



The Office for Standards
in Education

Handbook for inspecting colleges

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Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone: 020 7421 6800

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Introduction

This *Handbook* is published by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (HMCI). It provides guidance for colleges and for inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (the ALI) on the implementation of the *Common Inspection Framework for Inspecting Post-16 Education and Training (Common Inspection Framework)*

The handbook has two parts:

- Part 1. The organisation and management of inspections. Guidance to inspectors and colleges on the preparation for and conduct of inspections.
- Part 2. Guidance to inspectors and colleges on the evaluation requirements. Guidance on how inspectors will approach each of the seven key questions in the *Common Inspection Framework*.

This *Handbook* will be widely available to colleges and other organisations to ensure that colleges are well informed about the process and procedures of inspection. It seeks to balance the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each college to be inspected. It should, therefore, be regarded as an account of procedures normally governing inspection, rather than a set of unbreakable rules.

Definition of terms

Where possible, the *Common Inspection Framework* uses single terms to cover a number of different situations. For example, it refers to ‘learners’ as a term covering students, trainees and clients. This *Handbook* uses terminology most appropriate to the inspection of colleges. For example, the term ‘student’ is generally used, since this is how learners are usually referred to in colleges. Examples of the terms used include:

College	Any further education college or sixth-form college, or any other organisation involved in providing education and training for the college through a partnership agreement or similar.
Curriculum area	A group of courses or programmes, or an occupational area, designated for inspection.
Student	A person receiving education or training including learner, trainee, apprentice, client, and participant.
Teacher	Someone responsible for teaching or training. As well as those specifically referred to as teachers, the term includes lecturers, trainers, instructors, supervisors, technicians and assessors when they have a teaching or training function, and others involved in providing learning support.
Lesson	Any learning activity which is managed by college staff. The learning activity may not be directly supervised, such as when individual students attend a learning centre.
Learning goals	These can take a variety of forms including single qualifications; groups, modules or units of qualifications; greater knowledge, understanding and skills; occupational competence; milestones towards qualifications or employment; securing employment, or a place in higher or further education.
Personal and learning skills	These include communication, presentation and teamwork skills, independent study, and research and analytical skills.

Part 1: the organisation and management of inspections

Background to the inspection arrangements

1 The Learning and Skills Act 2000

Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000:

- OFSTED's remit is extended to include the inspection of all 16–19 education in colleges of further education and sixth form colleges from April 2001
- the ALI is set up to inspect all post-16 work-based training and adult education
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is responsible for the publication of inspection reports on the quality of provision in sixth form colleges and colleges of further education with 16–19 provision
- HMCI is responsible for planning and leading joint college inspections and for the co-ordination and management of the inspection
- area-wide inspections and other inspections may be carried out jointly by OFSTED and the ALI under the direction of HMCI.

2 The purposes of inspection

The overall aim of inspection is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of education and training in meeting the needs of students. The main purposes of inspection are to:

- give an independent public account of the quality of education and training, the standards achieved and the efficiency with which resources are managed
- help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and weaknesses and highlighting good practice
- keep the Secretary of State, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for England and the Employment Service informed about the quality and standards of education and training
- promote a culture of self-assessment among providers, leading to continuous improvement or maintenance of very high quality and standards.

3 OFSTED's role in college inspections

OFSTED's functions in relation to the inspection of colleges, undertaken jointly with the ALI or acting independently, include:

- managing and administering the inspection programme
- planning and leading the inspection of individual colleges
- assuring the quality of inspections and the work of inspectors
- collating inspection data to provide benchmarks for future inspections

- reporting on inspection findings, including the standards achieved, the quality of education and the quality of leadership and management, in HMCI's Annual Report
- assessing a college's progress with the implementation of action plans where its provision is judged to be inadequate overall or where curriculum areas or leadership and management are judged to be unsatisfactory or very weak.

In conjunction with the ALI, OFSTED will also:

- establish and keep under review the *Common Inspection Framework* and the *Handbook*
- provide training for inspectors
- maintain a list of inspectors who can take part in inspections as members of inspection teams.

4 The inspection programme

OFSTED, in consultation with the ALI, will select colleges for inspection and decide when the inspection will take place. The views of the LSC and the Employment Service will be considered when planning the programme, which will also be shared with the LSC and the Employment Service. It is expected that all colleges of further education and sixth form colleges will be inspected within a four-year period ending in summer 2005.

5 The *Common Inspection Framework*

College inspections will be guided by the principles set out in the *Common Inspection Framework*. The inspection team will be primarily involved in assessing the achievements of individual students and the quality of their experiences at college. The *Common Inspection Framework* emphasises the evaluation of achievement and standards, and of teaching and learning in curriculum areas and work-based contexts. Inspections will focus on the experiences of individual students, through the evaluation of:

- students' achievements, taking account of their prior attainment
- the quality of teaching and training and the effectiveness of learning
- other aspects of provision that contribute to the standards achieved, including course content, the range of provision, and the support for individual students
- the effectiveness with which the provision is managed, and its quality assured and improved, and how the efficiency of the use of resources ensures that the provision gives value for money
- the extent to which provision is educationally and socially inclusive and promotes equality of access to education and training. This includes provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The inspection will normally include provision in all the college's curriculum areas. However, where the provision in a curriculum area forms a very small part of the total curriculum, the inspectorate may exclude it from the inspection.

6 Self-assessment and inspection

Colleges should primarily rely on the guidance provided in the DfEE (now the Department for Education and Skills) publication *Self Assessment and Development Plans*, published in March 2001. This publication:

- emphasises that rigorous self-assessment and good development planning should be an integral part of an organisation's management
- sets out the requirement for providers to produce an annual self-assessment report which meets LSC and Employment Service requirements, to make judgements against the evaluation requirements in the *Common Inspection Framework*, to identify their strengths and weaknesses and other improvements needed and to grade provision using inspectorate grading scales and descriptors
- requires providers to produce a development plan that shows how they will address weaknesses and build on strengths
- describes the role of the Inspectorates and the working relationships between the LSC, the Employment Service and the Inspectorates
- describes the arrangements for post-inspection action plans and for re-inspection.

The publication does not impose any particular self-assessment process or model. Providers may choose a process to meet their needs. Dates and timescales are not prescribed. Providers may carry out their self-assessment at the point in the year which best suits their strategic and operational planning cycle.

7 Records of inspection evidence

A brief explanation of the main documents used by OFSTED and the ALI is given below. More information is provided in Annex A of this *Handbook*.

- College performance report (CPR) – a summary of the main characteristics of the college and the context in which it works, together with data on performance and retention. This data will be based on the ten Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas until the Individualised Student Record (ISR) database is revised
- Pre-inspection commentary (PIC) – an evaluative commentary, completed by the reporting inspector prior to the inspection, to assist inspectors with their preparation for inspection
- Inspection notebooks – the working documents, summarising inspectors' judgements on each curriculum area and on each of the seven key questions in the *Common Inspection Framework*
- Evidence forms – the documents used to record lesson observations and other first-hand evidence
- Record of main findings – a summary of the collective judgements of the team on the college as a whole.

Inspectors and inspection teams

8 Training and registration

OFSTED and the ALI are jointly responsible for ensuring that inspectors are competent. Before taking part in the inspection of colleges, each inspector must satisfactorily complete a course of training provided by OFSTED. Inspectors who have been trained in the use of the *Common Inspection Framework* will be approved to inspect 16-19 education, provision for students over 19 years of age, and/or the inspection of work-based learning. OFSTED will maintain a list of inspectors approved to inspect colleges. Members of inspection teams will collectively have the expertise and experience to inspect all aspects of the provision covered by the inspection.

9 The role of the reporting inspector

The reporting inspector (RI), who may be drawn from either Inspectorate, manages the inspection team and is responsible for the quality of the inspection. On most inspections the RI will be assisted by an assistant RI (ARI). The ARI will not normally be an inspector from the same Inspectorate as the RI. It is the responsibility of the RI to:

- ensure that judgements about the college are fair and accurate, that they are based on secure evidence, and that they cover the evaluation requirements in the *Common Inspection Framework*
- ensure that key judgements are corporately agreed by the inspection team
- ensure that inspectors follow a consistent approach to collecting and recording evidence and in how they conduct themselves during the inspection and in their feedback to teachers and managers
- keep a careful check on the sampling of the college's work and the extent to which individual teachers are being observed in lessons
- monitor and, if necessary, intervene in the work of individual inspectors to ensure that the *Common Inspection Framework* is complied with and that evidence and judgements are secure
- plan the inspection and communicate the inspection plan to the college at an initial meeting
- ensure that members of the inspection team are fully briefed before the inspection begins
- establish a programme of team meetings with clear agendas and ensure that evidence and judgements are communicated to, and shared by, all members of the team
- ensure that the principal and nominee are informed of emerging issues throughout the inspection.

Prior to the inspection, the RI will prepare the PIC. This will draw on several sources, for example the college performance report, the previous inspection report and the college's self-assessment report. The PIC will include:

- a brief commentary on the college's characteristics and the context in which it works
- an evaluative commentary on the pre-inspection evidence
- preliminary hypotheses about the college, to be tested during the inspection.

The RI will send the PIC to inspectors to ensure that they are fully conversant with the college's performance, and other aspects of its work, prior to inspection.

10 The role of inspection team members

The RI will identify inspectors responsible for:

- subjects or groups of courses
- co-ordinating curriculum inspections where two or more inspectors are involved
- reporting on the key questions set out in the *Common Inspection Framework*.

All inspectors will contribute to the overall evaluation of the college and provide evidence and judgements on key questions. This information will inform corporate judgements on the college as a whole. Inspectors will plan and use their time carefully and efficiently to collect the evidence necessary to support their judgements. They will be sensitive to the impact of the inspection on teachers and other staff in the college. They will abide by the code of conduct set out below.

11 The code of conduct

Inspectors will uphold high professional standards in their work. They will make every effort to secure the co-operation and confidence of those being inspected. They will carry out their duties according to the requirements of the *Common Inspection Framework* and the guidance provided in this *Handbook*. The best interests of students will be a priority. In particular inspectors will:

- be impartial and objective. They will have no connection with the college that might undermine their objectivity
- report honestly and fairly
- be open and transparent in the way they work, providing feedback whenever appropriate and keeping senior staff informed of emerging issues and findings
- carry out their work with integrity, treating everyone with courtesy and sensitivity
- adhere to principles of equality of opportunity
- be fully prepared for the inspections they undertake
- keep demands for information and other material to a realistic minimum.

12 The role of the auditor

In most cases the LSC will arrange for an audit of the college at the time of inspection. The auditor will not be a member of the inspection team or take part in team meetings or inspection feedback. However, where appropriate and possible, inspectors and auditors will plan joint meetings with college staff and governors. The RI and the inspector responsible for inspecting leadership and management will liaise with the auditor. Where the audit does not take place at the same time as the inspection, the RI will receive a report from the audit service and a summary of the key findings as they relate to the *Common Inspection Framework*. The RI will ensure that the inspection team takes account of auditors' findings in reaching its final judgements about leadership and management.

13 The role of the nominee

Each college will be invited to nominate a senior member of staff to act as the college's main link with the inspection team. The nominee should:

- have a detailed understanding of the college's programmes and operations
- be sufficiently senior to ensure the co-operation of staff at all levels before, during and after the inspection
- have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.

Inspectors will use the nominee's knowledge to help plan their schedule of meetings and their inspection of college documentation. The RI will ensure that the nominee has the opportunity to check that inspectors have sufficient evidence for their judgements. The nominee should raise any concerns about the evidence base with the RI as soon as those concerns become apparent. The RI will keep both the nominee and the principal informed of developing issues and findings as the inspection proceeds. The nominee should respect the same conventions of confidentiality as all team members. The nominee's rights and duties include:

- attendance at all team meetings except those at which grades are discussed
- co-ordination of feedback arrangements
- liaison with the RI over the team's use of college facilities, for example photocopiers and base rooms
- ensuring that staff are available for meetings as scheduled and that the necessary documents are available for inspectors.

Planning the inspection

14 Timing of inspections

The expectation is that all colleges will be inspected at least once between 2001 and 2005. The timing of an inspection will depend mainly on:

- the date of the college's last inspection or its involvement in an area-wide inspection
- the current programme of area-wide inspections
- the quality of provision, and standards of performance, as reflected in the grades achieved at the last inspection and the college's performance since that time
- advice from the local LSC, based on its provider reviews.

15 Notification of inspection

Colleges will normally receive 6-12 weeks notice of their inspection. Shortly afterwards, the college will be sent the CPR the name of the RI. The CPR contains information about the performance of the college, including comparisons of its performance with that of similar colleges and with national data. The local LSC will normally sample the achievement and retention data provided by the college for the year prior to inspection to check accuracy. Requests for paperwork will be kept to the minimum. Inspectors will draw, as far as possible, on existing college documents. The college will be asked to provide, within two weeks of notification:

- the most recent self-assessment report
- the current strategic plan
- the college prospectus or brochure
- a completed form CS1, giving details of students' retention, attainment and progression
- a completed form CS2, giving details of current enrolments by curriculum area and mode of attendance, including students following work-based training schemes
- written confirmation that the CPR is accurate, or amendments to the CPR.

16 The inspection plan

The RI will use the above documents and any other information provided by the college to prepare an inspection plan. The plan will normally cover a sample of provision in all the curriculum areas in which there is substantial provision. The RI will use the 14 'Areas of Learning' used by the LSC to classify post-16 qualifications as the basis for grouping subjects and courses for inspection. The RI will also take into account the college's organisation of its courses. The RI will present the inspection plan to the college at the initial visit. The plan will:

- identify the curriculum areas to be inspected and the contribution to be made by each inspectorate
- identify the number of inspectors and the number of days needed for the inspection
- assign inspectors to curriculum areas, subjects and key questions
- identify key meetings with college staff
- set out feedback arrangements
- identify areas for which further information is needed.

17 Updating information

At any time prior to the inspection, the college may update its self-assessment report, drawing the inspection team's attention to improvements in provision and changes in the key issues facing the college. It is not expected to undertake extensive activities in order to do this. Apart from this update, documents should not be written specifically for the inspection.

18 The reporting inspector's initial visit

The initial visit by the RI and ARI will take place about six weeks before the inspection. The local LSC will be invited to send a representative. At this meeting the college should provide:

- a staff handbook, if one is available
- a description of the college's organisational structure, identifying managerial responsibilities
- where appropriate, an update to the self-assessment report.

The agenda for the visit will normally include:

- presentation of the inspection plan to the principal and the nominee
- requests for inspection week meetings with governors, managers, staff and groups of students
- arrangements to gather the views of employers and parents
- details of the inspection team, its members and their responsibilities
- issues arising from forms CS1 and CS2 (where these have been completed)

- further information required of the college
- information required by inspectors prior to the inspection
- material required by inspectors to be held in the inspection base room
- any other matters raised by the reporting inspector or the college.

19 Information required by inspectors prior to the inspection

Inspectors will keep the information they require from colleges to a realistic minimum. Following the initial meeting the college will be asked to provide a set of course timetables for each curriculum area. Other relevant documents may also be requested, for example, details of employed trainees and New Deal clients on the employment option.

20 Information required by inspectors in the base room

One copy of the following items should be provided in the base room:

- details of staff qualifications and experience
- job descriptions for key staff
- course review reports or course self-assessment reports
- recent moderators' reports
- course specification documents
- teachers' schemes of work, planning and assessment records
- samples of students' assessed work
- samples of students' records and reports, including tutorial records and learning plans
- college policies and the college charter
- details of staff development activity over the last two years
- strategic plan, operating statements, curriculum plans, staff development plans and action plans arising from inspection, course review or self-assessment
- copies of contracts for provision funded by the LSC
- any other documents the college wishes to be considered.

21 Confirmation of inspection arrangements

The reporting inspector will normally confirm the arrangements for inspection in a letter to the principal at least two weeks before the inspection.

22 Summary of pre-inspection steps

The following table is based on a college that receives ten weeks' notice of inspection. The timings are an approximate guide. They are likely to vary from inspection to inspection, even if the same period of notice is given. The timetable will need to be adjusted if the college is given either more or less notice of inspection.

10 weeks	<p>The college is given notice of inspection, including the name of the RI. Shortly afterwards it receives the CPR</p> <p>The RI receives the CPR and contacts the college to arrange the initial visit</p>
8 – 10 weeks	The college sends the documents listed in paragraph 13 above to the RI, including an amended CPR if it is inaccurate
7 – 8 weeks	The RI and ARI prepare the inspection plan and identify the inspection team. Any amended CPR is sent to the college
6 – 7 weeks	The RI and the ARI make the initial visit to the college to present the inspection plan
3 – 6 weeks	<p>One or more local LSC staff normally visit the college to check a sample of data on students' and trainees' attainments for the year prior to inspection</p> <p>The RI completes the pre-inspection commentary</p> <p>The RI and the ARI plan the inspection in detail</p>
2 – 3 weeks	The RI (or, by agreement, the college) sends timetables and information packs to all members of the inspection team
2 weeks	The RI confirms the inspection arrangements in writing to the principal
1 week	The RI and nominee make a final check of inspection arrangements.

The inspection

23 Inspection activities

A team of inspectors working together will gather evidence about a range of provision which is representative of the college. Inspectors responsible for curriculum areas will collect evidence from a representative sample of the provision in that area. They will evaluate the quality of the college's work in each curriculum area selected for inspection and contribute to team judgements about the seven key questions and the adequacy of the college. They will:

- observe lessons and, where necessary, undertake other observations outside the college; for example, in the workplace
- visit work-based trainees and New Deal clients at work, observe training and assessment and talk to employers and work-placement providers
- visit community based provision and Learndirect centres
- evaluate data on students' retention, attainment and progression
- evaluate a representative sample of students' current and recent work, including practical work
- talk with students, teaching staff, managers, governors, employers and, where appropriate, parents
- evaluate the impact of key documents, including plans, policies, procedures and teachers' records of students' progress
- evaluate records relating to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, focusing on how effectively the records are used to improve provision for individuals. Documents include individual learning plans, statements, annual reviews and transitional reviews.

Inspectors responsible for co-ordinating evidence and judgements on each key question will gather evidence from a range of sources including: meetings with college managers, staff and students; inspection of documents; and evidence provided by curriculum inspectors.

24 Inspection team meetings

The team, including the college nominee, will meet for an initial briefing on the first morning of the inspection. Suitable arrangements will be made to brief members of the team who arrive later in the week. At the initial briefing the RI will ensure that inspectors are aware of:

- their responsibilities and expected standards of conduct
- the context in which the college works and the performance of its students
- the key issues to be covered during the inspection
- any issues raised by the college
- organisational and administrative arrangements.

Throughout the inspection, the RI or ARI will meet the other inspectors to discuss emerging findings and review the evidence gathered. The college nominee will normally attend these meetings.

At the end of the inspection, the RI will hold a final team meeting. Its purpose is to arrive at accurate and secure team judgements about the college. In particular, the meeting will enable the team to arrive at an overall view of quality and standards in the college and the college's effectiveness in meeting the education and training needs of its students. All inspectors will normally attend the meeting. The nominee will not attend. The team will specifically agree:

- the strengths and weaknesses of the college as a whole
- the factors that have promoted high standards
- what should be improved by the college
- the contents of the summary of the inspection report
- the grade for each curriculum area and for leadership and management
- whether the college is judged to be adequate.

25 Observation of lessons and other activities

Inspectors will concentrate on observing lessons, looking at work-based training and sampling students' work. This will be done in a way that minimises disruption to teaching and learning. Inspectors will not take part in lessons. However, when suitable opportunities arise, inspectors may talk informally with students or look at their work. The lessons observed will be part of the college's normal programme of work. Inspectors will not expect or require changes to that programme. When they enter a classroom, inspectors will ask the teacher for the register, the lesson plan and any supporting material. They may ask for information that enables students of different age-groups or programme type to be identified. They will make written notes during the lesson and provide brief feedback afterwards.

As far as possible the sample of lessons will cover a representative range of activities. For example, it may include group or individual activities, tutorials, registration periods, learning taking place in resource areas or on work placement, fieldwork and educational visits, enrichment and extra-curricular activities. The sample of teachers will be as wide as is practicable. Inspectors will not necessarily observe every teacher working in the curriculum area. The sample will include part-time staff and teachers with management responsibilities. Inspectors will not list in advance the lessons that they will observe.

Inspectors may stay for the whole or part of a lesson. They will spend enough time in lessons to enable them to make valid and reliable judgements on standards, teaching and learning. Normally this will not be less than 30 minutes. Each lesson observed will be assessed on the seven-point scale under three aspects: teaching; learning; and the standard of work (attainment).

26 The evaluation of students' written and practical work

Together with lesson observations and discussions with students, the scrutiny of written and practical work provides essential evidence of their attainment and progress. It also provides an insight into teaching and students' attitudes to work. It enables inspectors to evaluate the quality of teachers' setting and marking of work. The sample of marked work, provided in the base room, should include:

- the work of at least three students on each course being inspected. The sample should include standards of work that is above-average, average and below-average
- the work of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, where appropriate.

The college should provide assessment records and individual learning plans for those students whose work is sampled. Inspectors may also look at students' files when they observe lessons.

27 Analysis and evaluation of retention and attainment data

Inspectors' analysis and evaluation of retention and attainment data also provides vital evidence of standards. Inspectors will look at data for students who have completed their programmes in the last three years. They will give more weight to the most recent years and to courses that are currently operating. Where appropriate they will look at retention rates for existing students and at the results of any mid-course external tests, examinations and course work. They will also look at value-added data, where available.

28 Discussions with students

Discussions with students provide evidence about what they know, understand and can do. It helps inspectors to establish the progress and whether they are achieving as well as they might do. Discussions may take place with individuals or with groups. Inspectors will seek to find out students' views of the college, their attitudes to work, their interests, the progress they feel they have made and the extent to which they feel that they are effectively guided and supported. Students on NVQ programmes, employed trainees and New Deal clients, will be asked to discuss their practical work and portfolios of evidence. Sources of evidence will include:

- arranged meetings with individuals or representative groups of students
- informal discussions with individuals or groups
- brief discussions with students during lesson observations, where appropriate.

Inspectors will also gather evidence from:

- students' contributions in lessons
- students' responses to their teachers' questions
- the quality of questions asked by students in lessons and in meetings with inspectors
- information from college surveys of students' views.

29 Discussions with governors, staff and others involved in the work of the college

Discussions with the principal, managers and teaching staff provide important evidence of roles and responsibilities, procedures and policies. They clarify how and why decisions are taken and how the impact of those decisions is evaluated. Discussions help inspectors to establish the context for their observations. Inspectors will also meet, where possible, employers and providers of work-based training, the New Deal and Learndirect.

The RI and the nominee will plan meetings with governors, managers and staff who have responsibility for the curriculum areas being inspected. Meetings may also be requested with support staff and visiting specialists, for example careers advisers. Inspectors should avoid calling meetings at short notice, and where possible they will indicate in advance the matters to be discussed at meetings. The following principles apply to all meetings:

- inspectors will introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the meeting
- inspectors will be sensitive to the needs of those with any disability so that they can play a full part in the meeting
- the length of meetings will be agreed in advance. Normally meetings will not exceed one hour
- inspectors will offer the opportunity for those attending the meeting to ask questions and make points
- when providing feedback, inspectors will not attribute comments made in meetings to individuals.

30 General points about feedback

The outcomes of inspection remain provisional until publication of the report. Inspectors' findings are confidential to the staff of the college and its governing body until publication of the report. All oral feedback is confidential to those receiving it. The main occasions on which inspectors present feedback are described in the following four paragraphs. Whatever the circumstances, inspectors will present their findings in a way which:

- is well structured and clear
- emphasises, with reasons, what has been done well and what could be improved
- provides well-chosen examples
- allows opportunities for discussion and clarification of inspectors' findings
- gives clear indications of the areas in need of improvement, without offering detailed advice on matters which are the college's responsibility.

31 Feedback to teachers

Oral feedback will be offered to every teacher observed, normally at the end of the lesson observed. In some cases, however, feedback later in the day may be more convenient or appropriate. The objective is to let the teacher know what went well, what was less successful and what could be done more effectively; it will not include grades or grade descriptions.

Inspectors will identify key strengths and weaknesses. They will not comment on every aspect of the lesson, but their general conclusions may be illustrated with specific examples. Weaknesses will be linked to the effects of these on students' learning, and will be attributed to the nature of the teaching rather than to the teacher. Where appropriate, inspectors will provide reasons for the judgements reached.

32 Feedback to heads of departments and curriculum managers

Inspectors will present a clear picture of the inspection findings in each curriculum area inspected. Judgements will be expressed as strengths and weaknesses. Curriculum area feedbacks will normally run concurrently on the Friday morning of the inspection week, and will usually last between 20 and 30 minutes, including questions. It will include:

- an overall judgement of the quality of provision in the curriculum area and the provisional grade
- a summary of the evidence on which judgements are based, including what has been inspected, the profile of lesson observation grades, average class size and average levels of attendance at classes
- judgements about levels of achievement and standards in the curriculum area as a whole and, where appropriate, in individual subjects and courses
- judgements about the quality of teaching and training and the effectiveness of learning
- judgements about the effectiveness of leadership and management
- identification of priorities for improvement
- an opportunity for managers to ask questions.

Inspectors responsible for co-ordinating the teams' judgements on the key questions will not provide formal feedback to managers at the end of the inspection. However, throughout the week, inspectors will ensure that managers are informed of their findings and judgements.

33 Feedback to the principal and senior staff

On either Thursday evening or Friday morning, before the feedback to curriculum managers, the RI will notify the principal of the proposed curriculum area grades. At the end of the week, after the final team meeting, the RI will notify the principal of the overall judgement about the effectiveness of leadership and management and the team's judgement of the adequacy of the college. Neither meeting will include detailed comments on strengths and weaknesses.

34 Feedback to governors

The RI will provide formal feedback to governors, the principal and college senior managers between one and two weeks after the inspection. A representative of the local LSC will be invited to attend. The main inspection findings will be presented clearly and frankly, so that senior managers can start planning their responses to inspectors' findings. Those attending will have the opportunity to ask for clarification about the findings and to explore with inspectors the priorities for action. The feedback will focus on:

- the standards achieved by students and whether these are high enough
- the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, training and learning in the college
- the effectiveness of leadership and management
- significant judgements based on the other key questions in *the Common Inspection Framework*
- the issues identified by inspectors as priorities for improving the college.

35 Action plans

Shortly after the inspection the draft report will be shared with the college to enable the accuracy of factual information to be checked. The final report will normally be published within 12 working weeks from the end of the inspection. Copies will be sent to the college and the local LSC.

When it receives the inspection report, the college has **two** months to prepare an action plan in response. When calculating the two-month time limit, holiday periods are excluded. The plan must focus on action the college will take to address those aspects of provision identified in the section of the summary headed 'What should be improved', together with the weaknesses listed for each curriculum area. The governors must agree the action plan and send copies to the LSC and OFSTED. Action plans will vary to suit the college, but should indicate:

- the actions to be taken to address each weakness and each area for improvement
- the person responsible for each action
- realistic target dates for completion of each action
- the intended outcome of each action
- criteria for evaluating the extent to which outcomes have been achieved.

The inspection report

36 Report structure

Published reports will include judgements about the provider as a whole, as well as judgements about individual curriculum areas. Inspectors will seek to achieve a suitable balance between reporting on the provision for 16–18-year-olds and reporting on the education and training of adult learners. Reports will identify weaknesses and areas for improvement. The main judgements will be included in a summary. Annex B provides the outline structure for reports.

37 Inspection grades

The inspection report will include grades for each curriculum area or sub-area designated for inspection and for leadership and management. Where there is substantial work-based learning or New Deal provision, contributory grades for this provision may be included in the relevant curriculum sections of the report.

Grades for curriculum areas will primarily reflect students' achievements and the effectiveness of teaching, training and learning in these areas. Each curriculum inspector will also investigate key questions 3–7. Their findings in relation to these five key questions will influence the grade for the curriculum area, but will have less significance than inspectors' judgements on key questions 1 and 2.

An overall summary of lesson observation grades will be included in the report. Each lesson will be graded for teaching, learning and, where appropriate, attainment. Lessons will be graded on a seven-point scale. Curriculum areas and leadership and management will be graded on a five-point scale. Annex C shows the grades that are used.

38 Adequacy of provision

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires inspectors to come to a judgement as to whether the education or training provided is of a quality adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The inspection team, at its final meeting, will make the judgement on adequacy. The team will take into account the overall quality of teaching and inspectors' findings relating to the seven key questions. However, the main determinants of adequacy are the grade profile for the curriculum areas inspected and the grade for leadership and management. As a guideline, a college will normally be judged to be inadequate in either of the following circumstances:

- it has unsatisfactory or weak provision in one-third or more of the curriculum areas inspected
- leadership and management are unsatisfactory or weak.

When applying these guidelines inspectors will take into account the proportion of students in the curriculum areas that are unsatisfactory or weak.

Re-inspection

39 Re-inspection criteria

Re-inspection falls into two categories:

- monitoring inspections of individual curriculum areas that are unsatisfactory or weak or of leadership and management that is unsatisfactory or weak
- full re-inspection of all aspects of provision where the college has been judged to be inadequate

During full re-inspections and monitoring inspections, inspectors will review progress on planned actions which are relevant to the re-inspection. However, inspectors will base their re-inspection grades on the strengths and weaknesses of the provision at the time of the re-inspection, rather than the college's progress in implementing the action plan.

40 Monitoring inspections

Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, OFSTED or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory curriculum areas or of leadership and management.

As a result of the monitoring inspections, the inspectorates may judge that the curriculum area or areas, or leadership and management, are satisfactory. Such judgements, where applicable, are likely to be made between 12 and 24 months after the inspection. If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum areas or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grades for the areas that continue to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection. OFSTED will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and why.

The first monitoring inspection will take place about six months after the inspection. The programme of monitoring inspections will be organised and managed by OFSTED. By arrangement with the ALI, the inspections may be carried out by inspectors from the ALI. The outcome of each monitoring inspection will be reported orally to the college. A brief summary of the main findings and an assessment of progress will be sent to the college and the local LSC.

41 Re-inspection

Re-inspection will normally take place within two years of the date of publication of the inspection report. Colleges subject to re-inspection will also receive termly monitoring inspections. OFSTED will notify college of the date of their re-inspections. Re-inspections will normally be led by OFSTED, but may be led by the ALI. They will follow the usual procedures for inspection.

The written report of a re-inspection of an inadequate college will follow the general structure of other published inspection reports, except that it will also comment on the effectiveness of actions taken since the main inspection. The report will include a statement of whether or not the provision remains inadequate overall.

Assuring the quality of inspections

42 Quality assurance

OFSTED reviews all inspections for which it is responsible to ensure that an inspection provides an accurate and fair picture of the college and that it has been conducted well. As part of the process, colleges will have the opportunity to evaluate aspects of their inspection. Quality assurance of inspections includes assessment of:

- the quality, standard and management of the inspection
- the competence, effectiveness and conduct of inspectors
- the quality and standard of inspection reports.

43 Complaints procedure

OFSTED takes complaints about inspection seriously. Concerns should be raised initially with the RI, who will seek to resolve the issue. Where a complaint about judgements remains unresolved the college can request an initial review by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Post-Compulsory Education Division
OFSTED
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE.

Beyond this, there is a formal complaints procedure, which is described in the leaflet *Concerns and Complaints about College Inspections: Guidance for Colleges*. If the college remains dissatisfied with the way its complaint has been handled it can contact OFSTED's complaints adjudicator. This is an independent, external arbiter whose independence from OFSTED and the ALI is guaranteed.

Part 2: guidance to inspectors and colleges on the evaluation requirements

Introduction to part 2

Part 2 has three sections corresponding to the broad headings in the *Common Inspection Framework*; each of the seven key questions is addressed in the appropriate section. For each key question, the guidance contains:

- the evaluation criteria for the key question as stated in the *Common Inspection Framework*
- an introduction to the section emphasising the features on which inspectors will focus
- a section on making judgements that deals with bringing evidence together. The sections on characteristics of very good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory provision are included to assist inspectors' judgements. They are not intended to be definitive or exhaustive
- a section on guidance dealing with interpreting and applying the evaluation criteria. In this section the bullet points in bold type following each heading repeat guidance given in the *Common Inspection Framework*.

Section 1: achievements and standards

Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- success in achieving challenging targets, including qualifications and learning goals, and results over time
- the standards of learners' work in relation to their learning goals
- learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential
- the development of personal and learning skills.

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- results and retention rates compare well with local and national averages
- trends in performance over time show continuous improvement or the maintenance of very high standards
- analysis of added value indicates that learners make at least the progress expected of them

- standards are consistently high across the provider's work
- challenging learning goals and targets are achieved.

and learners:

- make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and their potential
- are prepared for effective participation in the workplace and in the community
- progress to relevant further education, training or employment
- reach levels in key skills consistent with their main programme of study or training
- develop the skills of critical evaluation, research and analysis
- develop the attitudes and skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning, including the capacity to work independently and collaboratively
- attend regularly and are punctual.

Inspection focus

44 Inspectors will evaluate how well students are achieving. They will focus on the standards reached and whether they are high enough. The inspection report will include judgements on the achievements of adult students, work-based learners and New Deal clients. The distinction between standards and achievement is crucial. Standards are judged by reference to the level of performance of groups of students against national averages and by judging the standard of work seen in relation to what is expected for the course being followed. Achievements are judged by reference to the progress made by individuals and groups of students, taking into account their prior attainment and potential. Key question 1 embraces two questions – ‘What standards are reached?’ (standards) and ‘Are they high enough?’ (achievement).

45 When judging standards, inspectors will look at levels reached. They will focus on:

- interpretation and judgement of results, including pass rates (how many students who complete their programme of study gain their qualifications), retention rates (how many students complete their course), proportions of high grades and trends
- the level of written work, including judgements about how the work compares with what is typically seen and expected irrespective of starting points, and compliance with the standards expected by awarding and funding bodies
- the level of practical work and of key skills.

46 When judging achievements, inspectors will look at progress made. They will focus on:

- whether the students are doing as well as they should, taking account of their prior attainment and potential. Inspectors will use value-added data which compares qualifications on entry to final qualifications and any other available measures that take account of students' backgrounds
- observation of students in lessons to judge whether they are making the progress expected of them
- good rates of progression to intended destinations
- achievement of any other individual goals set at the start of programmes of study.

Achievement, expressed in terms of progress, is likely to be linked to the quality of teaching. Inspectors will look for explanations where, for example, achievement is no better than satisfactory, but teaching is good. In subjects and courses that have poor pass rates and retention rates nationally, it may not be satisfactory achievement to meet these levels.

47 Achievement in work-based learning is judged in two main ways:

- the proportion of trainees who complete the programme and who achieve their learning objectives
- the level of competence and skills that the trainees achieve, both in absolute terms and compared with their levels of competence and skill at the start of the programme.

The success of New Deal is measured mainly by reference to the number of clients gaining employment and completing their individual training plans, and the progress they have made since starting. For both work-based learning trainees and New Deal clients, achievements in relation to prior attainment are considered as well as the progress made during the programme.

48 The inspection report will include overall judgements about standards and achievement. Curriculum inspectors will judge the standards and achievements in specific subjects and courses. Where appropriate inspectors will:

- highlight variations between different groups of students and between subjects
- report on students of different gender or ethnic background, students with learning difficulties and /or disabilities and students who are gifted or talented.

Making judgements

49 Before the inspection, inspectors will analyse the college performance report. This will give an initial indication of standards and achievements. It may be supplemented by evidence from:

- any monitoring of performance undertaken by the college; for example, performance compared with national benchmarks, achievement of college performance targets, and value-added data
- analysis of retention rates and pass rates for college departments included in the self-assessment report
- summary judgements relating to standards and levels of attainment made by external examiners and moderators.

50 Lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and discussions with students will provide evidence of the standards of work. Inspectors will use course specifications, subject and course objectives to evaluate students' knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, they will judge whether advanced level students' capacity for critical evaluation, research and analysis has been adequately developed.

51 When inspecting a vocational course, inspectors will evaluate students' practical skills and knowledge of their occupational area. Students' ability to organise and complete practical tasks in lessons or in the workplace will be compared with what can be reasonably expected of students at that stage in their course. Students near the end of their course should be approaching commercial speeds for completion of tasks. The work they produce should be of a high standard and reflect the standards expected in their chosen industry.

52 For students on foundation and intermediate courses, levels of achievement may not be wholly reflected in qualifications. Students taking basic skills courses, for example, may move on before they have completed the whole qualification. Progression to further study or employment may be a clearer indicator of success. Students may achieve well without necessarily securing formal qualifications.

53 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be challenged to progress and succeed in the same way as any other students. Their goals may be different from other groups, but judging how far they have met them is the same. Inspectors will assess whether initial assessments and individual learning plans are realistic, suitably demanding and understood by the students. They will judge individual students' progress towards the objectives recorded in their plans. Records should clearly indicate the progress students are making.

54 For GCE A level and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), value-added data will inform judgements about achievement. Discussions with students and scrutiny of their work will also enable inspectors to judge the standard of current work against indicators of prior attainment. Any differences between the achievements of different groups of students relative to their prior attainments will be reported, together with reasons.

55 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about standards and achievements

Very good or excellent

Pass rates and retention rates are well above sector averages. Results in any key skills that are examined are also very high. Students' knowledge and skills are well beyond what might typically be expected. Most students are working to their capacity, and respond well to challenges. Value-added analysis shows that most have made significantly more progress than their baseline performance would suggest. Progression to employment and higher education is the norm. A high proportion of modern apprentices achieve apprenticeship awards. A high proportion of New Deal clients complete their learning plans and progress to employment.

Good or satisfactory

Pass rates and retention rates are at least in line with national averages. Value-added analysis indicates that the majority are making the progress predicted of them. Most students attain the level expected in the key skills of communication, application of number and IT, where relevant. Most students demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills expected of the average student. Students are working at a level at least appropriate to their capacity. Many students are successful in achieving their higher education or employment goals.

The following may indicate unsatisfactory provision:

- overall underachievement by particular groups of students. For example, gifted and talented students, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or minority ethnic students
- a significant number of students' achievements in the key skills are too low for them to cope adequately with their course or for them to have reasonable prospects of meeting the demands of further education and/or employment
- in individual courses or subjects, standards are significantly lower than in other subjects taken by the same students
- few apprentices complete their apprenticeship awards
- few New Deal clients complete their learning plans or progress to employment.

Guidance on using and interpreting the criteria

56 College results and other performance data

- **results and retention rates compare well with local and national averages**
- **standards are consistently high across the provider's work**
- **challenging learning goals and targets are achieved**
- **learners attend regularly and are punctual**

Comparison of college performance with national averages, both overall and within specific subjects, will be made using the benchmarking data provided to support the college performance report. Curriculum sections of the inspection report will include judgements based on the following measures as appropriate:

- pass rates with levels for each of the subjects or courses inspected. For example, GCE A levels will show rates for grades A-E and grades A-B. For NVQ programmes, successful completion of the whole qualification will be used as a measure
- point scores per entry for completing students
- retention rates for the courses inspected
- destinations of students progressing to employment or higher education
- attainment of the goals described in individual learning plans for students who are not aiming for a qualification.

Where colleges have collaborative arrangements with other institutions, for example franchise partners or other groups in the community, inspectors will distinguish between the achievements of students taught by the college and students taught by the other organisation.

Where a significant proportion of students do not complete their course or training programme, inspectors will investigate the reasons, and will expect the college to have done so. They will seek to distinguish between students who, for example:

- leave early because the decision made at entry was wrong
- have lost interest
- are unable to cope with the work
- have found employment or progressed to some other suitable destination.

Inspectors will not assume that a lower than average retention rate necessarily reflects a weakness on the part of the college. Similarly it will not be assumed that high retention rates are necessarily a strength. In each case, inspectors' judgements will take account of the reasons for the level of retention, so far as they can be ascertained. Where appropriate, inspectors will relate retention rates to, for example, punctuality and attendance, the quality of initial guidance and tutorial support, the quality of teaching, the range of programmes offered and local employment opportunities.

57 Value added

- **analysis of added value indicates that learners make at least the progress expected of them**

Value-added measures, comparing current levels of performance with those at a specific time in the past, give an important indication of the college's contribution to students' education. Reliable value-added data are likely to be available for most sixth-form colleges and in tertiary and general further education (GFE) colleges that have significant full-time GCE A-level and AVCE provision. Where available, such data will be regarded as important evidence of performance. Inspectors will refer to data derived from commercial schemes, such as the A-Level Information System (ALIS) if the college is a subscriber. When referring to data derived from college-devised schemes, inspectors will take care to ensure that comparisons with national data are valid.

Many colleges use value-added data to set achievement targets for individual students. Inspectors will judge whether these targets are sufficiently demanding and whether students are generally reaching them. Colleges may produce value-added data for vocational qualifications other than AVCEs. Inspectors will seek to establish the validity and reliability of such data before taking account of them in their judgements.

Value-added measures in work-based learning relate to improvements in the competence and skills of trainees compared with the levels at which they start. A positive value-added measure would be indicated by progress over and above that predicted at the start of the programme.

58 Performance trends

- **trends in performance over time show continuous improvement or the maintenance of very high standards**

Inspectors will:

- seek to judge trends over a three-year period, placing more emphasis on recent years and less on courses that have been discontinued
- look at the retention rates of current groups of students to gain further evidence of trends
- be aware that percentage measures can have a disproportionate impact when there are few students
- ensure that they compare like with like. For example, a significant improvement in achievements may be the result of raised entry requirements, rather than a real improvement in the quality of work.

59 Standards of work

- **learners make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and their potential**

Inspectors will judge whether students' attainments meet or exceed the levels established in examination or assessment objectives. Subject and course specifications, objectives, prescribed content and grade descriptors will help inspectors in making their assessments.

Inspectors will:

- evaluate the standards being reached in each subject and course in relation to what is expected
- highlight strengths or weaknesses in what students know, understand and can do. For example, in advanced work inspectors will look for well-developed research, critical analysis and problem-solving skills. Where practical skills are important, inspectors' judgements will reflect how well students perform in the workplace or in realistic work situations. In respect of New Deal clients inspectors will look for improvements in social skills, occupational skills and knowledge that make a substantial difference to employability
- report significant differences in the standards achieved by students of different gender or ethnic background
- highlight variations between the standards achieved, in relation to what is expected, on particular courses
- highlight cases where the same students achieve differing standards on different courses.

60 Key skills

- **learners reach levels in key skills consistent with their main programme of study or training**

Inspectors will focus on the key skills of communication, application of number and IT. The wider key skills of working with others, improving own learning and performance, and problem-solving may also form part of students' learning programmes.

The new qualifications framework, introduced in September 2000, provides the opportunity for key skills evidence to be offered by all students taking post-16 programmes, including GCE A and AS levels. Key skills are also a requirement within most modern apprenticeship programmes. In many cases the provision will be an integral part of students' programmes. There is also the opportunity of formal certification through the new key skills qualification, based on the key skills of communication, application of number and information technology. The certificate gives a profile of the level achieved in each key skill. If the student does not achieve all three key skills, the key skills qualification will not be awarded, but each skill achieved will be individually certificated.

In their judgement of key skills achievements inspectors will consider:

- the opportunities for students to study and gain accreditation for key skills either as an integral part of their programme or separately through the new key skills qualification or free-standing mathematics units
- levels of attendance at key skills lessons
- the standards reached against the level specifications, based on observations and scrutiny of students' work
- the number and proportion of students completing key skills programmes and achieving qualifications at an appropriate level.

61 How well students achieve

- **learners are prepared for effective participation in the workplace and in the community**
- **learners progress to relevant further education, training or employment**
- **learners develop the attitudes and skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning, including the capacity to work independently and collaboratively**

Retention rates, pass rates and value-added data indicative of the standards reached by students who have left the college. Inspectors will also assess the work of current students and compare it with their previous record of attainment to obtain an up-to-date view. In discussions with students, inspectors will assess their potential by challenging them and seeking to extend their thinking beyond their classwork. They will evaluate how well their performance reflects their potential. Students' files and marked work will indicate their capacity to carry out research, present arguments and solve problems and show the progress they have made since the start of the course. Inspectors will look for appropriate levels of challenge and good progress for students of all age-groups and abilities, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, people for whom English as an additional language and those who are gifted and talented.

Section 2: the quality of education and training

Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and learning?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- how well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course or programme requirements
- how well learners learn and make progress.

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which teachers and trainers:

- show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise, at a level consistent with effective teaching, training and assessment of the course or programme
- plan effectively with clear objectives that all learners understand
- use methods and styles of teaching and training consistent with the aims of their programmes and learners' personal objectives
- challenge and inspire learners
- set, use and mark assignments and other tasks in a way that helps learners to progress
- with learners, develop individual learning plans, informed by initial assessment, that are reviewed and updated regularly
- promote good working relationships that foster learning
- use materials and teaching methods that are sensitive to issues of equal opportunity.

and the extent to which learners, irrespective of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, learning difficulty or disability:

- acquire knowledge and skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding
- understand and are confident in what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve
- apply effort to succeed with their work, work productively and make effective use of their time
- are stimulated by, and show interest in, their work.

Inspection focus

62 The quality of teaching is the main determinant of how well students learn, their attitude to study, and how well they achieve. Good teaching has the quality to inspire and challenge. It is based on understanding and expertise in the subject or course, linked to an enthusiastic approach that encourages students to respond actively and enjoy their learning.

63 Inspectors will focus on the effectiveness of the learning process. They will identify and report on teaching that works well and teaching that is ineffective. They will not be prescriptive. Colleges should not assume, for example, that lesson plans must be in a particular format, that exposition is undesirable, or that lessons must include a variety of activities at all costs. It is recognised that in different hands and with different students different approaches can be equally effective.

64 Effective use of students' time outside lessons is essential if they are to succeed. Materials for students to work with on their own, IT facilities, libraries and other learning resources make a major contribution to learning. The effectiveness of these facilities for learning will be evaluated.

65 Work experience plays a significant part in many students' learning. Students who are employed, or who are based with an employer on a training programme, will undertake most of their learning away from the college. How well students learn while at work, including judgements about how effectively their progress is monitored and recorded, will be evaluated and reported on. This may involve inspectors visiting students at their workplace and meeting with employers and work-based supervisors.

66 Inspectors of work-based learning will assess whether the training process enables trainees to acquire the competence, skills and knowledge that comprise their learning objectives. Much training takes place at work, so workplace supervisors exercise a significant influence over trainees' learning. Work-based training is supplemented by off-the-job training that gives the trainees the background knowledge and the skills that they apply in the workplace. Inspectors' judgements will take into account the extent to which teaching and training are suitable for adult learners, how they respond to teaching and whether they are capable of promoting their own learning.

67 Inspectors of the New Deal will judge the extent to which clients, training providers and employers plan learning programmes to meet the individual needs of the clients and help them to improve their occupational and personal development skills and fulfil their potential. They will look at how well the learning opportunities at work, and training away from work, help clients enhance their employability.

68 The report on teaching and learning for the college as a whole will focus on the effectiveness of teaching, training and learning. It will draw out on the strengths and weaknesses identified in curriculum areas. Lesson observation grades will be summarised under headings related to broad categories of qualifications. Overall attendance at lessons will be reported and compared with national benchmarks. Each curriculum section of the report will describe the quality of teaching on the courses inspected and include examples of lessons where teaching was particularly good or unsatisfactory.

Making judgements

69 Judgements are made about teaching, learning and attainment:

- in individual subjects, programmes and courses
- for students of different ages
- across college departments or sections, and
- across the college as a whole.

70 When inspectors observe lessons they will normally award grades for teaching, learning and attainment. If an inspector considers that there is insufficient evidence to grade any of these three aspects, a grade for that aspect will not be awarded. Many factors affect inspectors' lesson observation judgements about teaching, learning and attainment. In many lessons the three aspects will be very closely linked. In broad terms:

- the judgement of teaching focuses on the role of the teacher in preparing and delivering an effective lesson
- the judgement of learning focuses on the progress being made by students during that lesson, taking into account their starting-point
- the judgement of attainment focuses on the standard of work produced by students during that lesson, judged against the standard expected of students at that point in their course, irrespective of their starting-point.

71 Inspectors' judgements about teaching and learning in a curriculum area will contribute to the overall view of teaching and learning in the college. Judgements will emphasise the impact of teaching on students' learning and achievements. They will take account of the needs of all students, including those who are gifted or talented, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Inspectors will also evaluate how well the teaching helps students to extend their competence in key skills. Judgements will be based mainly on:

- lesson observations
- discussions with students, both individually and in groups
- discussions with teachers and managers
- scrutiny of students' marked work and practical work

- inspection of lesson plans and schemes of work
- analysis of students' feedback in surveys of their opinions
- analysis of attendance levels, which will be recorded and reported on in each curriculum section of the report.

72 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about teaching and learning

Very good or excellent

Work is thoroughly prepared, but this does not prevent effective use of unanticipated but productive opportunities that arise in lessons. Teacher's enthusiasm and commitment inspire students, who respond well to the challenges set for them. Teachers demonstrate authority and expertise in their subject or occupational area. Over a period of time, the range of methods used is varied and students develop different ways of working. Assessment is well organised. Teachers make effective comments on students' written work, so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Teaching promotes independent research, good working relationships, and the productive use of students' time.

Good or satisfactory

Course content is accurate and is planned and presented clearly and effectively. Working methods are suitable for the task and enable students to make satisfactory progress. Lessons have clear objectives and students know what they are doing. Teachers help them to plan their time sensibly. Work is marked regularly and thoroughly, and written comments help students to understand where they have gone wrong and what to do about it. They respond positively and purposefully in lessons, willingly answering questions and participating in discussions. Teachers take steps to encourage them to work effectively on their own, but a few students remain too dependent on the teacher.

The following may indicate unsatisfactory teaching:

- the teacher's command of the subject is inadequate for the level demanded by the course
- assessment and review are inadequate to give students a clear and critical picture of their achievement and progress in the subject
- students do not have an adequate understanding of what is necessary for them to make improvements
- excessive use is made of teaching methods that make too little demand on students' initiative, practical skills and ability to think for themselves
- students' attendance at lessons or for work-based training is poor.

73 There is no automatic link between the proportion of unsatisfactory and poor lessons and the overall judgement of the adequacy of the college. Guidelines for the judgement of adequacy focus on the overall judgements for each curriculum area and the judgement of leadership and management. However, the overall quality of teaching will be taken into account in making the inspection team's judgement of adequacy. If more than ten per cent of the lessons are unsatisfactory, the RI will draw the team's attention to this fact at the final team meeting when the adequacy of the college is being determined. A higher proportion of unsatisfactory lessons increases the likelihood of a finding of inadequacy.

Guidance on using and interpreting the criteria

74 How well students learn

- **learners acquire new knowledge and skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding**
- **learners understand and are confident in what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve**

Students should advance their knowledge, understanding and skills well beyond those they had when they started their course. They should be aiming to make the most of their potential. Advanced level students should show increasing capacity for research and critical analysis. At other levels, students should demonstrate appropriate understanding, knowledge and skills. If at any level, there is over-dependence on teachers, or work is pursued at a superficial level, students will not be learning effectively.

75 How well students progress

- **students apply effort to succeed with their work, work productively and make effective use of their time**
- **students are stimulated and show interest in their work**

Inspectors will assess, through observation and discussions with students, the extent to which students:

- are productive and work at a good pace
- are interested in their work and able to sustain their concentration
- think and learn for themselves
- make effective use of their time
- make use of the resources available to them, for example in libraries and IT centres
- show determination to complete assignments on time and see problems through
- are prepared to seek help and act on advice they receive.

76 How well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course requirements

Inspectors will evaluate how well teachers and trainers

- **plan effectively with clear objectives which all learners understand**
- **show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise, at a level consistent with effective teaching, training and assessment of the course**
- **challenge and inspire learners**
- **use methods and styles of teaching and training consistent with the aims of their programmes and learners' personal objectives**

Teaching will be judged in terms of its impact on students' learning. Good teaching in a college provides a bridge between work at school and higher education and employment. There is a strong relationship between thorough planning and effective teaching. Syllabuses and programme requirements should be translated into clear and comprehensive schemes of work, which are understood by students. Individual lessons should be well planned, but lesson plans should not be so inflexible that they cannot be adapted to reflect the progress of students.

In work-based learning, on- and off-the-job training should be planned and co-ordinated effectively to enable trainees to acquire the required range of skills and competence. Training plans should include objectives that are clear and understood by trainees, trainers and workplace supervisors. New Deal trainers should take account of each client's learning needs in devising training sessions. They should inform clients of the objectives of the session and its intended outcomes.

Teachers and trainers, including work-based trainers, should have comprehensive, up-to-date knowledge and expertise in their subject or vocational area. New Deal trainers should have skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience appropriate to their specialist option and occupational area. Lack of subject knowledge or training expertise may point to a weakness in leadership and management of the college. Teachers' attitudes to their subject or vocational area are important. Their attitudes directly affect students' own attitudes to learning.

When students first arrive at college they sometimes lack confidence in their ability to meet the new demands. This is particularly true of many adults who are returning to learning. Teaching that is sensitive to this and which also helps students to set themselves demanding and attainable targets for each stage of their work helps to overcome these doubts. Discussion should be a regular feature of lessons, enabling students to exchange ideas and clarify their understanding. Both teachers and students should initiate questions that are designed to extend thought and understanding. Teachers should ensure that students have time to think about the questions before they are expected to respond. Questions asked of advanced-level students should challenge their thinking and interpretation beyond the routine and superficial.

Inspectors' approaches to lesson observation will vary depending on the circumstances. Features of good lessons that inspectors may look for include, for example:

- clear objectives which are made known to the students
- enthusiastic and interesting teaching that maintains the attention of all the students
- activities that are suitable for all students, whatever their age and ability, and which are suitably demanding
- awareness of different individuals' needs
- effective questioning of students to check their understanding
- skilful leadership of discussions to ensure that students' contributions are encouraged and valued
- clear explanations
- accurate and up-to-date technical knowledge
- sensitivity to equal opportunities issues
- clear writing on whiteboards and overhead projectors
- good-quality handouts, which are well produced, free from errors and which contain references where appropriate
- sufficient coverage of ground
- effective management of any transition between individual and group work
- a crisp end to the lesson, summarising what has been learned and avoiding 'tailing off'.

77 Initial assessment and coursework

An assessment of the quality of teaching also requires inspectors to evaluate the extent to which teachers and trainers:

- **with learners, develop individual learning plans, informed by initial assessment, that are reviewed and updated regularly**
- **set, use and mark assignments and other tasks in a way that helps learners to progress**

The results of initial assessment should be reported to students without delay and will help to inform their individual learning plans. These plans should include arrangements to provide additional support with literacy or numeracy where need has been identified. Students' additional support needs may be met in a variety of ways; for example, in groups, through individual tuition or by attendance at support workshops. Inspectors will not be prescriptive about the arrangements for support, but they will expect students who have been identified as needing support to be receiving that support. Their progress should be monitored and reported to personal tutors in the same way as progress in academic or vocational aspects of their course. Colleges will be expected to have evaluated the impact of additional support.

Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which assignments encourage students to think independently, consolidate learning, develop research skills and use the available

resources, particularly IT resources. Assignment briefs should clearly indicate tasks to be undertaken, assessment criteria and deadlines. The overall programme of assignments should normally ensure an even workload throughout the year. Good assignment programmes are likely to require both individual and group work. Marked assignments should be returned to students within a specified time. Summary comments and marking throughout the assignment should clearly indicate how students could improve their work.

Many students study on a part-time basis and, at some colleges, students take distance learning programmes. Inspectors will consider whether the arrangements for planning individuals' programmes, supporting them and monitoring their progress are appropriate. In relation to distance learning, inspectors will consider whether the resources to support learning are appropriate. Where distance learning students are dependent on computers and computer-based materials, inspectors will assess whether students have the necessary skills to benefit from distance learning.

Inspectors looking at work-based training will expect trainees to contribute to their own training plans, based on an initial assessment of competence, skills and knowledge. Training plans are working documents. They should be reviewed regularly and amended to reflect progress and changes in trainees' needs. Work-based learning trainers and workplace supervisors should set relevant tasks and projects for trainees. They should give constructive feedback to the trainees to help them improve their performance. New Deal trainers should set appropriate tasks and projects both during training at work and away from work. The tasks should help clients to develop skills and gain knowledge. Trainers should give prompt and constructive feedback orally and in writing. Portfolios of evidence should be kept up to date.

78 The teaching of key skills

The development of key skills is most effective when teachers take responsibility for developing them as part of their teaching and when students see the relevance of these skills to the course they are studying. In the best practice, the teaching of, and support for, key skills are provided in a variety of settings, including lessons, key skills workshops and resource centres which students can visit as they wish and study individually or in groups.

To reach a judgement on the teaching and development of key skills across the college inspectors will assess whether:

- there is a college policy on key skills that applies to all programmes and all students
- the strategy for implementing the policy ensures a co-ordinated approach across the college that is actively supported by senior managers
- there are systematic procedures for initial assessment and learning support
- key skills teaching is closely linked to students' main programmes
- there is an appropriate range of teaching methods and modes of delivery
- there is regular monitoring and review of students' progress

- there are effective arrangements for internal verification and moderation
- managers receive regular reports on key skills development across the college
- there are opportunities for staff development and sharing good practice.

In relation to specific courses, inspectors will evaluate whether:

- students are learning the skills necessary to cope with the courses they are following
- work is carefully marked, with correction of spelling, grammatical errors or inaccuracies in work with numbers
- IT is used by students as an integral part of their courses
- work is as professionally presented as it is reasonable to expect at the relevant stage of their course
- students work collaboratively with their peers and others.

79 The teaching of practical skills

Developing practical skills is an essential element of many courses. Inspectors will observe the teaching and learning of practical skills in many different settings, for example learning resource centres, workshops, studios, laboratories, salons, kitchens, sports halls, simulated work environments and places of employment. Inspectors will often observe the start of practical lessons and return later in the lesson to assess the progress students have made, and will focus on the effectiveness of teaching. Matters that are particularly relevant to the judgement of practical lessons include:

- whether the balance between the teaching of theory and practical skills is appropriate
- whether the students have a sufficient grounding of theory before starting the relevant practical work
- the safety and suitability of the environment for the practical activity and the number of students expected to attend
- whether the activities reflect current commercial or industrial practice
- the quality of the equipment and other learning resources
- the quality of teachers' demonstration of practical skills
- whether students have enough time to practise and develop their skills
- whether there is a clear distinction between practice and work for assessment
- whether teachers divide their time equitably between all individuals in the group, and are aware of individuals' progress
- whether students are achieving appropriate standards, which should approach commercial or industrial standards, towards the end of their programmes
- whether key skills are integrated effectively with aspects of the practical work.

Question 3: How do resources affect achievement and learning?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate:

- the adequacy and suitability of staff
- the adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation.

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- there are enough qualified and experienced teaching, training and support staff matching the demands of programmes and the range of learners
- the professional development of staff contributes to their effectiveness
- specialist equipment and materials are used, including facilities which are relevant to the workplace and which meet current industrial standards
- accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching, training and learning and support for learners
- learners have access to learning resources that are appropriate for effective independent study
- learners work in a healthy and safe environment
- resources are used to best effect in promoting learning
- learning resources and accommodation allow all learners to participate fully, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or learning difficulty or disability.

Inspection focus

80 Inspectors will make judgements about the quality of resources and their impact on learning in the following areas:

- the qualifications, experience, subject knowledge and professional development of staff
- the range and quality of specialist equipment and materials and their effective use by teachers and workplace supervisors
- the range, quality and accessibility of central resources, such as libraries, sports and recreational facilities and computer rooms
- the quality, suitability and safety of general classrooms and specialist accommodation
- effective use and deployment of resources to support students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

81 In relation to work-based learning, staff resources include off-the-job trainers, workplace supervisors, staff who manage and co-ordinate training and those in subcontracted organisations. Inspectors will evaluate accommodation, equipment, materials and learning resources, both in the workplace and where off-the-job training takes place. Inspectors will consider how well Employment Service staff, employers and training providers fulfil the purpose of the New Deal, including the extent to which staff have the skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience necessary to deliver training in the specialist options and occupational areas to clients with different needs. They will also look at the quality of the accommodation, equipment and facilities available to clients.

82 The overall judgement will focus on the impact of resources on the quality and extent of students' learning. Where students spend time in workplaces, judgements about the quality of workplace resources and accommodation will be made. Where there are significant differences in the quality of the resources in different parts of the college this will be highlighted in the report. Curriculum sections of the report will include more detailed judgements about the teaching and technical support staff in those areas, and the general and specialist resources and facilities available to students.

Making judgements

83 When inspecting curriculum areas, inspectors will make judgements about the effective use of resources in those areas. Their findings will contribute to an overall judgement on the college's resources. Sources of evidence include:

- observation of classrooms and specialist facilities
- equipment inventories
- accommodation strategies and maintenance plans
- health and safety policy and procedures
- the curricula vitae of staff
- discussions with teachers and students
- arrangements for staff appraisal and development
- staffing levels and the effective use of part-time teachers.

84 Staff should hold qualifications that are relevant to their teaching commitments. Some awarding bodies require staff to hold particular qualifications before they can undertake specific roles: for example, the assessment of students. Professional development should enable staff to become more effective as teachers, not merely help them to gain further qualifications. In many cases professional development will include opportunities for staff to update their knowledge and experience of industry and commerce.

85 Inspectors will make an overall assessment of the quality of the college environment. They will assess how accommodation and resources affect what is done, for example whether they restrict or enhance opportunities for practical work. They will pay particular attention to the suitability of common areas, classrooms and specialist facilities for students who have learning difficulties or physical disabilities. They will also look, for example, at:

- the resources available to support enrichment activities
- the availability of refreshments for students who may be attending the college for an extended day
- the general cleanliness and standard of maintenance of college premises.

86 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about the effects of resources on the quality of learning

Very good or excellent

Teachers and trainers are well qualified. They have up-to-date subject or occupational knowledge that is used well to promote learning. The college provides an interesting and lively environment for students. Accommodation and learning resources are good. Surveys show that staff and students value the accommodation and facilities. Students' work is displayed in classrooms and public areas. Libraries and learning resource centres are well designed, well equipped and well used. They bring together a wide range of learning resources. Students and staff have good access to modern computers, which are available in open access areas and in many classrooms and workshops. The college has supported its investment in hardware and software with policies that encourage the use of computers. The reprographics service enables teachers to produce good paper-based resources. All areas of the college have easy access for students with restricted mobility. Adaptations to classrooms, workplaces and workshops enable students with a wide range of learning difficulties and physical disabilities to study effectively.

Good or satisfactory

Staff are well qualified for the work they undertake, but a few teachers on vocational courses have little recent industrial experience. Some college buildings offer good accommodation. The accommodation for student services is spacious, it is adequately staffed, and it offers students easy access to guidance materials. There are smaller rooms in which private meetings with individual students can take place. Most classrooms provide an attractive environment for students. Students and staff can use modern computers, offering a wide range of software and good access to the Internet. The quality of teaching accommodation and resources at outcentres varies, but most is good. Most areas of the college are accessible to students with restricted mobility.

The following may indicate unsatisfactory resources:

- significant numbers of teachers are poorly qualified in their subjects, lack experience, or do not hold teaching qualifications
- little opportunity for professional development and the effectiveness of professional development is not rigorously evaluated
- specialist equipment and materials to support substantial aspects of the college's work, including on-the-job training, is of poor quality
- accommodation is of a poor standard and inadequately maintained
- insufficient books, videos and computer-based learning materials to meet the needs of the students
- important areas of the college are inaccessible or unsuitable for students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Guidance on using and interpreting the criteria

87 Staffing and professional development

- **there are enough qualified and experienced teaching, training and support staff matching the demands of programmes and the range of learners**
- **the professional development of staff contributes to their effectiveness**

The evaluation of staff resources will not be made in. For example, inspectors will consider whether weaknesses in teaching are linked to aspects of staffing. Inspectors will look at:

- the extent and appropriateness of teachers' professional qualifications and knowledge of their subject in relation to the courses they teach
- the proportion of teachers with teaching qualifications and the arrangements for teachers who do not have them to become qualified
- whether teachers have recent and relevant knowledge and experience in industry or commerce
- whether a sufficient number of teachers have qualifications which enable them to assess students' work on vocational programmes
- whether specialist teachers are available to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the amount of teaching undertaken by instructors or part-time teachers
- the arrangements for part-time teachers to be involved in curriculum development and management and the effect these have on full-time colleagues and on students' learning
- whether there is a sufficient number of adequately qualified technical and other support staff to help students and teachers and to maintain resources and learning materials

- whether there is a sufficient number of administrative and clerical staff to help in the management of courses
- whether there are suitable arrangements for staff appraisal and review and for the provision of professional development activities which meet the identified needs of staff
- whether the college has suitable arrangements to evaluate its professional development activities.

There should be enough qualified and experienced staff to carry out training, assessment, internal verification and, where necessary, counselling of work-based trainees.

Workplace supervisors should have relevant occupational experience and be able to devote sufficient time to on-the-job training. Some should have occupational qualifications and be trained as assessors or internal verifiers. Staff should keep up to date their knowledge and skills as trainers and managers of training. New Deal training providers' staff should work effectively with clients who have diverse learning needs, including those with poor basic skills.

88 Specialist equipment and resources

- **specialist equipment and materials are used, including facilities which are relevant to the workplace and which meet current industrial standards**
- **resources are used to best effect in promoting learning**

Judgements will cover both the quality of equipment and how well teachers use it to promote effective learning. Specialist equipment and materials should reflect, so far as possible, the standards required by industry. The college should aim to introduce students to the latest industrial or technological developments. Inspectors will judge whether there is adequate provision of, for example:

- whiteboards, overhead projectors and screens
- televisions, videos and other equipment in classrooms
- up-to-date specialist equipment to teach the courses offered and to cater for the number of students on those courses
- modern computers and Internet access
- relevant up-to-date books and periodicals
- suitable specialist equipment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

89 Accommodation

- **accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching, training and learning and support for learners**
- **learners work in a healthy and safe environment**

Classrooms, workshops and specialist accommodation should be of sufficient size to accommodate the groups that use them. Accommodation should be clean, safe, well maintained and provide a modern working environment. Furniture should be fit for

purpose and its layout should be appropriate for the particular learning activity. The quality of accommodation for groups of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be comparable with accommodation for other groups of students.

Work-based learning and off-the-job training providers should check and record that the workplace meets health and safety requirements. Trainees should be made aware of their responsibilities for their own and others' health and safety.

90 Learning resources

- **learners have access to learning resources that are appropriate for effective independent study**
- learning resources and accommodation allow all learners to participate fully, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or learning difficulty or disability.

Libraries and other central learning resources have been subject to rapid change in many colleges. The separation of the location and management of books, journals and similar paper resources from electronic databases is increasingly rare. Issues for inspectors include:

- whether the resources, both paper-based and electronic, are sufficient to support and extend students' learning
- whether there is enough space in the library, whether the layout is good and whether there is a quiet study area
- whether students have had an appropriate induction to the library and resource centres
- opening hours for the library and resource centres
- accessibility to the Internet and the controls on its use
- the quality of links between libraries/central resource providers and college departments
- whether some departments have separate book collections, which may not be properly catalogued and controlled, and which may not be accessible to students from other departments
- the views of students on the resources available to them
- whether resources are available to students who do not attend the college: for example, distance learning students
- where a college has several sites, or where learners are predominantly work-based, whether suitable arrangements to borrow books and access computers are made for students at each site.

Work-based trainees and New Deal clients should have access to good learning materials, equipment and facilities when they need them. They should also be able to use these facilities on their own. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may require specially adapted resources and accommodation. Particular ethnic groups may need materials in their first language, especially when they first enrol at the college. Judgements will be made about the suitability and use of such resources.

Question 4: How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate:

- the suitability and rigour of assessment
- the uses of assessment in planning learning and monitoring learners' progress.

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which, for all learners:

- forms of assessment and recording are suitable for the courses and programmes being followed
- assessment is fair, accurate and carried out regularly
- initial assessment provides an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work
- assessment is used to monitor progress and inform individual learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further
- achievements towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded and accredited
- assessment information, including the analysis of performance of different groups of learners, is used to guide course and programme development
- assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow regulatory body requirements
- those with a legitimate interest, such as employers or parents, are clearly and regularly informed about learners' progress.

Inspection focus

91 Regular and effective assessment makes a major contribution to enabling students to achieve their full potential. It should involve thorough identification of students' learning needs and additional support needs and fairly and accurately identify what they are doing well and what needs improvement. Students should understand how they will be assessed and how their overall progress will be monitored. They should also be encouraged to evaluate of their own performance. Teachers should use assessment to evaluate how effectively the course meets students' needs.

92 Reporting students' progress to parents or sponsoring employers is important for many students under the age of 18. Inspectors will focus on the quality and accuracy of such reports and the function of parents' evenings and meetings with employers in reporting the outcomes of assessment. The college should consider the views of parents and employers when it judges the effectiveness of its reporting arrangements.

93 The assessment of work-based trainees involves judgements about how effectively they are assessed on entry and throughout their training programmes. Initial assessment enables an appropriate training plan to be produced. Subsequent assessments are used to monitor trainees' progress towards their learning objectives and to judge their competence and skills against national standards. New Deal clients are assessed during the 'gateway' and at the start of their options. Inspectors will assess the quality of the assessment of clients' learning and the extent to which clients, employers, training providers and personal advisers are involved in reviewing clients' progress.

94 Inspectors will consider how effectively the knowledge and skills of adult students are assessed on entry and whether initial assessment informs individual learning plans. In appropriate cases, colleges should be able to arrange for the accreditation of adult students' prior learning or achievement. Part-time students' progress should be as carefully assessed as that of full-time students.

Making judgements

95 Curriculum inspectors will provide much of the evidence for this aspect of the inspection. Evidence used to evaluate the suitability and thoroughness of the assessment of students' achievements and progress includes:

- records of initial assessment and the process of establishing learning goals
- students' assessed written work, and other assignments
- assessment records and reports
- records of progress reviews with students
- course assessment plans
- observation of assessment activities
- interviews with assessors and internal verifiers
- views of employers and parents who are supporting students
- views of students.

96 Discussions with students will reveal whether students have an accurate picture of how well they are doing and what steps they need to take to improve. For students who are learning at a distance from the college, inspectors may need to contact them by telephone to discuss these matters. For work-based trainees, inspectors will judge how well they are trained and assessed in the workplace, as opposed to being given tasks in simulated work environments. Evidence will include:

- authorised witness testimonies
- records of assessment and of observation of trainees' performance
- records of discussions with staff responsible for the trainees' performance
- trainees' portfolios
- trainees' responses to written and oral questioning.

97 Using assessment to improve students' performance often involves setting students targets for improvement. Judgements about the effectiveness of target-setting will be reported on in this section. Reviews of students' performance in their assessments are central to the evaluation of courses. Inspectors will judge how effectively the college's evaluation of students' progress leads to improvements in the way courses are taught and managed. Inspectors will evaluate whether the quality of assessment, advice and guidance is consistent for all students.

98 Inspectors will judge how well assessment is used to monitor students' progress in the college. Differences in the effectiveness of assessment in different curriculum areas, between age-groups, between full-time and part-time students, and on different categories of programme, for example GCE A levels, NVQs or basic skills courses, will be highlighted. Curriculum sections will include judgements on the effectiveness of assessment and monitoring of progress on the courses inspected.

99 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about the quality of assessment and the monitoring of students' progress

Very good or excellent

Assessment is regular and rigorous. Teachers mark students' work fairly and return it promptly. The assessment of each significant piece of work leads to an opportunity for the teacher to raise matters with students, and for students to clarify the assessment. Students are given accurate information about their achievements. They are helped to understand the strengths and weaknesses in their work and to identify targets for the next stage of their work. Targets are informed by value-added data in the case of GCE A level and AVCE students.

Assessment is used to identify the additional learning needs of individuals. These needs are met. Reporting is accurate and gives students, their parents and their employers a clear picture of the students' performance. Students' performance and progress are used effectively to monitor the effectiveness of the college's provision. Comments from examiners and verifiers appointed by regulatory bodies are responded to promptly and appropriately. Teachers and managers monitor students' achievements and ensure that standards are consistent for different groups of students on equivalent courses in different parts of the college. There are highly effective internal verification procedures which include opportunities for assessors to share good practice across curriculum and occupational areas.

Good or satisfactory

Regular assessments of work are accurate and provide students with information about how well they are doing and how they can improve. There is some variation in the quality of the assignments presented to students, with some unsatisfactory assignments in a few areas of the college. Teachers set frequent tests and provide regular homework for students. Most have a thorough approach to marking and correcting students' work. It is easy for students to see where they have gained and lost marks. Teachers often make encouraging comments.

The following may indicate unsatisfactory assessment:

- assessments are not sufficiently thorough and regular, and do not enable students to form an accurate picture of their achievements
- records of progress give inadequate indications of what has been learnt
- internal verification procedures are inadequate
- not enough is done to help students to develop skills and knowledge which enable them to evaluate their own work
- there are no arrangements for monitoring the overall workload and achievement of students across their courses or subjects
- the college does not respond in an appropriate and timely manner to the views of external examiners, moderators and verifiers.

Guidance on using the criteria

100 Forms of assessment

- **forms of assessment and recording are suitable for the courses and programmes being followed**

Inspectors will look for a close match between the objectives of the course and the means used to assess students' progress. For example, courses that predominantly use written tests or assignments to assess students should offer students opportunities to develop their written skills to a sufficiently high level to tackle such written tests. Assessment methods and recording systems within a course should be consistent. For example, one tutor should not grade assignments A, B, C and so on, if another tutor on the same course is marking similar assignments out of 20. Suitable methods for assessment of work-based learning should be used and detailed records of assessment should be maintained.

101 Awarding body requirements

- **assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow regulatory body requirements**

Awarding bodies specify the criteria, rules and procedures for assessment. Some awarding bodies require assessors to hold qualifications in assessment approved by the awarding body. Inspectors should judge whether these requirements are met. They will also judge the work of internal verifiers through discussions with them, reference to college procedures, records of internal verification and scrutiny of internally verified students' work.

102 Assessing students' progress

- **assessment is used to monitor progress and inform individual learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further**
- **assessment is fair, accurate and carried out regularly**

Feedback to students about their assessments should be honest and objective. It should provide enough information about their achievements to ensure that they are able to make a realistic assessment of their progress and prospects. If students doubt their ability to make progress, feedback from tutors should support and encourage those students without arousing false and unachievable expectations.

Work-based trainees' progress should be reviewed at appropriate intervals at meetings involving the person responsible for the training, the trainee and the workplace supervisor. The review may lead to amendments to the individual training plan. Each party should maintain records of these meetings. Actions to be completed by the next meeting should be identified. Inspectors will sample records of these meetings.

New Deal clients should make significant progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge identified in their training plan for enhancing their employment prospects. Clients should understand the purpose of the option and the role of trainers and personal advisers in setting targets and monitoring progress. They should regularly be set short-term targets and receive detailed and constructive feedback from assessors on their performance.

Assessment should give students a fair and complete picture of their work and progress in relation to course objectives. Clear messages about the strengths and the weaknesses of their work are essential. Students should understand the good features of their work and what must be done to improve it. To judge this, inspectors will:

- look at teachers' written comments on students' work
- when the opportunity arises, listen to teachers' comments when work is returned to students
- listen to students' views about the extent to which assessment meet their aims.

Inspectors will evaluate the accuracy of assessment. The marks or grades awarded should fairly reflect the quality of students' work. In forming their judgements inspectors will look at a range of work from students of different abilities. For students on NVQ

programmes, assessment will be carried out in an actual workplace whenever possible, rather than a simulated one.

103 Initial assessment

- **initial assessment provides an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work**
- **assessment information, including the analysis of performance of different groups of learners, is used to guide course and programme development**

Initial assessment should be used to identify students' additional support needs. It should be carried out during induction and the results should be reported to the students without delay. Actions based on the outcomes of initial assessment should be incorporated into students' individual learning programmes. Support may be provided to individuals, to whole groups or through learning workshops. Inspectors will look to see whether the students have suitable opportunities to get the support they have been identified as needing and are receiving it.

Regular assessment throughout a course should provide information that is acted on by both students and teachers. The readiness of students to pursue matters raised in the assessment of their work reflects their attitudes to work and reveals whether teaching has fostered a commitment to continuous improvement. Inspectors will look at how teachers follow up issues revealed by assessment, for example by providing additional help for individuals or by changing teaching methods, class timetables or any other aspect of how the course is taught or organised.

Work-based trainees and New Deal clients should receive, when they join their programme, an assessment of their basic and key skills and, where appropriate, occupational aptitude. The results of this assessment should be taken into account when devising their individual training plans and in deciding whether the trainees and clients need additional learning support.

104 Accrediting performance

- **achievements towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded and accredited**
- **those with a legitimate interest, such as employers or parents, are clearly and regularly informed about learners' progress**

Inspectors will look at the records kept by teachers and personal tutors. These should clearly indicate individuals' progress, how their progress compares with what is expected of them by their teachers, and what needs to be done to improve. Inspectors will sample the reports prepared for parents and employers. Where appropriate, they will meet parents or employers to discuss the quality of the information they receive. Trainers should also maintain detailed records of work-based trainees' progress towards, and achievement of, learning goals and qualifications. Trainees and New Deal clients

receive certification for component parts of full qualifications, so that they have something to show for the learning they have achieved if they leave early or wish to work towards the qualification elsewhere.

Question 5: How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- the extent to which courses or programmes match learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience
- how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements, and are responsive to local circumstances.

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- learners have the opportunity to follow an appropriate range of courses or programmes, and, where appropriate, achieve suitable qualifications
- the curriculum or an individual programme of work is planned and managed effectively to provide coherence and progression
- the curriculum or programmes of work are socially inclusive, ensuring equality of access and opportunities for learners
- learners have the opportunity to broaden their experiences and enhance their personal development through a suitable variety of enrichment activities
- programmes of work take account of community and employer needs
- legal requirements in relation to religious education and collective worship are fulfilled where they apply
- multi-site provision and resources are effectively integrated to give a coherent programme of learning.

Inspection focus

105 This question considers how effectively courses reflect the needs and interests of students and enable them to achieve appropriate qualifications for further education, higher education or employment.

106 Inspectors will focus on:

- the policies and practices that widen participation in education, by ensuring access from groups that are under-represented in further education, helping them to achieve and to progress to further study or employment
- how well the college assesses educational and training needs in its local area, including the quality of its links with local schools and employers
- how well the college identifies and responds to local needs by offering an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level
- the extent to which students are offered coherent programmes of study with a variety of interesting and useful activities
- whether there are clear progression opportunities within the college for full-time and part-time students at all levels
- the extent to which the reforms of advanced level qualifications have broadened the curriculum and been effectively implemented, including the arrangements for the teaching of key skills
- the availability of enrichment opportunities that enable students to explore personal, social and ethical issues and take part in sports, drama or other activities
- whether the organisation and planning of courses is suitable for the students enrolled on those courses
- the extent to which the college provides opportunities through suitable franchise and partnership arrangements with other providers
- the effectiveness of work-based training in meeting the expectations of trainees to obtain employment and to start or develop their career
- whether New Deal clients are guided to options where they can acquire skills and knowledge in interesting and challenging contexts and which will help them achieve sustained employment
- where appropriate, whether the statutory requirements relating to collective worship have been met.

Making judgements

107 Inspectors will assess the effect of the curriculum on students. They will look at the choices the students can make and how well subject or course organisation enables them to make progress. Discussions with students will provide evidence of how well they feel that the course meets their particular needs and aspirations.

108 Sources of evidence include:

- discussions with students, parents, employers, community representatives, franchise partners, training providers and college teachers and support staff
- examples of individual learning plans
- schemes of work
- college promotional literature

- the college's strategic and operational plan
- findings from market research activities carried out by the college or other organisations
- local labour market information
- documentary evidence of external links.

109 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about the quality of opportunities for learning

Very good or excellent

The curriculum is rich and varied, with a choice of courses that permits all students to continue with work at different levels. Key skills provision is well organised. A good range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum. Programmes are carefully planned and monitored. Course planning also ensures that students can build on and use their existing knowledge and experience. Across the curriculum, students have regular opportunities to reflect on personal, social and ethical issues of relevance to them. Students make effective use of facilities provided for working on their own. The curriculum is inclusive and ensures equality of access and opportunity. Provision taught by franchise partners is carefully planned and monitored.

Good or satisfactory

The college offers a good range of post-16 courses at levels appropriate to students' needs. The vast majority of students are able to follow their choice of courses. The college ensures that students are aware of what is available in other colleges in the area. The enrichment programme offers a satisfactory range of activities including sport. There are suitable arrangements for the development of the key skills.

The following may indicate that the curriculum is unsatisfactory:

- the college lacks policies or practices that effectively widen participation in education
- the curriculum lacks sensitivity to educational inclusiveness and equality of opportunity, with the result that particular groups of students, for example women returning to study and ethnic minorities, are not adequately provided for
- the range of courses is too narrow to enable students to achieve suitable qualifications or progress to other courses
- students' programmes of work are not effectively planned, managed and monitored so that a significant number of students fail to make the progress expected
- students have few opportunities to broaden their experiences through enrichment activities
- little account is taken of the skills and understanding needed for employment, for further training or higher education
- franchise or partnership arrangements provide an unsatisfactory experience for students.

Guidance on using the criteria

110 Curriculum range

- **learners have access to an appropriate range of courses or programmes, and, where appropriate, achieve suitable qualifications**
- **the curriculum or programmes of work are socially inclusive, ensuring equality of access and opportunities for learners**

The range of subjects and courses should enable students to build on what they have already achieved and experienced, as well as providing a range of choices and opportunities in new areas. Inspectors will look at the number of subjects and courses, the combinations offered, the levels of study, progression routes and timetable arrangements. They will look at arrangements for part-time students where many of the students have family or childcare commitments. They will be aware of the issues that arise in a curriculum area attracting low numbers of students, for example whether:

- the provision of a particular course or a particular curriculum area is consistent with responsible management of resources across the college as a whole
- there are effective management strategies to deal with low numbers of students, for example by appropriate combination of groups
- students in small groups are taught effectively.

The success of students on different courses, including retention rates and rates of progression to relevant destinations, provides an indication of the suitability of the curriculum and the effectiveness of pre-entry guidance. Provision for New Deal clients should give them the opportunity to work towards qualifications which meet their needs.

111 Planning of courses and programmes

- **the curriculum or an individual programme of work is planned and managed effectively to provide coherence and progression**

Inspectors will not prescribe models for course organisation and management. They will assess the effectiveness of what is done in terms of its impact on students. Key skills will be an integral part of many students' courses. Inspectors will assess key skills provision in relation to college policies, the assessment requirements specified by the college or the examining body and how effectively the teaching of key skills supports and enhances the main area of study. Work-based trainees should have coherent training programmes that require them to carry out tasks that become progressively more complex and demanding. All aspects of New Deal clients' learning, including jobsearch, work-based projects and additional learning activities should be well co-ordinated.

College students should take some of the responsibility for organising their own learning. When they are not in lessons they have opportunities for working on their own, for example in libraries and computer rooms. In relation to such opportunities, inspectors will assess:

- whether courses strike a good balance of lessons and time for students to work on their own
- the quality of advice from teachers or personal tutors on how to make best use of that time
- whether students actually use the time effectively.

Indicators of a poorly organised course might include, for example:

- the course is too fragmented because of rigidity in teaching one module at a time
- there is a lack of coherence owing to a lack of communication between the teachers responsible for teaching different parts of the same course
- the progressive acquisition of knowledge of skills is hampered because modules are not taught in the best order
- the scheduling of assignments causes an uneven work load for students
- timetables are not suitable for groups of students with outside responsibilities, for example for childcare
- provision is not as good for students taking the same course on different college sites or with franchise partners.

112 Enrichment activities

- **learners have the opportunity to broaden their experience and enhance their personal development through a suitable variety of enrichment activities**

Evaluation of the curriculum will cover the full range of activities provided, including those that do not lead to accreditation. Enrichment activities include sport, drama, recreational activities and studies contributing to economic, political and social understanding. They may include citizenship, careers education and guidance or key skills development. Enrichment for work-based trainees will focus on their opportunities to gain additional qualifications in order to improve their employment or career prospects.

Inspectors will evaluate:

- the quality and impact of enrichment activities
- whether the programme of activities is responsive to interests expressed by students
- students' success in achieving accreditation for enrichment activities where it is available and sought
- whether timetables enable or preclude students from involvement in enrichment activities.

113 Partnership arrangements

- **programmes of work take account of community and employer needs**
- **multi-site provision and resources are effectively integrated to give a coherent programme of learning**

Where a college works in partnership with local schools, employers or training organisations, inspectors will assess whether the arrangements are appropriate and effective. They will focus on how the arrangements benefit students, for example by widening the choice of subjects or improving access to education in remote areas. Inspection of off-site provision may involve the observation of lessons taught by persons who are not employed by the college. Such lessons will be evaluated, recorded and reported in the same way as any other lesson. Where college students are taught in schools, on partners' premises, or on outlying college sites, inspectors will look, for example, at:

- the achievements of those students, compared with students taking the same qualifications at the main site
- the quality of learning resources and the accessibility of those resources to students
- whether there are sufficient links between the staff who teach similar courses on and off the main site
- the accessibility of the full range of support services, in particular the quality of pre-entry guidance and tutorial support for students working away from the main site
- whether off-site provision is subject to the same quality assurance arrangements as main site provision
- where students are required to attend more than one college site, whether timetable and transport arrangements are reasonable.

In the New Deal, inspectors will assess whether:

- the projects on the environment task force and voluntary sector options are of benefit to the community or the environment
- the employment, education and training options enable clients to meet the needs of the local labour market.

On-the-job and off-the-job training should be co-ordinated. Off-the-job training complements on-the-job training and should be relevant to the jobs the trainees carry out in their workplace. In the workplace, trainees should be able to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired through off-the-job training. In the New Deal, training providers, Employment Service staff and employers should work together to ensure that all aspects of the clients' training are well co-ordinated.

114 Religious education and collective worship

- **legal requirements in relation to religious education and collective worship are fulfilled where they apply**

The legal requirements in relation to religious education and collective worship are contained in sections 44 and 45 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, as amended by schedule 9 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. In the inspection of sixth-form colleges of voluntary origin, the inspection team will include a member recognised by the appropriate church authority as being competent to inspect the denominational education and collective worship provided by the college, in accordance with guidelines agreed between OFSTED and the appropriate church authority. Inspectors will focus on whether the statutory requirements are met and the importance students attach to the opportunities that are provided.

Question 6: How well are learners guided and supported?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- the quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance to learners in relation to the courses and programmes and their career progression
- the diagnosis of, and provision for, individual learning needs
- the access learners have to relevant, effective support on personal issues.

In making judgements, inspectors should consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- support arrangements are planned and managed coherently
 - impartial guidance enables learners to choose the course or programme which is right for them
 - careers education and guidance are effective in guiding learners towards the range of opportunities available to them
 - procedures are in place for recognising poor punctuality, non-attendance and poor performance early and for taking appropriate action
 - induction programmes enable learners to settle into their programmes quickly, to understand their rights and responsibilities and the demands of the course or programme
 - individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and learners have access to effective additional support throughout their studies or training
 - learners have effective personal support to help them to complete their course or programme, including access to specialist support services
-
- guidance and support are sensitive to factors such as gender, race and ethnicity
 - partnerships with the Connexions Service and other agencies involved in advice and guidance are effective.

Inspection focus

115 Judgements about student support focus on the quality of guidance and support given to all students from their first contact with the college through to leaving for the next step in their careers. The entry phase focuses on how students learn about, apply for and enrol on courses appropriate to their abilities and aspirations. The on-programme phase focuses on how students are helped to fulfil their potential during their time at college. The exit phase focuses on how students are helped to make informed choices about their next steps. Arrangements should be supportive but not over-protective, encouraging a degree of autonomy appropriate to school leavers and adult students.

116 Inspectors will focus on:

- the quality and impartiality of advice given before and on entry to help students choose the right course
- how well the induction introduces students to the college and their course and enables them to settle into work quickly
- whether support and guidance meets the needs of individuals from sections of the community with particular needs, for example women returning to study, refugees and students from ethnic minorities
- the effectiveness of arrangements to assess the learning support needs of individuals
- the quality of learning support and tutorial support provided throughout students' time at college
- the availability and quality of guidance about opportunities for students when they have completed their studies
- the availability and quality of support on personal issues, including financial advice, childcare, personal, health and social matters.

117 Inspectors will assess the effectiveness of the management of support services, in particular whether the arrangements amount to a coherent service that is related to their course and is easily understood. The college charter should indicate the college's commitment to provide a high standard of support. Evaluation of support services will include judgements about how they enable learners to make progress towards their learning goals.

118 Support arrangements for part-time students are likely to differ from those for full-time students. This may be due to their reduced time in college or the fact that many part-time groups consist only of adults. Judgements will be made about the extent to which their particular needs are met. Some adult students may not wish to take advantage of personal support systems; others returning to study may lack confidence and place heavy demands on support services.

119 Inspectors of work-based learning will focus on the arrangements that a training provider uses to support and guide its trainees, including the quality and accuracy of guidance given to prospective trainees to steer them towards the most appropriate

programme and level of study. Support systems should maximise the likelihood of trainees achieving their learning objectives and minimise the risk of them leaving their programme before it is completed.

120 The overall evaluation of the quality of learning support will draw on evidence from inspectors assessing curriculum areas. Where appropriate, there will be references to support for students in the curriculum sections of the report.

Making judgements

121 Inspectors will talk to individuals and groups of students to judge how their experience at college matches their expectations based on pre-course information. Inspectors will judge how effectively the recruitment process has resulted in enrolment on courses that match both the students' aspirations and their prior learning. Retention rates may also provide evidence for the effectiveness of pre-course advice and guidance. Inspectors will look at the quality of individual guidance provided throughout courses. Management information will show how many students transfer between courses soon after starting at college. Inspectors will assess whether this is a measure of flexibility, or an indicator of poor initial guidance. They will look at how these students are helped to catch up.

122 In relation to additional learning support, inspectors will consider, among other things:

- the proportion of students assessed as needing support and the proportion actually receiving it
- whether the support is in place soon after the start of the course
- whether the college has assessed the relationship between this support and the eventual success of the students.

123 Judgements will be set in the context of the college's aims and local environment. Colleges that claim to be inclusive should have support systems that reflect this claim. The support available to students with poor levels of attainment upon entry, or to those who have unconventional backgrounds, such as asylum seekers, should be efficient and readily accessible.

124 Inspectors will relate their judgements about guidance on future career and study paths to the number of students who progress to further education, higher education, or employment. Where students are sponsored by their employers, inspectors will be interested in their progress in their job. They will look for any special relationships with universities or employers that provide opportunities for students to sample work to which they might progress.

125 Sources of evidence include:

- observation of recruitment and guidance procedures, group and individual tutorials and support lessons in literacy and numeracy
- arrangements to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- discussions with students and work-based trainees
- discussions with support staff, personal tutors and workplace supervisors
- college and course information documents
- information on how additional support needs are assessed and addressed
- tutorial and additional support policies and procedures.

126 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about the quality of guidance and support

Very good or excellent

Initial guidance is impartial and careful. Information is provided in many forms and places, and students are able to take care over their choices. Induction enables students to settle in quickly to their studies. Their needs are accurately and rapidly assessed before or early in their course. Learning support needs are addressed rapidly and sensitively, and students put in the extra work. The impact of this support is regularly assessed, and the effectiveness of support systems is evaluated against measures of cost and of students' achievement.

There are good and varied arrangements to provide support in times of difficulty, and a wide range of personal and social services for students. Students know well the people who are charged with helping them both in their studies and with personal matters. There is good communication between tutors, teachers and support staff. Targets are set and progress is carefully monitored and recorded. There are frequent opportunities for students to discuss and plan future courses of study or employment. There are high levels of successful progression for students of all types. The needs of students from unconventional backgrounds are recognised and met, and the college forms a supportive community in which learners take responsibility for their own and others' welfare. There are opportunities for service to the college and the wider community. The college tutorial programme offers opportunities for personal and social education, together with a full range of welfare services, including good childcare arrangements.

Good or satisfactory

Initial information is clear and accessible to all students. Students are offered both tutorial and learning support, which is checked for its appropriateness to their needs. Targets are set and checked regularly, and students know what is expected of them. There are opportunities for weaker students to obtain extra help. There are additional sources of help and advice on financial, health, and welfare matters, and assistance with

childcare. The college checks the destinations of its students, and has ascertained that most students progress to more advanced study or relevant employment.

The following may indicate that the support offered to learners is unsatisfactory:

- large numbers of students change their courses soon after entry, in ways which suggest that they have been poorly advised
- there is a high drop-out from courses of study, or a large proportion of students leave the college early
- guidance and support for groups of students with particular needs, for example asylum seekers, are not effective
- learning support needs are not assessed, or they are assessed but not met
- many students are unaware of the support services available
- staff providing various support services do not communicate well with each other or with tutors
- records of students' progress are poor or non-existent
- the working atmosphere of the college is not conducive to study, or students have reasons not to feel safe.

Guidance on using and interpreting the criteria

127 Coherence of arrangements

- **support arrangements are planned and managed coherently**
- **guidance and support are sensitive to factors such as gender, race and ethnicity**

Many colleges have policies on support and guidance that include all phases of students' progress through college. Inspectors will judge how effectively these policies are reflected in operational and departmental plans. They will evaluate whether:

- an appropriate range of services is accessible to all college students, at reasonable times, wherever they are physically located
- the range of services is well known to staff and students
- standards are high across all services and all college sites
- there are good links between teachers, personal tutors and staff who provide the support services
- staff providing support services have appropriate specialist qualifications and relevant experience
- arrangements for supporting New Deal clients are comprehensive, fully recorded and well managed
- guidance and support are sensitive to issues of equality of opportunity.

128 Guidance on entry

- **impartial guidance enables learners to choose the course or programme which is right for them**

The information given to potential students should be accurate, informative and visually interesting. Its presentation should suit different audiences. Presentation media might include print, sound, video and website. It may be appropriate to produce literature in various community languages. Links with partner schools, employers and other relevant organisations should support the supply of sufficient information to potential students. The working relationship with the careers service should be clear, helpful to students, and subject to regular reviews which include the views of students.

Students should be able to discuss their choice of course with college staff before they enrol. Some students will take this opportunity at open days or taster days organised by the college. Full-time students should have the opportunity for impartial advice at an interview, following their application to the college. Part-time students should have appropriate opportunities for guidance either when they attend college to enrol or through telephone contact prior to completion of postal enrolment procedures.

New Deal clients should be given relevant, timely and objective advice by personal advisers and option providers on the training offered within each option and subsequent employment opportunities.

129 Induction

- **induction programmes enable learners to settle into their programmes quickly, to understand their rights and responsibilities and the demands of the course or programme**

Induction should introduce students to the structure and demands of their course, enable them to find their way around the college, meet other students and staff, and understand the support services available. New Deal clients should be given a well-planned induction to their option, their learning programmes and job or project. They should be fully informed of their rights and responsibilities. Although inspectors will rarely see induction programmes at first hand, they will study the documentation given to students and judge the effectiveness of induction by speaking to students to assess, for example:

- students' understanding of the demands of their course
- how well they have been introduced to the styles of teaching and learning used on their course and to the need to develop independent study skills
- their familiarity with health and safety arrangements
- their understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as set out in the charter.

Inspectors will also study any guidance given to teachers about good induction practice and evaluate the induction arrangements for students who start their course late.

130 Improving punctuality and attendance

- **procedures are in place for recognising poor punctuality, non-attendance and poor performance early and for taking appropriate action**

Regular attendance and punctuality make a significant contribution to students' achievement. Inspectors will evaluate:

- the degree to which students are aware of the need to attend all lessons and to be punctual.
- how well punctuality and attendance are monitored and how promptly problems are addressed
- the effectiveness of reporting systems to ensure that each student's attendance at each subject or option, including key skills or additional learning support, is promptly reported to their personal tutor
- whether the reasons for poor punctuality or attendance are discussed with individuals and the extent to which action plans, with realistic targets for improvement, bring about changes in behaviour
- the availability and quality of professional support for students with personal problems that affect their punctuality and attendance
- the effectiveness of policies and procedures for contacting parents or guardians of students aged under 18.

Work-based trainees' and New Deal clients' punctuality, attendance and performance, both at work and at off-the-job training, should be systematically monitored and recorded. There should be clear and effective procedures to deal promptly with any trainee whose lack of punctuality, irregular attendance and poor performance gives cause for concern. The provider's staff should meet the trainee in question, discuss his or her problems with the employer concerned, and do all they can to help the trainee resolve them.

131 Careers education and guidance

- **careers education and guidance are effective in guiding learners towards the range of opportunities available to them**

A high proportion of students progressing to suitable employment or entering higher education is one indicator of good careers education and guidance. Students on foundation courses need careful guidance to help them to choose from the available options. Students seeking employment in the near future need to undertake jobsearch programmes. Students on advanced level courses may wish to focus on aspects of higher education. Throughout their option, New Deal clients need effective training in jobsearch and comprehensive, up-to-date information and advice on opportunities for employment and further training.

Inspectors will evaluate:

- whether the arrangements to help students make decisions about their future are effective and timely
- the quality of information and guidance on educational and employment opportunities
- whether there are arrangements to ensure fair and objective references for students
- the effectiveness of support for students following publication of examination results
- how well destination information about previous students is used to inform planning and practice.

132 Learning support

- **individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and learners have access to effective additional support throughout their studies or training**

Most colleges assess full-time students' learning support needs when they start their course. College staff may also have information from the students' schools, including records of achievement. Initial assessment may identify difficulties with literacy or numeracy, particular problems such as dyslexia or hearing impairment or, in the case of advanced-level students, some individuals who are gifted or talented. In the initial assessment of literacy and numeracy, many colleges use diagnostic tests to determine whether the students have the key skills necessary for the specific demands of the course, rather than simply assessing general levels of literacy and numeracy.

Matters to be considered by inspectors include:

- how effectively existing information is used in evaluating individuals' needs
- the effectiveness of procedures for assessing all students at the start of their course, using methods appropriate to the level of study
- whether opportunities exist for teachers to refer students for additional support and for the students themselves to request such support
- whether the analysis of the results of initial assessment is followed by discussion between learning support staff, the student and the student's personal tutor about the nature and level of support required
- whether suitable individual learning programmes are devised for each student, which include clear targets for achievement
- whether the staff providing additional support have appropriate qualifications and experience
- how effectively the support is integrated with the teaching of the main programme
- whether the arrangements for learning support are free from any negative connotations on the part of students
- how well the impact of learning support is evaluated.

133 Personal support

- **learners have effective personal support to help them to complete their course or programme, including access to specialist support services**
- **partnerships with the Connexions Service and other agencies involved in advice and guidance are effective**

All students should have an identified person, usually their personal tutor, to whom they can refer in the first instance for guidance on personal and study matters. Such people should be trained on how to fulfil their duties. There may be a manual of guidance to help them. They should know when to refer a student for more specialist help, if necessary outside the college. Personal tutors will have less contact with part-time students, but the role is similar. There should be a sensible relationship between the number of students a tutor is required to support and the time available for such support to be offered.

Personal, financial, domestic, childcare, transport and health problems can pose significant obstacles to learning. Colleges should have arrangements, including the provision of funds, to help students with these issues. Inspectors will wish to be informed about the range of services available, their level of use, and their impact on retention or achievement. The college may not provide the full range of services itself, in which case it should help students to gain access to them.

Section 3: leadership and management

Question 7: How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

To answer this question, inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- how well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high-quality education and training
- how effectively, through quality assurance and self-assessment, performance is monitored and evaluated and steps taken to secure improvement
- how well equality of opportunity is promoted and racism and discrimination are tackled so that all learners achieve their potential
- where relevant, the extent to which governors or other supervisory boards meet their responsibilities
- how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by staff, including subcontractors and work placement providers
- demanding targets for retention, achievement, progression and employment are set and met
- the quality assurance arrangements are systematic and informed by the views of all interested parties
- rigorous self-assessment leads to identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement
- priorities are supported through responsible financial management
- staff understand and are fully involved in the organisation's quality assurance arrangements
- the information needs of managers and other staff are met and management information is used effectively to the benefit of learners
- staff appraisal or review is effective in improving the quality of provision
- there are explicit aims, values and strategies relating to equality for all that are reflected in the provider's work
- there are effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment
- there are effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints
- governors or other supervisory boards effectively oversee the provider's strategic direction, and regularly monitor the quality of provision and their own performance
- the 'best value' principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are applied in securing resources and services
- efficient and effective use is made of resources.

Inspection focus

134 Inspection will focus on the extent to which leaders and managers create an effective and improving college, where students achieve high standards and are well supported. Judgements will not be based only on the work of senior managers and governors. The leadership and management of departments have a direct impact on students' progress. The evidence and judgements made by curriculum inspectors about, for example, the department's approach to improving the quality of teaching will inform overall judgements about leadership and management of the college. Within each department the quality of teaching, the progress made by students, examination pass rates, and the levels of attendance and retention, reflect the quality of management. Curriculum inspectors will evaluate the impact of managers' actions, rather than their intentions. Their judgements about leadership and management will be consistent with their judgements on teaching and students' achievements.

135 In relation to governance, inspectors will focus on the governors' contribution to the strategic direction of the college and how well they monitor and influence its performance and work. Compliance with instruments and articles of governance and financial regulations will be evaluated by the audit service. Prior to the inspection, the audit service will provide a recent report, giving clear opinions about whether governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and about the standard of financial management of the college. Inspectors will take account of this report in their judgements of leadership and management.

136 Inspectors of work-based learning and New Deal will focus on the management of the training, quality assurance arrangements and the promotion of equality of opportunity. The implementation of policies or strategies in each of these areas will be evaluated. Inspectors looking at New Deal provision will evaluate:

- whether local partnerships provide a comprehensive range of opportunities so that clients are able to improve their employability within the context of the local labour market
- the extent to which the partnerships actively promote equality of opportunity for clients
- the rigour with which the effectiveness and efficiency of the service are monitored
- how effectively data are used to develop the provision and improve clients' achievements.

137 Judgements on leadership and management will be made in the curriculum sections of the report. In addition the overall evaluation of leadership and management of the college is likely to refer to the following:

- improvements or deterioration since the last inspection and the reasons for these changes
- the overall quality of teaching and learning and the impact of teaching on students' achievements
- the involvement of governors, managers and staff in setting college aims and objectives, their commitment to them and how well they are met
- the involvement of governors in measuring the college's performance and, where necessary, requiring improvements
- managers' and governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and of its partner organisations
- the effectiveness of setting and meeting targets for improvement
- the quality of the data regarding on students' progress and achievements and the effective use of the data in monitoring performance
- the effectiveness of equal opportunities policies and practices
- the quality and deployment of resources to support educational objectives, including staffing, accommodation and learning resources
- financial management, including the assessment of financial management and health provided by the audit service
- the use of cost-effectiveness and best-value approaches
- the effectiveness and impact of staff appraisal and development, including approaches to training new or unqualified teachers.

Making judgements

138 Overall judgements about leadership and management will reflect the relationship between what is achieved by students and the effectiveness of those who lead and manage.

139 Sources of evidence include:

- college mission statement, and strategic and operation plans
- data on the college's performance in all aspects of its work
- arrangements to communicate with staff
- job descriptions
- organisation and management structures, including the corporation's committee structure
- course timetables
- observation of governing body meetings

- information on the membership of the governing body
- arrangements for informing governors of curriculum and quality issues
- minutes of meetings of governors, managers, teachers and other staff
- quality assurance policies and procedures and information relating to their implementation
- college and departmental self-assessment reports and action plans
- surveys of students' and staff views
- moderators' and verifiers' reports
- equal opportunities policies and procedures and evidence of their implementation
- the views of learners, managers, teachers and other staff, governors, employers and other interested parties.

140 The following characteristics illustrate judgements about leadership and management

Outstanding or good

Managers share a common purpose and put students and their achievements first. They build effective teams and set demanding yet realistic targets for the college, for teaching teams and for individual students, including targets for retention and achievement. The aims and values of the college are clear and equality of opportunity is emphasised strongly. Staff are well informed and committed to the college's aims. The college works effectively with partners such as employers and community groups. The work of the college is thoroughly monitored, particularly the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Students' achievements are evaluated regularly. Information on students' progress and achievements is accurate, accessible to teachers and managers and used effectively to improve performance.

Systems to appraise the performance of staff, identify their training needs and ensure these are met are comprehensive and effective. Financial and other resources are effectively deployed to support educational priorities. Best value principles are understood and applied well. Governors monitor the college's performance closely. They understand the college's strengths and weaknesses and set the right priorities for development and improvement. They fulfil their statutory duties and provide a clear sense of direction for the college.

Satisfactory

The leaders of the college are clear about the its strengths and weaknesses. They have established some ways of raising levels of achievements. Teamwork is generally well established and the college has identified sensible objectives. Retention and achievement targets are set and normally met. Most staff have access to accurate data on students' progress and achievements and use the data well in evaluating their work. Much of the work of the college is monitored closely. In most departments, the effectiveness of teaching and learning are monitored well and their impact on students' progress is evaluated. The majority of staff are appraised regularly and receive training to meet their

identified needs. Financial and other resources adequately support educational priorities in most areas of the college. Governors are informed of the college's performance and set targets for improvement. They meet their statutory responsibilities.

The following may indicate that leadership and management are unsatisfactory:

- there is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching, or there are unacceptably wide variations in the quality of teaching across the college. As a guideline, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching is significant if over ten per cent of lessons observed are unsatisfactory
- standards in the college are significantly lower than they should be
- the college consistently fails to achieve its performance targets
- there is little monitoring and evaluation of performance and few steps are taken to improve achievements
- leaders and managers do not know the strengths and weaknesses of the college
- unsatisfactory resources reduce the quality of learning in many areas of the college
- the aims and objectives of the college are not clear.

Guidance on using and interpreting the criteria

Inspectors will not prescribe any particular model of good management. There are different ways in which effective leadership and management can lead to success for students. Inspectors will focus on the impact of leadership and management, rather than the supporting systems and structures.

141 Strategic planning

- **clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by staff, including subcontractors and work placement providers**

The quality of the strategic plan and the procedures that support its production will be judged. The local LSC's view of the strategic plan will be considered where possible. Inspectors will evaluate:

- the clarity of the mission and strategic objectives
- the extent to which governors and staff at all levels contribute to strategic and operational planning
- whether the college operating statement and departmental plans are closely aligned to the college's strategic objectives, and whether they include allocated responsibilities, time scales and costs
- whether appropriate targets are set and performance is monitored against them

- whether there are procedures for managers and governors to review and report on progress towards the objectives and targets in the strategic and operational plans
- whether the college's sense of purpose is shared by all staff and, in the case of work-based learning and New Deal, whether it is shared by subcontractors, employers and work placement providers.

142 Quality assurance and self-assessment

- **the quality assurance arrangements are systematic and informed by the views of all interested parties**
- **staff understand and are fully involved in the organisation's quality assurance arrangements**
- **rigorous self-assessment leads to identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement**

Inspectors will judge the impact of the college's quality assurance systems on students' achievements. They will evaluate:

- how well quality assurance procedures, including self-assessment, accurately inform leaders and managers about the college's strengths and weaknesses
- the extent to which quality assurance procedures focus on improving students' achievements and the extent to which they lead to improvements or the maintenance of high standards
- whether the college's commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in comprehensive quality assurance policies and procedures which cover all aspects of the college's work
- whether responsibilities for quality assurance arising out of links with schools, other colleges, franchise partners, employers of work-based trainees or other contracted organisations are clearly allocated, understood and met
- how well the college judges the effectiveness of teaching
- how well the college evaluates and responds to the views of its students, parents, employers, trainees and New Deal clients
- how effectively action plans, based on the outcomes of quality assurance arrangements, are used to improve the education, training and students' achievements.

143 Setting and monitoring targets

- **demanding targets for retention, achievement, progression and employment are set and met**
- **the information needs of managers and other staff are met and management information is used effectively to the benefit of learners**

Inspectors will evaluate whether targets and performance indicators are clearly identified and effectively used to improve achievements. They will look at how well the college compares its performance with other providers. Benchmarking should enable the college to set itself suitably realistic targets at college and departmental level. Where possible, inspectors will consider the LSC's view on how well the college sets and reaches its targets. Targets should be linked to the college's strategic objectives. New Deal partnerships should set and meet measurable targets that relate to their strategic objectives.

Inspectors will judge whether staff have good access to accurate information about students and finances and whether it is used effectively. For work-based learning, managers and staff should have accurate data on the trainees' performance which they use effectively to plan ways of improving training.

144 Equality of opportunity

- **there are explicit aims, values and strategies relating to equality for all that are reflected in the provider's work**
- **there are effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment**
- **there are effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints**

Inspectors will look for clear statements of college values supported by policies and measures, which demonstrate that the college welcomes students from a wide range of backgrounds, abilities and cultures and, in the case of the New Deal, meets statutory requirements. Policies should be closely monitored, regularly reviewed and effectively implemented across the college. Inspectors will also consider:

- whether staff and governors demonstrate a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and have clear responsibilities for implementing the college's policies
- whether provision is designed to take into account the needs of both sexes, different ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- participation rates for students from ethnic minority groups, women and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the extent to which curriculum planning and teaching have been informed by equal opportunities principles
- whether surveys of students and others involved with the college show that there is a high level of awareness of the college's equal opportunities policy and high levels of satisfaction among ethnic minority groups, women and people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- how well the college responds to survey findings and other expressions of the views of students from minority groups
- any college analysis of grievances or complaints relating to equality of opportunity and any consequential action.

Inspectors will expect similar standards from the college's franchise partners, and work-based learning providers. Inspectors will look at providers' action in promoting training for people from groups in the community which are under-represented on training programmes. Work placements will be checked to avoid undue risks to trainees, discrimination or poor equal opportunities practice. Trainees and New Deal clients should be protected from harassment and discrimination at all times, including at work. Trainees should be aware of what constitutes harassment and what they should do if they are confronted with it. The provider should have procedures to deal with all forms of harassment and records to show that they are effective.

Students who have complaints or wish to appeal against a college decision should be clear about how they can do this. Complaints and appeals should be dealt with fairly and in a reasonable time.

145 Use of resources

- **priorities are supported through responsible financial management**
- **the 'best value' principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are applied in securing resources and services**
- **efficient and effective use is made of resources**

Curriculum inspectors' evidence about accommodation, and learning resources will contribute to overall judgements about resources. The focus will be on the quality of services provided directly for students and the resources that help teachers to deliver good lessons. The audit service will look at the financial health of the college and at the quality of financial management.

In their judgement of 'best value' inspectors will not seek to assess whether 'best value' has in fact been achieved in every possible situation. They are also aware that 'best value' is not the same as 'lowest price'. Judgement of value requires a comparison of financial costs with a wide range of possible outcomes, many of which cannot be assessed in financial terms. Inspectors will look at evidence of procedures by which the college judges whether its expenditure results in outcomes that represent value for money. They will judge whether decisions are well-informed by information on costs, including unit cost information about particular courses or curriculum areas. They will look for progress in the development of college systems that relate the cost of provision to the number of students who achieve their qualifications.

146 Staff development and appraisal

- **staff appraisal or review is effective in improving the quality of provision**

Appraisal and staff development will be judged in terms of its impact on teaching, tutoring and supporting students. Inspectors will not focus on the processes involved, but on how well managers know the strengths and weaknesses of both full-time and part-time

staff and how they help them to improve the quality of their work. They will evaluate, for example:

- college policies, procedures and records for lesson observation, staff appraisal and staff development
- how effectively lesson observations, staff appraisal and staff development are linked to each other and to college priorities
- whether staff appraisal covers all staff and whether the appraisals are on schedule
- how well the college supports its teachers in gaining teaching qualifications
- the effectiveness of mentoring schemes to support new or inexperienced teachers.

147 Governance and supervisory boards

- **governors or other supervisory boards effectively oversee the provider's strategic direction, and regularly monitor the quality of provision and their own performance**

Inspectors will focus on how well the governors direct the college, measure its performance and require improvements. Prior to inspection, the RI may have observed a governors' meeting and completed an evidence form. The inspector responsible for leadership and management will normally meet the chair and vice chair of governors during the inspection to discuss aspect of governance. In addition to the matters referred to above inspectors will look at:

- how well-informed governors are about the college
- whether they recognise its strengths and weaknesses
- how effectively they address key issues facing the college.

In relation to the New Deals, inspectors will look at how well local strategic partnerships, consortia or steering groups evaluate the effectiveness of the planning, implementation and review of the New Deals in their area, and how the steering groups evaluate their own performance.

Annex A

Records of inspection evidence

Sources of pre-inspection evidence

Before inspection the RI and other members of the inspection team will consider information about the college and the performance of its students. Time will be given to the college to gather together any necessary documents and provide additional data on the performance of its students. Pre-inspection evidence is drawn from:

- the previous inspection report and action plan
- the college performance report provided by OFSTED
- additional data provided by the college on performance
- the college self-assessment report
- briefing documents for the inspection team provided by the college
- discussion with senior staff on the pre-inspection visit
- briefing documents provided by the LSC.

Evidence obtained prior to and during the inspection will be recorded on the forms set out below. The college performance report and the pre-inspection commentary are available to the college. Evidence forms, inspection notebooks, the judgement recording form and the record of main findings are confidential to OFSTED and the ALI.

The college performance report

This is a summary of the college's achievement and retention data derived from national benchmarking data produced from college's Individualised Student Record (ISR) returns. It is produced by OFSTED prior to the inspection.

The pre-inspection commentary

The RI will use the pre-inspection evidence listed above and the college performance report to prepare a pre-inspection commentary (PIC). This will form the basis of the initial team briefing and be used by members of the team, together with the pre-inspection evidence, to prepare for the inspection. It ensures that inspectors are fully conversant with the college's performance and other aspects of its work. The PIC may highlight key issues that team members may be required to focus on and report to the team. It includes:

- comments on the college's main characteristics
- an evaluation of the pre-inspection evidence
- preliminary hypotheses about the college to be tested during the inspection.

Evidence forms

These are used to record all first-hand evidence, including lesson observations, records of discussions with staff and students and other evidence that arises from an inspector's observation of the work of the college, its staff and students. They inform inspectors' entries in their inspection notebooks.

Inspection notebooks

These are kept by each inspector (or team of inspectors looking at a curriculum area) They summarise interim and final judgements. Notebooks are working documents. In them inspectors:

- record judgements on all aspects of the framework looked at by the inspector
- note emerging issues to be pursued
- write feedback notes and draft text for the report
- formulate contributions to team meetings.

The complete notebook provides a record each inspector's judgements. It forms a basis for writing the report and a record for the RI. Entries will normally be in note form, and indicate where the evidence for the judgement can be found. Copies of individual pages are shared with other members of the team to support collective judgements.

The judgement recording form

This is part of the inspection notebook. It provides a summary of the inspector's grades.

The record of main findings

This provides a record of the collective judgements of the team as they apply to the college as a whole. It provides the basis for both the feedback and the report on the college as a whole. A summary of the evidence will be included. It includes a judgement recording form for the whole college.

Annex B

The structure of inspection reports

Reports will have four parts.

Part A. Summary

Within this part there are four sections.

- Information about the college. This is a brief explanation of the nature of the provider and its work, the range of students it serves and what the provider sees as its main aims and purposes.
- How effective is the college. This section highlights the keys strengths and main areas for improvement for the college as a whole. If the college is judged to be inadequate, a statement to this effect will be included in this section.
- The quality of provision in individual curriculum areas. This is a short summary of the overall judgement for each curriculum area. There are also brief summary judgements on leadership and management and guidance and support.
- Students' views of the college. Summary findings will be divided between what students like about the college and what they feel could be improved.

Part B. The college as a whole

This part of the report will normally include four sections.

- Achievement and standards. This section summarises the team's findings on key question 1
- The quality of education and training. This section summarises the team's findings on key questions 2 – 6.
- Leadership and management. The team's judgement on key question 7.
- Areas for further improvement. This will highlight the issues for the college as a whole that will need to be addressed by governors, managers and staff.

Part C. Curriculum areas

The report will include a section of between 700 and 1,000 words on each curriculum area inspected. Each section will include:

- grade and grade descriptor, with contributory grades for work-based learning or New Deal where there is a substantial amount of this provision
- bullet points, highlighting strengths and weaknesses
- a table showing retention rates and pass rates on key courses for the past three years

- a paragraph describing the scope of provision
- further paragraphs, classified under the headings of ‘Achievement and standards’, ‘The quality of education and training’ and ‘Leadership and management’.

Part D. Inspection and performance data

Reports will include four tables:

- enrolments by level of study and age
- enrolments by curriculum area and age
- summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type
- summary of grades awarded to teaching, learning and attainment.

Annex C

Grades denoting summary judgements

The following table shows the grades that will be used in inspection reports to denote the summary judgements made by inspectors.

Summary judgements for lessons and other evidence collected during inspection		Summary judgements provided in inspection reports for curriculum areas and leadership and management	
Grade 1	Excellent	Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Very good		
Grade 3	Good	Grade 2	Good
Grade 4	Satisfactory	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 5	Unsatisfactory	Grade 4	Unsatisfactory
Grade 6	Poor	Grade 5	Very Weak
Grade 7	Very poor		

Curriculum grades represent a summative judgement about the overall quality of provision in the curriculum area. The grade for leadership and management represents a summative judgement about the quality of leadership and management of the college.

The inspection report will include the grades allocated by the inspection team to each of the curriculum areas inspected and also a grade for leadership and management. In some curriculum areas more than one grade may be allocated. Grades for curriculum areas and leadership and management will be on the five-point scale as defined in the right-hand side of the table. Each lesson will be allocated grades for teaching, learning and students' attainment. A summary of these lesson grades will be included in the report. Lessons will be graded on the seven-point scale shown in the left-hand side of the table.

