

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Salisbury College

June 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

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

College grade profiles 1993-95

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

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 86/96

SALISBURY COLLEGE SOUTH WEST REGION

Inspected February 1995-February 1996

Summary

Salisbury College provides a wide range of courses which meet the needs of the local community. There is an effective and responsive student services unit. The majority of its students attend part time and 75 per cent are over 19 years of age. The college has good relations with the Wiltshire TEC and with the community. The senior management team gives a high priority to consultation and communication with all staff. The strategic plan is well understood by staff and governors. Its key aim is to encourage the development of new styles of learning. Learning resource centres are a strong feature of the college. A particular strength of the college is the development of self-assessment procedures at all levels of the institution. Areas for improvement include the variable quality of tutorial support, the quality of teaching and learning in some areas, in particular for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the lack of recent industrial and commercial knowledge of some staff. The college should also: address the quality of management at divisional level and the unsatisfactory standard of much of the accommodation; raise the levels of student achievement and retention and improve the collection and recording of destination information. A comprehensive framework for quality assurance has been established, but the setting of standards, targets and performance indicators across the college is at an early stage and has yet to make an impact on student achievement.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision		Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision		1
Governance and management		3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		2
Quality assurance		3
Resources:	staffing	3
	equipment/learning resources	2
	accommodation	4

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematics, science and computing	3	Health and community care	2
Construction	2	Hair and beauty	3
Engineering	3	Art and design	3
Business and management studies	3	Humanities, social studies and foreign languages	3
Catering, leisure and tourism	2	Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4

INTRODUCTION

1 Salisbury College was inspected between February 1995 and February 1996. Twenty-two inspectors spent a total of 80 days in the college. Enrolment and induction were inspected in September. The college's curriculum areas were inspected during February and November 1995 and January 1996. Cross-college issues were inspected in February 1996.

2 Inspectors visited 215 classes, involving 2,280 students, and examined students' practical and written work. There were meetings with governors, college managers, teaching and support staff, students and with representatives from industry, local schools, the community, higher education and the Wiltshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Inspectors examined a range of documentation relating to the college and its courses.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 Salisbury College is a general further education college close to the city centre of Salisbury. It was formed in 1992 from the merger of the former Salisbury College of Technology and the Salisbury College of Art and Design which shared the site the college now occupies. The college has a small outpost at Amesbury, 10 miles north of Salisbury and provides courses at a number of outreach centres in and around Salisbury.

4 The city of Salisbury is in the south of Wiltshire which is a largely rural county with a comparatively low population. Employment in the area is mainly in farming, land-based industries and with the Ministry of Defence. The army has a number of bases on Salisbury Plain. The largest is at Tidworth, about 15 miles north of the city. Two hundred students from the army enrolled at the college in 1994-95. There are government research establishments at nearby Boscombe Down and Porton Down. Unemployment in the area has risen as a result of job losses in farming and related industries, and cutbacks in the defence industry.

5 The population of Wiltshire is 588,573, of whom nearly 20 per cent live in the district of Salisbury and approximately 5 per cent are aged 16 to 19. The immediate Salisbury District area has seven comprehensive schools for pupils aged 11 to 16, one 13 to 18 comprehensive school, an 11 to 16 technology college and two single-sex grammar schools.

6 At the time of inspection, there were 9,530 students at the college of whom 6,543 were enrolled on further education courses. There were 968 students enrolled on higher education courses and 2,019 on leisure and recreation classes. Of all students, 7,110 were over 19 years of age. Student numbers by age, by level of study, and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

7 The college has 313 full-time equivalent employees, of whom 175 are teachers, 60 directly support learning in posts such as technicians and 78 have other support roles. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

8 The college's management structure was reorganised in September 1995. The senior management team comprises the principal and three vice-principals. Teaching staff and technicians are based in one of 15 divisions each of which is managed by a head of division. The three vice-principals are each responsible for overseeing the work of five divisions. Similarly, three managers with responsibility for quality assurance each work with five divisions and functional areas. Administrative staff are the responsibility of the college registrar who is accountable to one of the vice-principals.

9 The college aims: to provide a full and accessible range of educational provision to meet the needs of all sections of the local community; to offer those students who require it, additional and effective support for their learning; and to develop modes of attendance and flexible timetabling arrangements to enable students to study at times and in ways which suit them. A key feature of the college's strategic plan is the development of learning centres throughout the college to support a range of student learning activities.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10 A broad range of courses, levels and modes of study is available in all Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas except agriculture. General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses at foundation level are offered in the built environment and health and care. There are also full-time courses leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 in business administration and construction. Intermediate and advanced GNVQ courses are offered in art and design, business, health and care, leisure and tourism, science, information technology, the built environment, engineering. Food and hospitality is offered only at advanced level. There are six Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma courses in fashion, graphic design, performing arts, nursery nursing, computing and engineering. A substantial number of vocational courses, both full time and part time, lead to NVQs at level 2 or above.

11 Twenty-nine General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) subjects are available to full-time and part-time students. The timetable is arranged to suit the needs of part-time adult students. There is a core of eight General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects for full-time students. Many more GCSE subjects are on offer for full-time and part-time students at various outreach centres in and beyond Salisbury. The access to higher education programme for adults offers a wide range of 13 different subject specialisms around a common core of tutorial guidance and help with study skills. Two courses meet the many different needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those for students with severe learning and physical difficulties. Students can progress from these courses to the 'choices' programme which offers vocational modules, some GCSE subjects, and the opportunity to take GNVQ at foundation level and NVQ at level 1.

12 The college has been flexible in its timetabling arrangements to provide students with opportunities for open learning whereby they can study on their own in a learning centre, often through the use of information technology, using materials which suit their individual needs. Fourteen GCSE and GCE A level subjects and many courses in business administration, computer-aided design and construction may be studied in this way in the learning centre. Students following courses or subjects taught by staff in the divisions reinforce their learning through additional study in the centre. For example, one student on an access to higher education course worked for GCSE mathematics in the learning centre and, as a result, entered for the examination earlier than originally anticipated and was successful.

13 Approximately 10 per cent of the college's work is in higher education. There are 11 full-time and five part-time higher education courses, covering photography, electronic engineering, business, film and television, fashion and textiles, hotel and catering, building studies and design. Approximately half of the college's higher education courses are franchised from the Southampton Institute of Higher Education. A teacher training programme is validated by the University of Greenwich and an access to higher education programme by a consortium led by the University of Portsmouth. Links with all these higher education institutions are constructive and effective.

14 There are limited structured opportunities for students to participate in activities beyond their examination syllabus or outside their main courses. The general education division offers a voluntary programme of curriculum enrichment for full-time students whereby those who wish to may choose to pursue a cultural or recreational activity. There is no college policy on curriculum enrichment, although the possibility of formulating one is under discussion. There is a policy for promoting European awareness in the curriculum, but no strong evidence of its implementation. Nevertheless, many of the divisions have arranged exchanges of students with, or made visits to, institutions on the continent. At the time of inspection, there were 122 overseas students in the college from 37 different countries.

15 The college is increasingly responsive to the training needs of industry. It surveys the needs of employers, responds efficiently to demands for training and asks employers to evaluate the quality of the training provided for them. The college is a major provider in the region of training and NVQ assessment in the workplace for glaziers, and of management training for armed service's personnel which is offered at the college or at services bases. Management training is also provided jointly with health trust staff for hospital personnel. The college has been more successful in working with large employers than the many small and medium-sized enterprises in the area.

16 A co-operative and productive working relationship has been established with Wiltshire TEC, for which the college provides its 'directions' youth programme. The principal is a member of the TEC's southern area board and the recognition panel for the Investors in People award. The college is working with Business Links (Southern Wiltshire) Ltd. to survey training needs, and with the three other TECs in the area to develop more detailed labour market information.

17 There are good links with local schools. Staff from the college visit schools to attend events such as careers evenings and to talk to year 11 pupils about courses and opportunities at the college. These links are generally stronger with the 11 to 16 schools than the 11 to 18 schools. Teachers from the schools who were consulted during the inspection were complimentary about the quality of arrangements for liaison between the college and their institution.

18 The college has put much effort into extending its activities to meet a wide range of needs in the community. Classes on Saturdays mornings in subjects such as business administration and GCSE mathematics have attracted over 350 students. The college is responsive to the needs of the unemployed and provides them, where possible, with learning materials free of cost. The college also arranges a programme of talks aimed to help the unemployed. Computing and business administration courses are franchised to the Royal British Legion College at Tidworth. In collaboration with the rural development commission, the college is bidding for funding from the European Union to develop training in rural crafts. Equality of opportunities is explicitly promoted in the college's statement of its mission and by specific ventures such as short courses to attract women into painting and decorating, technology and engineering.

19 Marketing activities are clearly defined and well planned. There are four market sectors: 16 to 19 year olds, independent adults, higher education and employed students. Marketing targets relating to the strategic plan are set and monitored. Monitoring of the curriculum and enrolments are used to inform marketing. An effective and consistent corporate image has been developed. Representatives from the community and business who were consulted during the inspection regarded the range of publicity activities carried out by the college as effective.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

20 There are 16 members of the corporation. These include the principal, 10 independent members representing a cross-section of the local community, two staff members, two co-opted members and a representative of Wiltshire TEC. The board has three subcommittees: finance and general purposes; audit; and remuneration. Meetings are well recorded and minutes are clear.

21 The governors are supportive of the college and its aims. To gain greater understanding of the work of the college, each governor is paired

with a college manager. Governors are well informed about the college's strategic plan and receive regular monitoring reports on its objectives. To date, however, they have received limited information on the achievement and destinations of students and are keen to be given more. They have not received regular reports on the implementation of some college policies. They recently carried out a self-assessment of their work as a board and intend to repeat this annually.

22 The strategic planning process is highly consultative. The views of staff are sought at all stages. The plan is understood and accepted by staff and governors as central to the future direction of the college. Its main aims are to achieve growth and to encourage the introduction of new styles of learning for students. Several of the changes identified in the strategic plan which will affect the way students learn, are dependent on the availability of suitable accommodation. The college has, however, no detailed accommodation strategy. The college's policy of developing learning centres has been disseminated to all staff, but it is not yet fully understood by all.

23 Managers produce their own operational plans to support the strategic plan. These are reviewed formally with the college's senior management team. Each operational plan is judged against the strategic plan and managers have to justify the objectives they have set. They are encouraged to produce performance indicators in order that achievements can be measured. Plans vary in quality. In some cases, the targets are not realistic and are not able to be measured. The best plans provide a sound basis for measuring progress. There is wide variation in the effectiveness of the practices of the middle management. In the best practice, middle managers ensure that there is clear documentation to support the monitoring of students' progress and achievement. In some instances, the timetabling arrangements made by middle managers are poor. There is little opportunity for middle managers to discuss and share good practice. Training for middle managers has been limited.

24 Senior managers place a high priority upon consultation with all staff. The college has a variety of systems for ensuring good communications across the college. The senior management team meets weekly. Senior managers and middle managers meet together monthly. There is also a designated weekly meeting time which is used by middle managers for divisional, cross-college and course team meetings. Communication with some part-time staff is less satisfactory because they have difficulty attending meetings. There are regular newsletters for all staff and students.

25 The academic board has recently reviewed its role. The results of a survey of the views of staff about the academic board showed that few understood its role and purpose.

26 The process for delegating budgets is clear and understood. Budgets are allocated to divisional heads. Using a divisional spreadsheet model,

allocations are based on a formula which takes account of the number of students enrolled. Budgets are amended to take account of the withdrawal or increased enrolment of students. Managers can bid for additional funding from a variety of centrally held budgets. For example, managers can bid for funding for specific projects to increase student enrolments in line with the strategic plan. Resource requirements are given due consideration. Divisions have to submit annual development plans which reflect the college's strategic plan and include in these a statement of their needs for equipment. The college recognises the importance of calculating unit costs and has begun the process of allocating costs to college activities.

27 The college has a well-established range of computerised management information systems which provide financial and enrolment data. Middle managers receive regular information to enable them to monitor their spending on staffing and consumables. Not all managers make full use of these data. Heads of division are kept well informed of the number of students on their courses. A separate system records the enrolments and withdrawals of students. In a few instances, heads of divisions have begun to set targets for the retention of students, but target setting and the use of performance indicators are at an early stage. Strategies to improve retention and increase enrolments have been successful in some areas. The setting of targets for students' achievements is not widespread in the college. The college lacks effective systems for monitoring the achievement of students across the whole institution.

28 The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6, respectively. The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 is £17.04 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £17.84 and the median for all sector colleges is £18.56 per unit. The college did not achieve its growth target in 1995, attaining only 93 per cent of its intended units of activity. Enrolment targets are set and closely monitored.

29 The college has a statement of policy on equal opportunities and a working party has been established to advise on its implementation. There is a policy on health and safety and the implementation of this is monitored by a committee which meets three times a year.

30 Details of the intended destinations of students are collected and the college attempts to record their actual destinations. On some courses, however, the percentage of students leaving the college whose destinations are unknown is as high as 50 per cent.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

31 The college has an effective system for providing guidance and support to students. A students' support unit was established in 1992. It is operated by professionally-qualified staff and is well used by students. It is adjacent to the main reception areas in a highly visible, welcoming and attractive location. Advice on careers guidance, counselling and

financial or accommodation matters is given by telephone or in person. The students' support team provides a high level of care and sensitivity in dealing with students' enquiries. The unit also houses the main careers library and stocks of divisional leaflets. Staff have initiated a number of innovative projects including a mid-career scheme for army personnel. The unit is also open in the evening when two of the tutors are in attendance to support students. They contact part-time students at the start of the term, visit all teaching groups to inform them of the services available and distribute the students' newsletter and handbook. There are insufficient staff to cope satisfactorily with students' requests and enquiries at peak times. A similar but smaller service is provided off-site at Amesbury. Monitoring shows that the use of the services of the students' support unit is increasing significantly.

32 There is a well-defined central admissions system, incorporating guidance for students who are unsure which course they require. The interview process is careful and thorough. All applicants are interviewed by a member of staff at divisional level. Places on courses offered at interview are logged by the registry onto the management information system. The enrolment system is well organised and includes advice and guidance for prospective students. At induction, all students receive a handbook informing them of the services they can expect from the college and a summary of the college's charter. A Braille version is available.

33 There is an efficient and effective system for identifying and accrediting knowledge and skills which students already have before they come to college. The system is readily available in eight of the 14 divisions. It is used, in particular, by students of management, food and hospitality, construction, motor vehicle engineering and office studies. In 1994-95, over 800 students had taken advantage of the process. Nearly 500 of these were on courses leading to NVQs in management, 185 were on construction courses, and 70 were in office skills courses.

34 The quality of tutorial support received by students is variable. All students are allocated a personal tutor and have a weekly tutorial period of at least one hour. The college is developing strategies to improve the consistency of tutorial practice. A handbook is being prepared that will provide guidance to tutors. Tutors responsible for liaison with student services meet regularly with the manager of the students' support unit and are responsible for disseminating good practice within their division. A comprehensive programme of staff development has been developed to improve the quality of tutoring. Activities have been evaluated and tutors have welcomed the programme.

35 There is no systematic testing of new students to find out whether they need additional support to assist their learning. It is up to individual teachers to identify those students who may require such help and support. Basic Skills Agency tests have been piloted across three divisions. The college is considering extending this testing to the other 12 divisions.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and integrated across the college. A member of staff is employed to work with nine students with hearing impairment and give them special support. Support for students who are visually impaired includes the provision of specialised information technology and handouts in digital form and a voice synthesizer. Individual students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assigned a more experienced student who helps them settle into their studies. The staff of the support unit have a wide range of contacts in the community and liaise with many local agencies. The college has good links with the Royal School for the Deaf.

36 The college provides students with a range of financial support. For example, it provides a bus for students from Andover and funding to subsidise their travel costs. For adult students there are good childcare facilities. A 40-place nursery is subsidised by the college, and an 'after-school' club for children up to the age of 12 is funded by Wiltshire TEC. An informative *Finance for Students* booklet has been produced by the students' support unit.

37 An effective and increasingly used counselling service is offered by qualified male and female counsellors. A useful report produced by the counsellors analysed the nature of the problems affecting students. Courses on counselling have been attended by about 75 per cent of personal tutors. Staff of the students' support unit have been trained to provide counselling for students in crisis if the qualified counsellors are not immediately available.

38 Procedures for monitoring student's attendance are inconsistently administered across the divisions. The system in place is dependent on the recording of students' attendance by individual tutors. There is evidence that some tutors fail to record the absence of students over extended periods or find out why they are not attending. During the inspection, students' attendance in lessons ranged from 72 per cent to 89 per cent, and in eight divisions it fell below 80 per cent. The average attendance at classes inspected was 78 per cent. The highest attendance rate was 89 per cent in mathematics and information technology. Attendance was lowest in engineering, hairdressing and art and design classes at 72 per cent. In some lessons the poor attendance of many students resulted in a size of class too small to allow the teacher to use an appropriate range of learning activities. Students were not always punctual and some teachers failed to determine the reason for lateness.

39 A good careers service is available through qualified careers advisers, a well-equipped careers library and careers databases in the students' support unit. The college contracts with the Wiltshire Careers Service to provide careers advice for students. There is an information pack for tutors to help them advise students on the applications process to universities. Careers advice and guidance are also available at the Amesbury site. There are wide variations in the amount of information

the college gives the parents of 16 to 18 year olds about the progress of their son or daughter. Some parents spoken to during the inspection expressed satisfaction that they had regular contact with the college. Others only received one yearly report. There is inconsistent practice between divisions on the extent to which full-time students are required or encouraged to make action plans about their future educational and career development.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

40 Of the 215 lessons inspected, 49 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses, and 38 had a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Thirteen per cent had weaknesses which outweighed strengths. This profile compares unfavourably with the results of the inspections carried out of other colleges in the sector in 1994-95 showing that, on average, 64 per cent of lessons had strengths which outweighed weaknesses.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCSE		2	4	1	0	0	7
GCE AS/A level		2	13	11	5	0	31
Vocational certificate		0	11	6	7	0	24
Vocational diploma		13	29	43	12	2	99
NVQ		3	21	17	2	0	43
Higher education		3	3	3	0	0	9
Non-schedule 2		0	2	0	0	0	2
Total		23	83	81	26	2	215

41 Most teaching is well planned. There are some comprehensive schemes of work. These help to ensure that learning builds on students' existing knowledge and skills. Most teachers use an appropriate variety of techniques and learning activities. In the best lessons, students were required to undertake a range of challenging tasks and had appropriate opportunities to link theory and practice. Some divisions have created areas which provide realistic working environments, enabling students to develop their practical skills in conditions as close as possible to those in the world of work.

42 The quality and usefulness of lesson plans are variable. Some fail to identify the purpose and scope of the learning activities. A few less satisfactory lessons lacked clear objectives and teachers used schemes of work which consisted of little more than lists of topics. In some lessons, students spent too much time taking notes from dictation or copying from the board or overhead projector transparencies. Some teachers gave lengthy expositions of topics without asking their students questions or checking to see if they understood the lesson.

43 In science, there is an appropriate balance between theoretical and practical lessons. In the best practice, the lessons had momentum and the students were continually challenged. Some lessons are poorly planned. For instance, in some practical lessons, teachers directed the activity too much and failed to plan and provide opportunities for students to take the initiative in practical investigation themselves. Whilst the comments which teachers make on the students' work address scientific mistakes, they rarely help the students to express themselves more clearly and correctly in writing. In mathematics, teachers follow well-prepared schemes of work and aims and objectives are generally shared with students. Effective use is made of question and answer techniques to reinforce learning. Overall the teaching is good and staff ensure that the students take pleasure in learning which is rigorous and demanding. In computing, teachers provided opportunities for students to develop and practise their practical skills. In one intermediate class, a revision exercise required students to create a document that involved editing, spell checking, reformatting and the designing of new documentation. This was followed by practical work using a sophisticated graphics package. The assignment was challenging and by completing it successfully, the students enhanced their confidence in computing skills.

44 In construction, a learning centre has been established for the delivery of all GVNQ and NVQ learning in this vocational area. Most lessons are well structured. In the learning centre, good use is made of learning packages which suit the needs of individual students' abilities and experience. However, some packages are poorly structured, too detailed and out of date. Teachers encourage students to participate in discussions in class. Relations between staff and students are good and students clearly respect the technical expertise of their teachers. The teachers mark students' work carefully and provide them with detailed comments on its quality.

45 Most practical lessons in engineering are well organised. Students are encouraged to work productively on their own or in small groups. Teachers draw effectively on the students' own industrial experience to illustrate particular points and reinforce learning. In some lessons, mostly on theory, students lose interest because there is a lack of momentum and variety in the learning activities. In some instances, teachers take little account of the differing abilities of their students and fail to check they all understand the lesson. Handouts and course documentation are comprehensive and clear. Course and lesson objectives are rarely shared with students. Some teachers fail to mark and return students' work promptly. Some teachers also fail to emphasise the importance of observing codes of safe practice in the workshop.

46 Teachers of business studies give their students well-structured exercises and learning activities. Teachers on the higher national certificate courses encourage the students to draw upon their experiences at work to illustrate particular points in classroom discussion. Students

on secretarial courses learn and develop office skills in a realistic working environment. Some schemes of work and assignment schedules are, however, poorly devised or not appropriate to the students' aims and needs. In many lessons, students are required to copy information from overhead projector transparencies which they could discover for themselves. Some assessment of students' work is insufficiently thorough and the students do not receive guidance on how they need to improve or what standards are expected of them.

47 On health and social care courses, most lessons are well organised and their content reflects current industrial practice. Schemes of work and lesson plans are well planned. The theoretical and practical aspects of courses are well integrated and students are encouraged to draw on their practical and work experience in class. Teachers provide individual students with support which helps and encourages them to develop appropriate levels of skill. Students learn through a variety of activities that include group work and role play. For example, students develop oral skills through assignments that require them to make presentations to the rest of the class either individually or as a small group. Students' skills and knowledge are regularly tested and challenged to check that learning is taking place. Work placements are used to complement learning in the classroom. In some poorer lessons, too much time was spent dictating information to students which they could have found out for themselves. Work is efficiently marked and returned on time. On a minority of courses, assignments were marked too generously.

48 In hairdressing, teachers effectively demonstrated a good range of technical skills and knowledge and imbue the students with their own enthusiasm for their subject. Schemes of work are well prepared and supported by learning packs that enable students to work on their own. Most lessons are well organised to encourage the progressive development of students' technical skills and knowledge. The use of a variety of teaching and learning activities in many practical and theory sessions helps to sustain students' motivation. In some classes, the pace of work was too slow and theory was inadequately related to commercial practice. Students are not always sufficiently challenged to work under realistic commercial conditions in the salons, owing to the inadequate number of clients.

49 In art and design, projects have clear learning objectives which help the students to establish good links between theory and practice. Teachers help students to develop an appropriate range of technical skills in practical lessons. Teachers and students discuss work together as it progresses. In this way, students are encouraged to develop the critical skills with which to judge their own and other's work. Imaginative teaching in some classes, particularly in fashion, generated worthwhile responses from students. In a number of lessons, particularly on GNVQ courses, teaching was not sufficiently demanding. Students were given insufficient opportunities for research and for developing their ideas. Some of their work was unimaginative and showed a lack of experimentation with media.

In performing arts, there is a good balance between practical and theoretical activity. Workshop-based improvisation and rehearsal sessions provide students with good opportunities to develop both their performance and communication skills. However, in some rehearsal sessions, there was a lack of discipline. Some students did not behave sensibly while the tutor was discussing aspects of performance with other members of the group.

50 In humanities, the quality of teaching and learning is highly variable. Some lessons were well organised and supported by comprehensive and detailed schemes of work. Other schemes of work were too rudimentary to be useful. In some classes, students' analytical and creative skills were developed by lively teaching and structured discussions supported by well-presented handouts. Teachers asked questions effectively to reinforce previous work. Some classes were too small to permit effective group discussions. In some instances, the students received insufficient guidance on how to make useful notes. In modern languages lessons, most teachers conducted discussions almost entirely in the language being studied. Students gained practice and confidence in their language skills by being constantly challenged to use them in class. In a few lessons, however, teachers adhered too mechanically to the textbook and gave the students little opportunity to practise their language skills.

51 In catering, practical and theoretical work are well integrated. Teachers aim to build up their students' confidence in the realistic working environment provided by the college's restaurants. For instance, in a lesson on restaurant practice, the students responded well to the enthusiasm of the teacher who showed them how to use computerised bar tills and deal effectively with customers. The teacher made good use of questions to check the students had understood the lesson thoroughly. In some lessons, however, the teaching of theory was unimaginative and repetitive and opportunities were missed for students to discover information for themselves instead of being given it by the teacher. In leisure and tourism, the teachers sustain the students' interest and give the lessons relevance by relating topics to the locality and its issues. A useful programme of visits is arranged for students to leisure and tourist centres in order for them to test theory learnt in the classroom against practice. Some of the course documentation for leisure and tourism lacked sufficient detail and it would have been helpful to some students if they had received their schedule for assignments earlier in their course. Some assignments lacked a realistic industrial context.

52 Although teachers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop positive relationships with their students, students were often given tasks which were inappropriate for them. In most sessions, students were involved with activities that did not form part of a coherent learning programme. There were no clear goals. Tasks were set without consideration of the learning they provided and activities were rarely linked, or relevant to each other. Students have no learning plans.

Staff, particularly from other divisions, are not well briefed. Many lessons were based on concepts that the students could not understand and involved activities that they could not undertake. In many classes, students were working on tasks that did not match their individual abilities and skills. Often, the more able students finished tasks early and wasted time waiting for the others to finish, while the less able would not complete the task. Excessive reliance on literacy skills for teaching, learning and recording meant that reading and writing activities were often used inappropriately and at the wrong level for the students. For example, a class of students with severe learning difficulties who could not read or write were involved in a project that involved writing and map work. Students have few opportunities within lessons to think for themselves. Teachers intervene too quickly and carry out tasks for students, so they do not learn.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

53 In most curriculum areas, students are well motivated. They enjoy their studies and work with a sense of purpose. On some courses, students acquire high levels of practical skills, especially in fashion and construction. On many courses, students are encouraged to work on their own. In some instances, however, teachers fail to make clear to their students the standards and achievements expected of them.

54 Students demonstrate their practical competence through a variety of tasks carried out in workshops and other specialist areas. In construction students have good manipulative skills. Catering students work deftly and confidently in the bakery stores restaurant. Most engineering students use instruments competently. Hairdressing students work safely and hygienically in salon areas. Fashion students develop skills in garment production. However, not all students are aware of safe working practices.

55 On some courses, students are developing a range of information technology skills. Leisure and tourism students make good use of information technology to complete assignment work and are developing a materials database in the leisure and tourism resource centre. Catering students use information technology during industrial assignments and in the stores and restaurant. In other areas, such as performing arts, students do not use information technology in connection with their written work and, with the exception of graphic design, few art and design students are developing information technology skills.

56 In 1994-95, the college's GCE A level pass rate for all subjects was 70 per cent compared with the national average for general further education and tertiary colleges of 72 per cent. Students aged 16 to 18 scored, on average, 3.1 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2). This places the college in the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on data in the 1995

tables published by the Department for Education and Employment. Subjects with pass rates better than national averages include Spanish (100 per cent), German (100 per cent), communication studies (95 per cent) and English literature (94 per cent). Lower pass rates include sociology (53 per cent), law (50 per cent) and geography (50 per cent).

57 The college's provision of GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects is small. In 1994-95, 33 entries resulted in a 48 per cent pass rate, which is below the average pass rate for general further education colleges of 55 per cent. High pass rates were achieved in French.

58 Achievement rates in the GCSE are variable. In 1994-95, the overall success rate for all students gaining A to C grades in GCSE subjects was 50 per cent which is equal to the average for general further education and tertiary colleges. In 1995, there were 376 entries from students aged 19 or over, and 228 from students aged 16 to 18. Sixty-seven per cent of those aged 19 and over achieved grades A to C, which matches the national average. High achievement rates were achieved in Italian (100 per cent), French and Spanish (91 per cent).

59 Good pass rates are achieved on some vocational courses, but overall there is wide variation in results across curriculum areas. In 1994-95, 95 per cent of foundation GNVQ students, 65 per cent of intermediate GNVQ students and 80 per cent of advanced GNVQ students achieved a full award. At intermediate GNVQ level, pass rates ranged from 100 per cent in art and design to 46 per cent in health and social care. Of the two advanced GNVQ courses, 100 per cent of the built environment and 70 per cent of business students successfully gained the full award. Sixty-five per cent of BTEC first diploma students and 70 per cent of BTEC national diploma students achieved the full award. First diploma students achieved pass rates ranging from 82 per cent in information technology to 25 per cent in engineering. National diploma courses with high pass rates included graphic design (100 per cent), nursery nursing (97 per cent) and performing arts (97 per cent). Poor results were achieved by national diploma students in engineering, of whom only 40 per cent achieved the full BTEC award. Eighty-two per cent of BTEC first certificate and 53 per cent of national certificate students gained the full award. National certificate results ranged from 82 per cent in business to 14 per cent in building. Fifty-nine per cent of the 234 students, aged 16 to 18, in their final year of vocational courses, achieved their qualification, according to the tables published by the Department for Education and Employment. This places the college in the bottom third of colleges within the sector, on this performance measure. The college claims a discrepancy in the figures presented to the Department and has since calculated that their pass rate was 68 per cent. This does not alter the college's position amongst colleges in the sector.

60 Results for students completing NVQ courses vary widely. Pass rates at level 1 ranged from 18 per cent in engineering to 91 per cent in

construction crafts. At level 2, 100 per cent of management and community care students achieved the qualification. However, only 18 per cent of motor vehicle body, 29 per cent of computer-aided engineering and 40 per cent of construction crafts students gained the full award. At level 3, all management, teaching basic skills and plumbing students, but only 31 per cent of catering crafts students and 42 per cent of motor vehicle maintenance students, gained the award.

61 Adults on higher certificate and access courses achieved generally satisfactory examination results. Seventy per cent of students on the access to higher education courses gained the award. Pass rates on BTEC higher national certificate courses averaged 75 per cent, with results ranging from 84 per cent of building students to 59 per cent of electrical engineering students achieving the qualification.

62 The retention rate for all students in 1994-95 was 85 per cent. Personal and financial problems are identified by the college as the main reasons why students withdraw from courses. Retention rates of students across curriculum areas are variable. Over 95 per cent of students complete their courses in construction and health and social care, but retention rates for other curriculum areas are much lower. In art and design courses, retention rates range from 100 per cent to 50 per cent, and in engineering from 100 per cent to 60 per cent. In other areas, such as humanities and social science, retention rates have steadily declined, to 63 per cent for GCE A level year one, and 57 per cent for GCSE.

63 The college has limited information on the destinations of students who completed their courses of study in 1994-95. Of the 660 students aged 16 to 18 gaining awards, 24 per cent progressed to higher education, 38 per cent to other further education courses, 20 per cent gained employment and the destinations of 18 per cent were unknown. Twelve per cent of the 1,253 students aged 19 or over who gained awards entered higher education, 12 per cent continued in further education, 42 per cent found employment and the destinations of 34 per cent were unknown.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

64 The college's senior management are strongly committed to developing a quality assurance system based on the continuous improvement of quality in every aspect of the college's provision. The college's quality assurance policy is clearly stated. It covers all aspects of quality monitoring and control.

65 The college has recently appointed three quality managers who have overall responsibility for quality assurance. A quality council has been established to manage the development and implementation of the college's quality assurance policy. This consists of the senior management team, the quality managers and a governor. A useful handbook has been produced which describes the college's system of quality assurance and the roles and responsibilities of all staff in relation to it.

66 A self-assessment process has been introduced to enable managers and governors to identify their strengths and remedy weaknesses. Managers across the college produced their first self-assessment reports in January 1996 using common procedures and criteria. The corporation has also undertaken self-assessment. This process of self-assessment does not include the setting of standards. Standards against which performance can be measured have, however, been established in relation to the management of human resources, staff development and the learning centres. Questionnaires are used extensively as a means of finding out the views of students on the college and its provision. The responses to these questionnaires are used by divisions when they review their courses and by the library, the students' support unit and the marketing unit when they evaluate their performance. There is, however, no system for providing the students with any information on action taken by the college in response to their views.

67 A number of working groups address issues related to quality. For example, one group is involved in a project to develop a course review procedure for new courses such as GNVQs and linking it to the self-assessment procedures. There is no consistent practice in the college in the use of performance indicators. For example, there are no uniform performance indicators across the college for retention rates and the achievements of students. The college does not measure the value-added component in examination results to calculate the students' overall achievement in relation to their previous attainment.

68 The quality of course reviews is variable. The system for reviews is complex and necessitates the completion of appropriate evaluation forms for student support, admission and enrolment, delivery of learning, the skills of staff, assessment activities, learning materials and resources, accommodation and furnishing, external liaison and equal opportunities. Completion and submission of the forms are phased across the academic year. Some forms have not been completed on time and some submissions lack quantitative data. The preparation of action plans across the institution to remedy weaknesses is poor. Some action plans do not have measurable outcomes and in some cases important weaknesses are not addressed. Most identify what has to be done, but they do not specify how progress will be made or measured.

69 The college has carefully introduced a good staff appraisal system that is firmly linked to staff development. The system is well documented and is used for both teaching and support staff. It includes formal recording of self-appraisal, observation of work, an appraisal interview and staff development. It provides staff with the opportunity to discuss their development needs in the context of personal development and the needs of the college. The appraisal system is monitored and reviewed annually by the college's appraisal monitoring group.

70 In April 1995 the college achieved the Investors in People award. The associated staff-development system is well managed. The staff-development plan for 1996 is informed by staff appraisal, strategic planning and more recently by the self-assessment reports.

71 The college has developed a charter in consultation with staff and students. The first version has been revised and a second edition has been published. A working group is revising it to produce a third edition. Staff and students are aware of the charter, but are not familiar with its contents. There is no systematic implementation of a complaints procedure. There is no central logging or monitoring of complaints.

72 The college has franchised college programmes in business administration, information technology, numeracy and some GCE subjects to the Royal British Legion College in Tidworth. The first students enrolled under this franchise at Tidworth in September 1995. The franchise agreement requires the Royal British Legion College to carry out quality assurance of the programmes using Salisbury College's quality assurance procedures. Salisbury College, in turn, monitors the Royal British Legion College's quality assurance arrangements. The franchisee is also required to use Salisbury College's enrolment, initial guidance and induction services.

73 The college's self-assessment report is concise and well focused. It uses the headings of the Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The introduction provides useful background information, details of the strategic planning process and data relating to enrolment and staffing. Under each heading there is a general commentary followed by strengths, weaknesses and proposed actions. The report is a candid analysis of some operational areas and a good basis for the further development of self-assessment. The assessment relates to the strategic plan and in future will inform strategic planning. The college has drawn attention to some weaknesses which have been confirmed by the inspectorate.

RESOURCES

Staffing

74 The majority of teaching staff are well qualified. Seventy-nine per cent have a degree or equivalent professional qualification. Eighty-one per cent hold a teaching qualification. Approximately half of the staff teaching on vocational courses have relevant and up-to-date commercial and industrial experience. Some teachers of business studies and leisure and tourism lack such experience. The college's staff development unit offers opportunities for staff to be seconded to industry and commerce but few have opted to take these up.

75 Of the college's total number of teachers, nearly half are part time. The college has little information about the skills and qualifications of its 312 part-time teachers.

76 The college is making slow progress in training assessors and internal verifiers for its expanding NVQ and GNVQ provision. Some staff teaching on GNVQ and NVQ programmes are not trained to assess their students' work and some divisions do not have an internal verifier.

77 There is a wide range of support staff who work in the areas of administration, finance, student services and learning resources. The college lacks data on the skills and experience of these support staff. There are problems concerning the adequacy and deployment of some support staff. The amount of technician support is inadequate in hairdressing. Technicians are unevenly deployed in art and design.

78 The college has appointed a qualified personnel officer. There are clear rules and procedures for staff in relation to discipline, grievance, health and safety, recruitment and sickness. These rules and procedures are regularly updated.

Equipment/learning resources

79 Approximately 50 per cent of specialist equipment is good, but much is ageing and there is no policy for the replacement of equipment. In science, there are some modern computers, but other equipment is barely adequate. Similarly, in engineering the computer-aided design equipment is good but tools and equipment in motor vehicle and mechanical and production engineering are ageing and equipment used for electrical craft is outdated and inaccurate. There are some well-equipped areas in hair and beauty but some hairdressing equipment is also outdated. In art and design, the print making, graphic design, garment production and the wood machine workshops are well equipped, but general art and design at Sarum is poorly resourced. Areas such as health and care, which have achieved significant growth, are now inadequately resourced. Some equipment in engineering which was identified as unsafe and dangerous by inspectors, has yet to be replaced.

80 The college is well equipped with audio-visual equipment. Historically, the purchase and management of audio-visual aids were the responsibility of the heads of division. A centrally co-ordinated audio-visual aids service has recently been established. A senior technician has catalogued all equipment and recorded where it is held. The reprographics service is also managed centrally. Both services are valued by staff and provide materials of good quality. At the Amesbury centre, a small computer area has been established consisting of three computers and nine laptop computers running wordprocessing, database and spreadsheet software.

81 Significant investment has been made in information technology over the past two years. The college's open learning centre and the library are linked by an information technology network to specialist learning centres in construction, electrical engineering, mathematics, business studies, office skills, food studies, professional communications, fashion and

information technology. Each centre provides students with opportunities to study with the aid of information technology either working alone or, more normally, with the assistance of a tutor. The college's information technology service is well managed by an information technology manager supported by three technicians. The service is responsive to the needs of students and staff. A central purchasing policy has been established. The information technology network has been extended to all learning centres, all managers' offices and most staff rooms. The computer stock has been increased to 280. Two hundred and fifty computers are distributed across the college in seven central information technology rooms, and 17 other rooms. There are 30 computers for art and design. There is one computer for every 11 students, although at the time of the inspection, theft and breakdowns had reduced this ratio to one computer for every 12 students. The inadequate amount of computer-aided design equipment means that some further education students have limited opportunities to gain skills in computer-aided design.

82 The library is well managed and responsive to the needs of the students and staff. The library is sited centrally next to the college's main open learning centre. Currently the two facilities are run separately, although the chief librarian is responsible to the learning resources manager who runs the open learning centre. The library is managed by a chartered librarian supported by eight staff, the majority of whom work part time. It is well cared for but some of the books are out of date. The library is open in the evenings. It is also open on Saturday mornings. Two personal computers are linked to the college network. There are 24 private study places, some of which are in a designated quiet area. All full-time students are given induction on how to use the library. The librarian works closely with teaching staff to identify their needs and agree a list of purchases. Currently, there are no library facilities at the Amesbury centre.

Accommodation

83 The college has taken little action to improve the quality of accommodation. The planning and use of accommodation are poorly co-ordinated. The college has not yet issued an accommodation strategy, although one exists in draft. Some walls and ceilings are in poor decorative order. Sign posting is inadequate. Standards of maintenance and cleaning are poor. The allocation of teaching areas is inefficiently organised.

84 The former college of technology buildings date from the 1960s. They were renamed Wylie, Avon and Nadder in 1995. A fourth floor was added to Wylie and Avon 15 years ago. The five-storey, purpose-designed art and design block, now called Bourne, dates from the 1970s. A single-storey engineering block immediately to the rear of Avon, and two units housing construction craft courses were built in 1964. Two former industrial premises named Tollgate and Sarum are slightly to the north.

85 Approximately 50 per cent of the college's general teaching rooms are suitable for their purpose. They are well lit, sufficiently large and

pleasantly furnished. The remainder are in poor decorative order. The majority of the engineering and construction crafts workshops, hair and beauty salons, science laboratories and kitchens are well appointed and well maintained. Some of the art and design workshops are less efficiently managed. Rooms are mainly grouped according to subject specialisms. Some courses, such as the GNVQ art and design at the Sarum premises, are in unsuitable accommodation. The Sarum premises also lack private study spaces for students and lavatories in the engineering and construction areas and social areas.

86 The main library is light and spacious. The centrally-located refectory is open continuously throughout college opening hours and vending machines are always available. The refectory provides a social area where students can meet. Other services include a shop for stationery supplies, a bookstall, two restaurants, coffee bar and a bakery shop. The main entrance to the Bourne block has been attractively refurbished.

87 The college recently completed an audit of facilities for students who use wheelchairs. There are ramps to entrances on the ground floors of all premises. There are lifts in Bourne and in Avon and a chair lift in the open learning centre. Some video units and one room have 'hearing loops' for students with hearing impairment. Parts of the college not accessible to students with restricted mobility include the main lecture theatre in the Bourne block and the upper parts of the Sarum premises.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

88 The strengths of the college are:

- its wide provision of subjects and courses
- increasing participation of groups from all sections of the community
- a supportive governing body, well informed about progress in achieving the strategic plan
- an effective and responsive students' services unit
- the provision of effective initial guidance and advice for students
- its good relations with the TEC and the community
- its good staff/student relations
- its well-equipped learning centres and significant investment in information technology
- the development of self-assessment procedures
- the high priority given to consultation and communication by management.

89 The college should address:

- the low levels of student achievement and poor examination results on some courses

-
- the low retention and completion rates for students on some courses
 - the lack of information on the destinations of students
 - the quality of teaching and learning in some areas, and in particular for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
 - inconsistencies in tutorial practices
 - the variable quality of management at divisional level
 - the lack of identified standards, targets and performance indicators across the college
 - the lack of up-to-date industrial/commercial knowledge of some teaching staff
 - the slow progress training staff to be Training and Development Lead Body assessors
 - the lack of co-ordination in the planning and management of accommodation
 - the poor standard of much of the accommodation
 - some health and safety issues which have remained unresolved for too long.

FIGURES

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

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

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

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

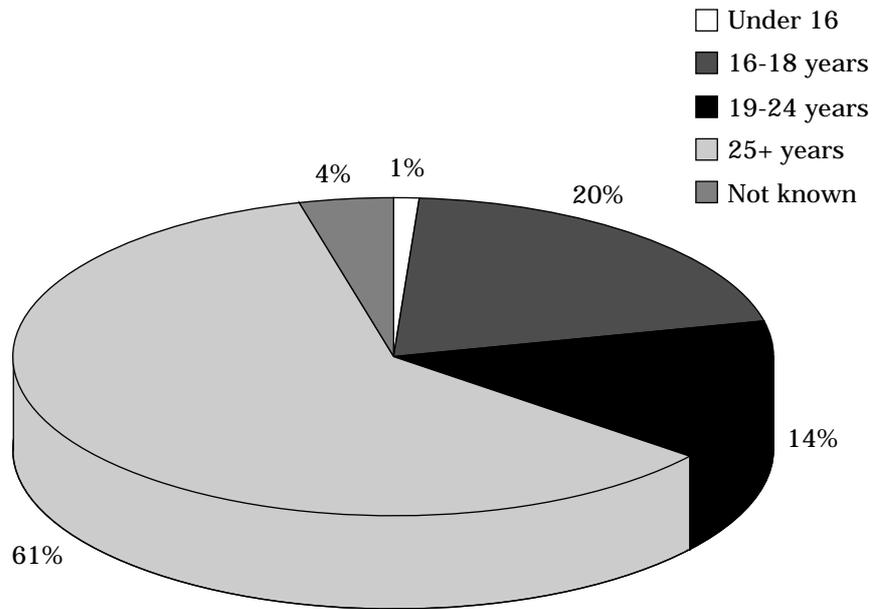
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

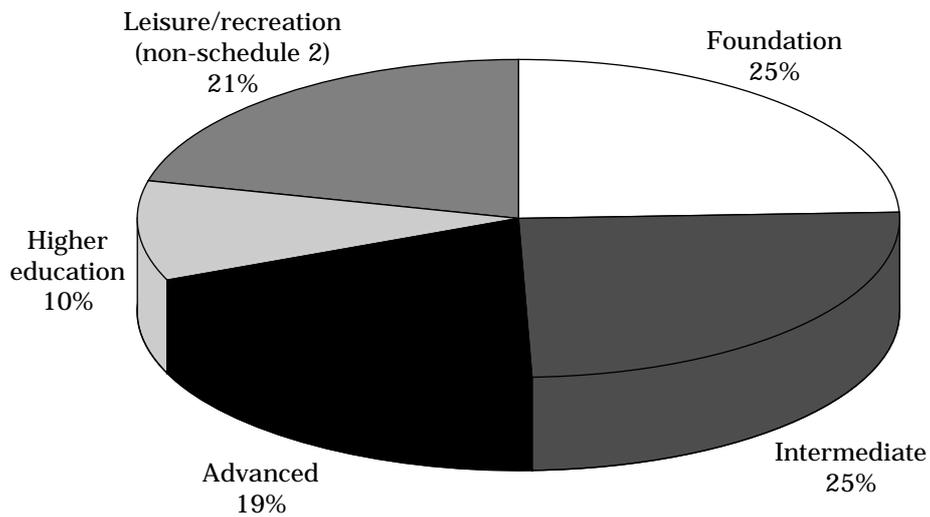
Salisbury College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 9,530

Figure 2

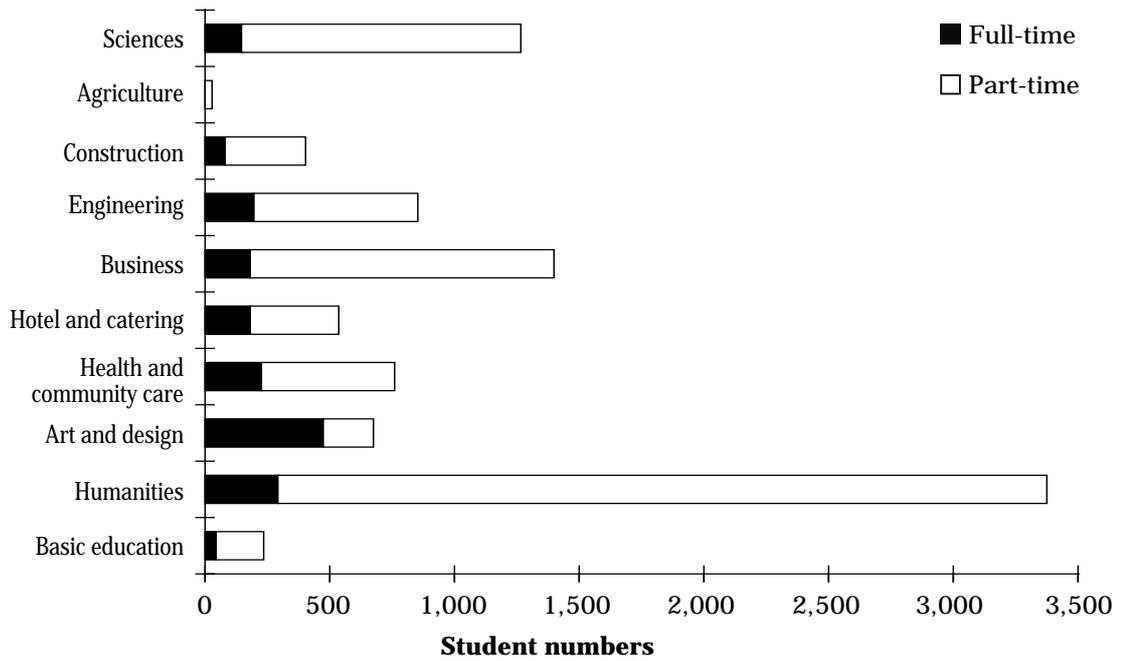
Salisbury College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 9,530

Figure 3

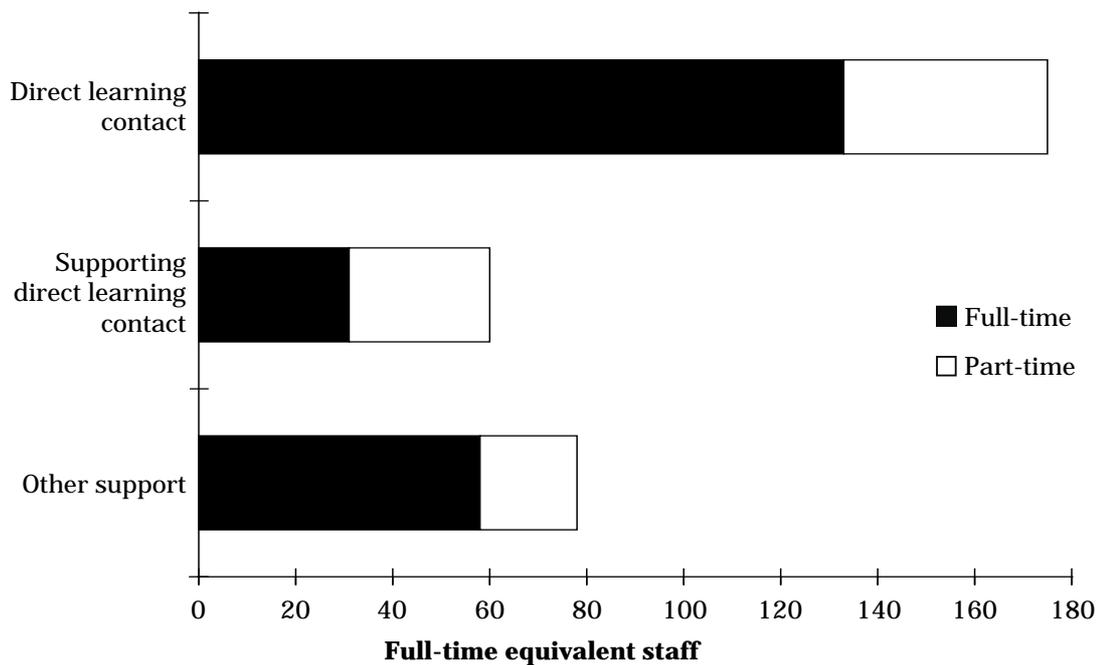
Salisbury College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 9,530

Figure 4

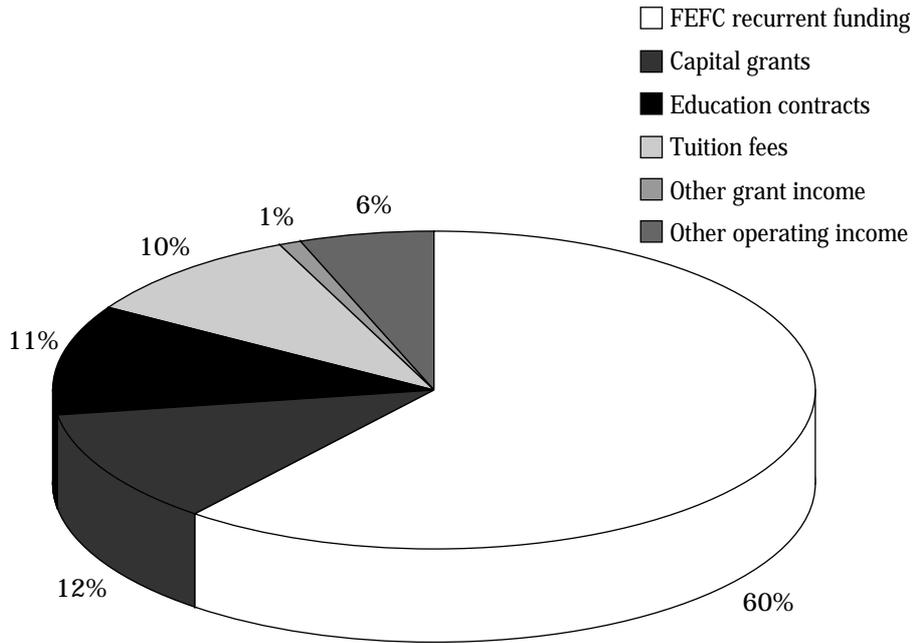
Salisbury College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 313

Figure 5

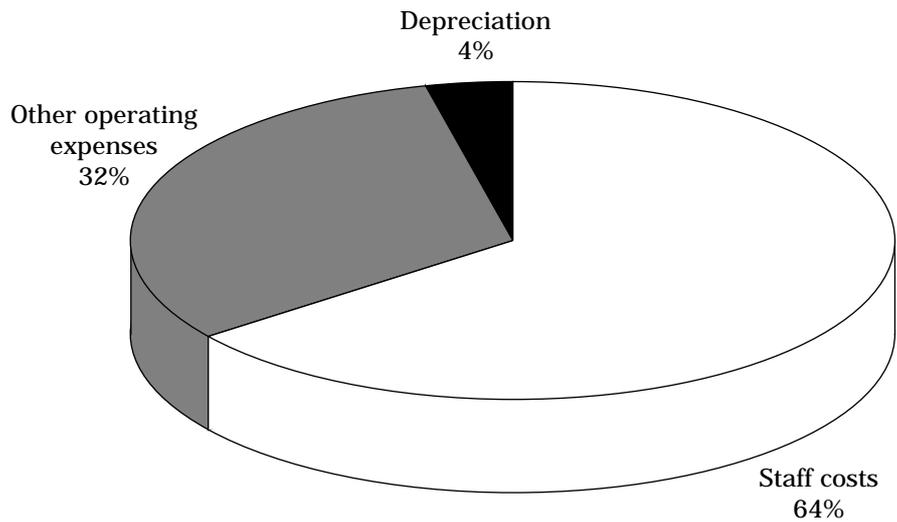
Salisbury College: income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Income: £9,616,000

Figure 6

Salisbury College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £9,754,000

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