opening times are adequate for the current student population. In addition to the library there are two learning centres which are available to any student but are specifically designed for the needs of particular curriculum areas. In addition, the modern and up-to-date language centre serves the needs of a range of English and foreign language students, including those on courses for industry.

94   The head of library and learning resources is responsible for a team of library assistants, open-learning centre administrators and learning resource assistants. The library and learning centres have some 29,000 items, available in book, audio-visual and other formats. Text books and other resources are also retained in resource bases within curriculum areas. The library has good basic texts and periodicals in the majority of areas. However, in some curriculum areas there is an inadequate supply of essential titles, the existing books are not regularly reviewed and some are out of date. The library has computer-based information facilities, and increasing numbers of computer information databases are being purchased for use by students. Only 197 study spaces are available for students in the college library and learning centres. It has been recognised that this is inadequate and plans are at an advanced stage to provide an additional open study area with 135 study spaces.

95   The library at Normanton Road is not well developed. The study facilities and stock are inadequate for students at this site, particularly for art and design students and adult returners.

96   Equipment purchases are well managed through the resources directorate. Decisions on priorities are made in consultation with the senior management team. There is no delegation of budgets to curriculum areas. The notional allocation is based upon student numbers, income generation and curriculum development. Requests for consumables and small items of equipment are made against this allocation. Budgetary control and value-for-money measures rest with the resources directorate.

97   There is no rolling replacement programme for equipment. The college is currently devising a system to estimate the life-cycle of equipment and put this into a rolling replacement plan.

Accommodation

98   The accommodation is used flexibly and efficiently. The college has a comprehensive accommodation strategy and a maintenance programme which clearly states priorities in relation to the strategic plan. As part of its accommodation strategy, a detailed use of space analysis has been carried out, using a manual charting system. There is potential for increasing the capacity by extending opening times. For security reasons evening sessions are concentrated into one or two areas of the college.

99   The extensive changes taking place at Normanton Road are part of the overall strategy to improve the use of space and to maintain a presence in the city centre. At the time of the inspection, there were still some problems affecting the effective use of this site. The plans indicate that when current projects are completed there will be sufficient capacity for all current and planned developments. The Sidney Street annex of the college has been developed as a multi-functional workshop, suitable for the teaching of wood, metal and concrete skills. It is used for training in manufacturing practice for training credit trainees and other groups of students, some of whom have learning difficulties.

100 The Mackworth site is generally clean, safe and pleasant. It is accessible for students with disabilities, including wheelchair access. Rooms are generally in an adequate state of repair. Science laboratories are well kept and comfortable. A suite of rooms provides a convenient focus for specialist mathematics provision. There are well-laid-out and spacious rooms for business administration, secretarial skills and communications workshops. Motor vehicle workshops provide a professional learning environment. The mechanical engineering workshops are of a satisfactory standard, although the floor surface requires recoating and safety lining. The welding workshop provides a high-class facility but it is under used. Some classrooms in the workshop block are functional but require redecoration. Internally, the student services building is suitable for its purpose and there has been a good level of investment to make it friendly and functional. However, the external appearance gives a poor initial impression of the college.

101 The current building work at Normanton Road and the nature of the buildings including the refectory means that the environment is less welcoming. New studios are being developed to provide a potentially excellent teaching facility for art and design. There is a good, stimulating base room available for history. There is a lift and a number of other access improvements have been made, but there continue to be problems of access on this site for those with impaired mobility. The base room for supported learning programmes is poorly planned. The signposting of rooms is poor around the college.

102 Excellent nursery facilities are available on the main site and at Normanton Road. They are spacious, well maintained and safe.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

103 The strengths of the college are:

- the effective liaison with, and responsiveness to, the TEC, employers, community organisations and other education providers

- effective governance and management

- good links with local schools and an established programme of guidance

- a readily-accessible student services unit providing a comprehensive and courteous service

- satisfactory examination results

- a supportive tutorial system

- well-qualified and competent teaching and support staff

- comprehensive strategies for accommodation and staffing

- excellent childcare facilities.

104 If it is to raise standards further, the college should:

- identify training needs through more active market research

- involve employers in curriculum development and review

- develop the support available from the management information system

- formally monitor the progress of students receiving additional academic support

- further develop its quality assurance systems and increase the emphasis on evaluation

- implement fully a rolling programme for the replacement of equipment.

FIGURES

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

Figure 1

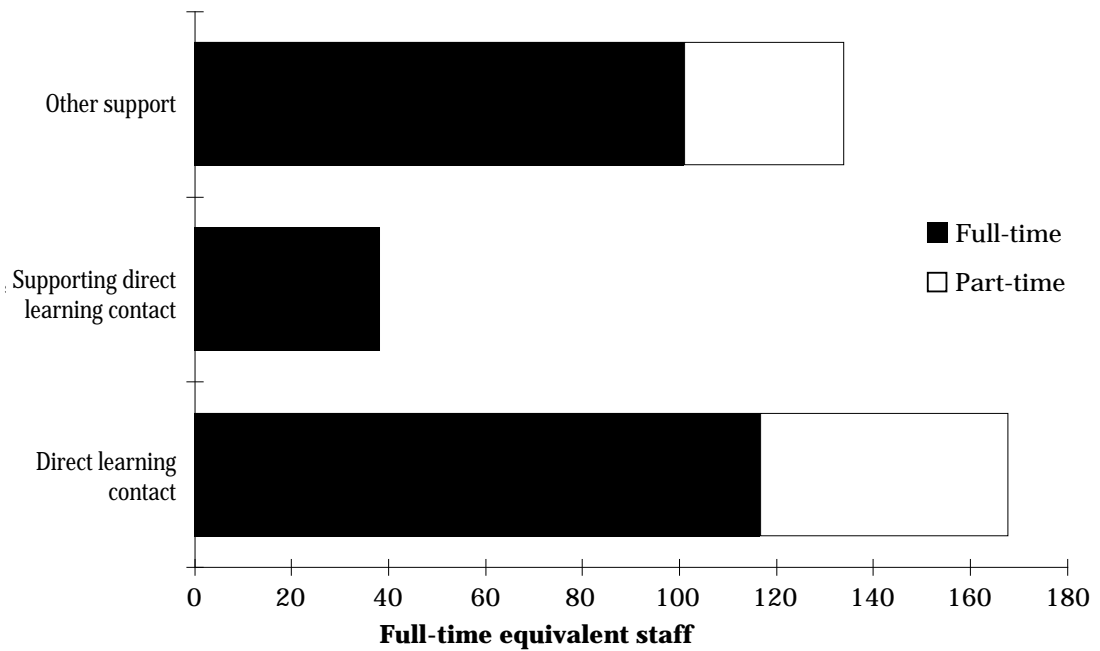**Mackworth College: percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)**

Legend:
- ☐ Age under 16
- ■ Age 16-18 years
- ■ Age 19-24 years
- ☐ Age 25+ years
- ☐ Not known

3%   2%
33%
16%
46%
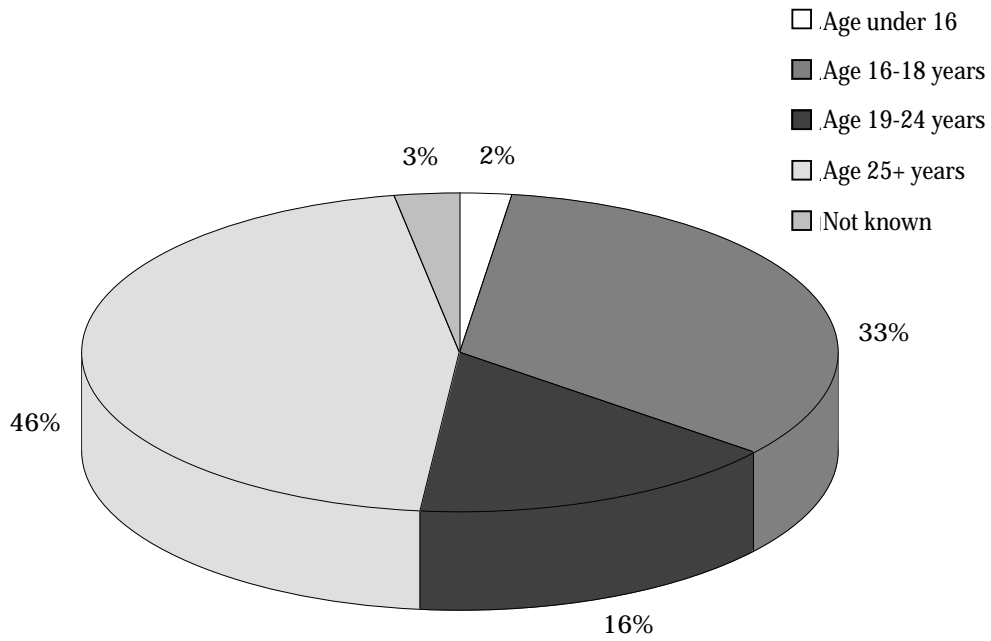
Enrolments: 6,981

Figure 2

Mackworth College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1993-94)

Higher
education
1%

Foundation
level
11%

Intermediate
level
38%

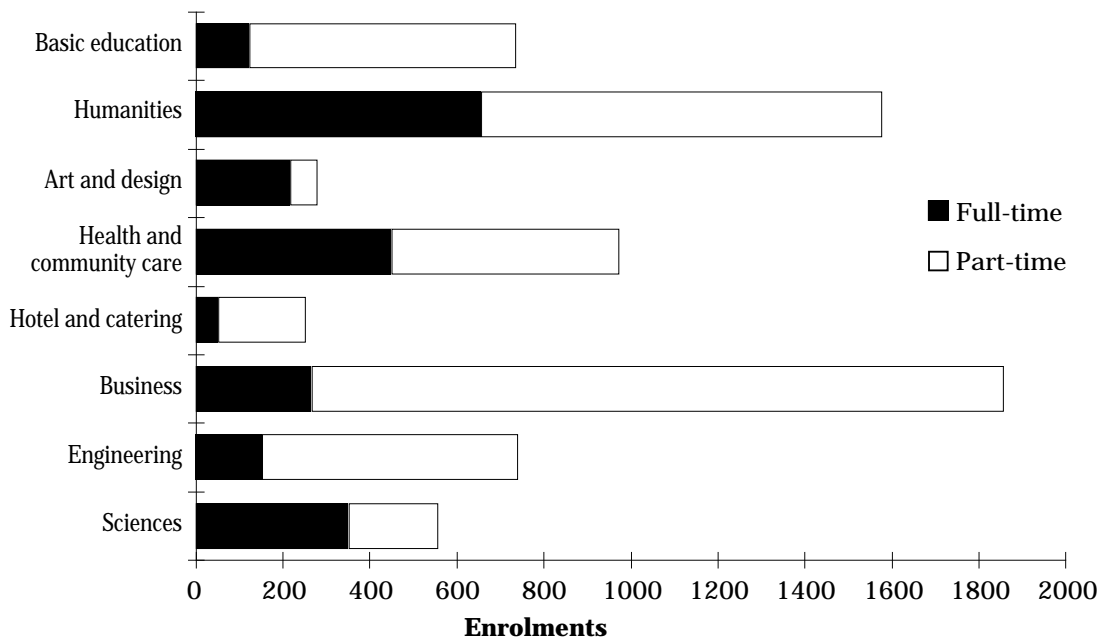Advanced level
50%
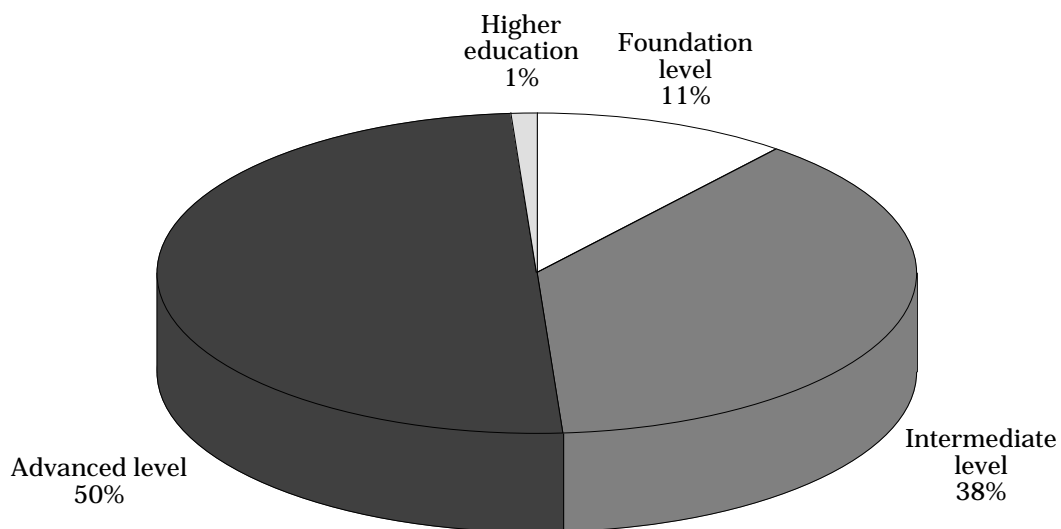
Enrolments: 6,981

Figure 3

Mackworth College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)
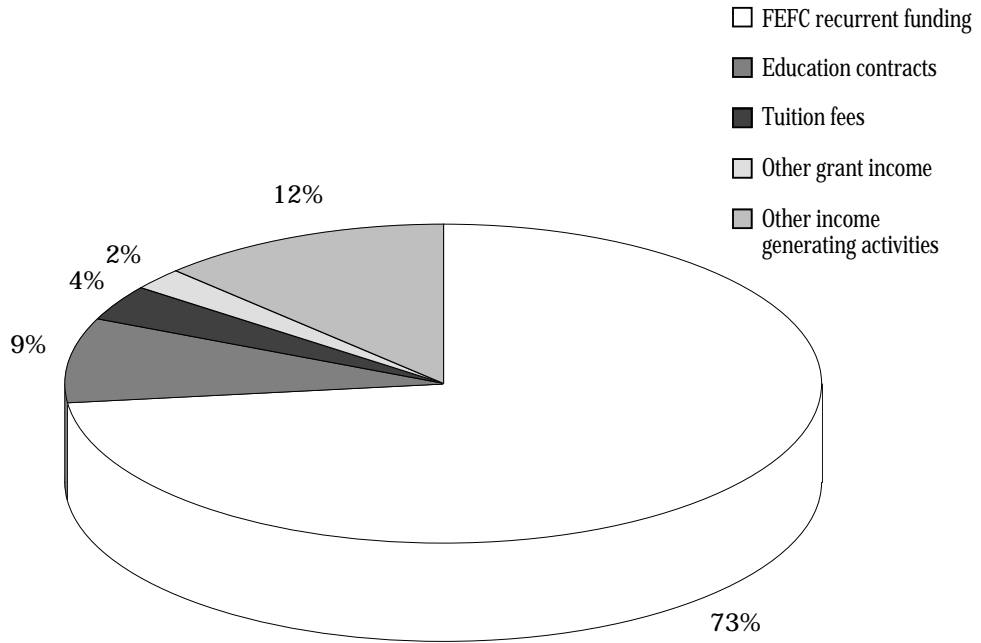

Full-time equivalent staff: 340

Figure 4

Mackworth College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)

Enrolments: 6,981

Figure 5

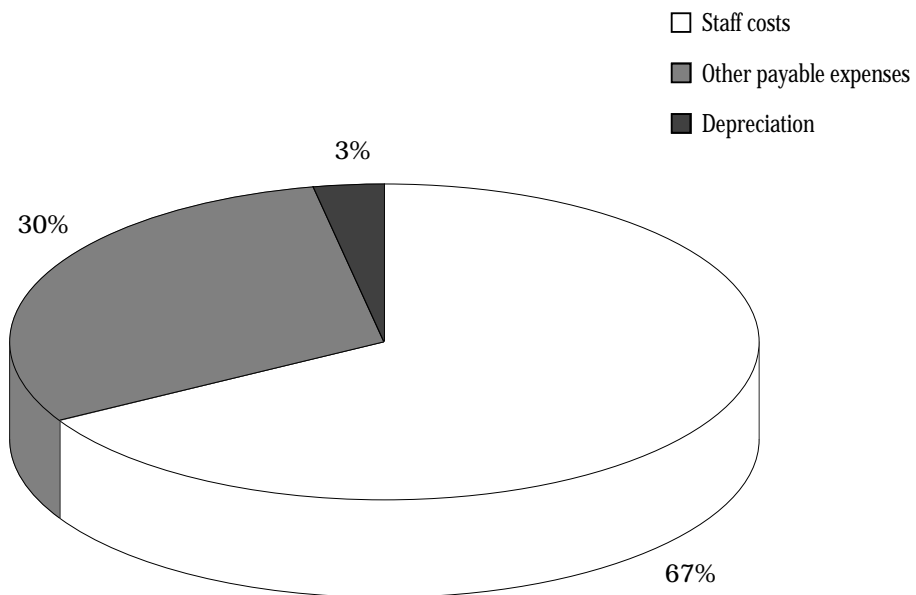**Mackworth College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)**

☐ FEFC recurrent funding

◼ Education contracts

◼ Tuition fees

☐ Other grant income

◼ Other income generating activities

12%

2%

4%

9%

73%

Income: £13,133,000   *Note: this excludes £30,000 capital grants*

Figure 6

Mackworth College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

☐ Staff costs

◼ Other payable expenses

◼ Depreciation

3%

30%

67%

Expenditure: £13,607,000   *Note: this chart excludes £10,000 interest payable*