



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

**Nominee handbook
for independent specialist colleges**

from

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The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities;
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ independent specialist colleges;
- ▲ adult community learning;
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ Welsh for adults;
- ▲ work-based learning; and
- ▲ learning in the justice sector.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Contents	Page
Introduction	1
Part 1: Before the inspection	1
Section A: Role and responsibilities	2
Section B: Putting the provider in context	3
Section C: Self-assessment	4
Section D: Gathering evidence	5
Part 2: During the inspection	9
Section A: Role and responsibilities	9
Section B: A walk through the inspection period	9
Section C: Documentation required during the inspection	10
Section D: The inspectorate's quality assurance processes	11
Part 3: After the inspection	12
Annex 1: A walk through the inspection week	13

Introduction

This handbook is designed for nominees who will act as the college's representative on the inspection team during their inspection. The handbook has been developed primarily with the needs of senior managers in mind and there is a strong emphasis on practical application. It responds to the frequently asked question - "What do I have to know to be an effective nominee?". Taking time to read through the handbook will provide you with the information you need to prepare for your inspection and to understand the importance of the role as the college's nominee.

The nominee handbook is in three parts:

Part 1: Before the inspection

Part 2: During inspection

Part 3: After the inspection

We hope that you find the handbook informative and, most of all, easy to use in preparing for your inspection.

Part 1 and part 2 contain the critical information and actions needed at different times throughout the period of the inspection. Part 3 briefly touches on the role of the nominee post inspection.

It will be helpful to have your copy of the Estyn 2010 sector inspection guidance to refer to as you go through the handbook. It is vital that you are familiar with your sector inspection guidance before the inspection.

In order to act as a nominee on an inspection, you will be better informed if you have read the nominee handbook, completed the online revision guide (this will be available shortly) and be in receipt of an up-to-date certificate of completion of the online revision guide. Please keep the certificate safe as the inspection co-ordinator will need to place it in the virtual inspection room before the inspection begins.

Part 1: Before the inspection

This part is in four sections.

Section A will help familiarise you with your role and responsibilities.

Section B provides guidance on working with the reporting inspector (RI) to put your organisation in context.

Section C allows you to explore briefly the key aspects of effective self-evaluation.

Section D provides guidance on gathering evidence for the team.

Section A: Roles and responsibilities

This section will explain your role and responsibilities as the provider nominee.

This section should enable you to:

- have a good understanding of the role of the nominee; and
- know and understand the protocol that guides the work of the nominee.

Background

Inspections provide an opportunity to involve colleges actively in the inspection process by enabling a nominee from the organisation to work with the inspection team. This is to provide greater involvement by the college and strengthen the partnership between the inspection team and college staff. It will also give providers a better insight into the inspection process as well as providing valuable opportunities for professional development.

Colleges are invited to select a nominee who will:

- ensure that inspectors are fully informed about the context of the college's work;
- contribute to meetings of the inspection team; and
- hear emerging findings of the team.

The nominee

As nominee, you should be a sufficiently senior member of staff to act effectively as a link between the college and the inspection team. The role of the nominee is valued highly by inspectors as the nominee contributes significantly to ensuring that the inspection runs smoothly and that inspectors see all the relevant evidence so that they can make valid and reliable judgements.

If the college decides not to take up the offer of having a nominee, this will not prejudice the inspection. The fact that a college does not have a nominee will have no impact on the judgements made by the inspection team.

An effective nominee

The role of the nominee is demanding and requires you to exercise the objectivity essential to an external inspection process. You will also be required to **respect the strict confidentiality of all inspection discussions**. Your role is not that of an advocate or defender of the college. Your role is to help inspectors access all the evidence they need to see, to listen to discussions, to understand inspectors' reasoning and to signpost inspectors to further evidence, personnel where this is needed.

Guidance in the sector handbook tells you that before the inspection you should:

- become familiar with the sector guidance for inspection;
- become familiar with the inspectorate's guidance on the role of the nominee;

- play a key role in the college's self-assessment procedures;
- become familiar with the inspection documentation;
- attend all team meetings;
- make administrative arrangements for the inspection; and
- collate provider documentation and evidence required for the inspection.

In the new 2010 inspection model, the nominee has a particular role in making sure that all the evidence to support the college's self-assessment is readily available and to hand. If evidence is not available, the inspection team will not have time to search it out. The effectiveness of the nominee in signposting inspectors to evidence will inevitably have an impact on the judgements awarded by the inspection team.

When you receive the date of your inspection you must read and sign the nominee protocol and agreement, this must be presented to the reporting inspector when he/she arrives on site.

Summary

In this section, you have read about your role and responsibilities as the college nominee. It will be useful for you now to share your understanding of your role with staff, senior managers, directors and proprietors/trustees prior to the inspection.

It is also a good idea to fully brief staff, senior managers, directors and members of supervisory bodies about changes to the inspection processes in general.

Section B: Putting the provider in context

This section provides you with guidance on working with the Reporting Inspector (RI) to put your organisation in context.

Each college operates in widely different circumstances with different challenges. As the nominee you have a key role in helping the inspection team to understand the context in which you work. If you are unfamiliar with the sort of evidence that the inspection team will look for in writing the context section of the report, then it may be useful for you and the RI to agree this during the inspection.

Please refer to the guidance in your sector handbook

About the college

The information that you provide about your organisation will inform inspectors' judgements about learners' standards of achievement and attainment, as well as possibly providing them with lines of enquiry.

The 'About the college' section should contain brief information on:

- size, nature and location of the college;
- the background and circumstances of the learners, including socio-economic disadvantage, ethnicity, SEN or mobility;
- the linguistic background of the learners;
- any other relevant factors; and
- any significant changes since the last inspection.

Remember it is very important to have the evidence available to support the provider's analysis about your provision and the context that it operates in, as well as evidence to support your self-evaluation.

Summary

In this section you have read about the sort of information that is needed to put your organisation in context.

Section C: Self-assessment

This section on self-assessment revisits what makes effective self-assessment and its importance in the new inspection arrangements.

The college has prime responsibility for raising standards and quality. Self-assessment lies at the heart of this process. It feeds into improvement planning, identifying good features and areas for development, setting performance targets and measuring progress against them.

For self-assessment to be truly effective it needs to be open and honest and fully understood by staff, managers, proprietors and other relevant stakeholders. The college will be disadvantaged if something is noted by the inspection team that members of staff do not seem to know about, or if the college's self-assessment does not accurately reflect its current performance. All colleges will have areas that they wish to improve or develop – the issue is what processes are in place to identify these areas and what is the college doing to address them? Over time, all aspects of the life and work of the college should be reviewed, but the emphasis should always be on how good are outcomes and the quality of provision.

The link between self-assessment and improvement planning is crucial. Detailed and comprehensive processes for self-assessment are of little worth unless self-assessment outcomes are clearly linked to the college's improvement targets.

High-quality data, both quantitative and qualitative, is essential in making sure that the college has the necessary information to make secure judgements about its performance and to prioritise its future actions. Set out below are criteria that you should use when gathering information to support your self-assessment judgements.

Self-assessment judgements should be:

- secure – based on sufficiently robust, reliable and accessible evidence;
- first-hand – based on direct observation; reliable – based on common, well-understood criteria;
- valid – accurately reflecting what is achieved and provided;
- free of bias – valuing equality of opportunity and diversity;
- comprehensive – covering all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework; and
- corporate – reflect the collective view of staff, managers, and other stakeholders.

The new 2010 inspection framework places great importance on the college's

self-assessment as the starting point for inspection. As the nominee you may play a key role in writing the college's self-assessment report. Inspectors will seek evidence during the inspection to validate the college's own judgements. If the evidence is not available the team may decide that a follow-up visit is necessary at a later date. Please refer to details of follow-up inspections in your sector handbook.

Summary

In this section you have read about the key features and purpose of self-assessment in the new Common Inspection Framework. If you want to learn more about self-assessment please see the Estyn website for the Independent Specialist College self-assessment manual.

Section D: Gathering evidence

This section on gathering evidence for inspection will enable you to:

- understand how inspectors judge the application of learners' skills;
- understand how inspectors identify and follow lines of enquiry; and
- be aware of the types of documentation that inspectors may request before the on-site part of inspection.

Judging the application of learners' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

This part of the handbook will provide you with information about the skills that inspectors will judge and the sources of evidence they will use to make their judgements. It will help you to know which evidence you should provide and how inspectors will make their judgements.

How will inspectors judge learners' skills?

In particular, inspectors will evaluate whether all learners have the skills in communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Inspectors will judge how well learners' skills give them access to the curriculum based on evidence from observations of lessons, scrutiny of learners' work and by talking to learners. For example, talking to learners will provide evidence of their speaking and listening skills. Scrutiny of work will demonstrate whether learners can write clearly and read with understanding at the appropriate levels. Inspectors will consider the extent to which learners' communication skills support or hinder progress in and beyond the classroom, including interaction with their peers.

Inspectors will seek evidence to determine whether learners have the skills to:

- cope with the demands of their learning;
- make good progress across the curriculum; and
- cope with the communication, numeracy and ICT demands of everyday life.

Inspectors will consider learners' preparedness to develop and use the skills they have acquired in different, new or unfamiliar situations, as well as how well they apply their skills without support.

Inspectors will take account of learners' level of ability when considering evidence and determining judgements.

Which lessons/sessions will inspectors observe?

The inspection team will spend between 30% and 50% of their time during the inspection observing teaching;

Inspectors will use the timetables provided by the college before the inspection to identify the sessions they will observe.

Inspectors will not always notify staff of the sessions they will observe.

Will inspectors observe support programmes, such as essential and basic skills and literacy and numeracy support sessions?

Learners who receive specific support to develop their communication, numeracy and ICT skills, such as essential /basic skills programmes, will always be a focus for inspectors to judge how well they are doing. Observations of these learners will provide inspectors with evidence of how well these learners achieve in day-to-day learning tasks and activities.

Will inspectors talk to learners?

Inspectors will determine learners' views of how well they are doing in terms of developing and applying communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and will find out if learners know how much progress they have made and what they must do to improve. Inspectors will choose learners from lists that you supply in order to follow lines of enquiry and gain evidence for the common inspection framework requirements.

Will inspectors scrutinise samples of learners' work?

Inspectors will choose samples of learners' work to meet the needs of the lines of enquiry identified by the inspection team. Inspectors will tell you which samples of learners' work they will need. You should make certain that these samples provide evidence of learners' application of communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Where will inspectors report on learners' skills in the Inspection Framework?

In Key Question 1, inspectors will report on whether all learners have the skills in communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT needed to access the whole curriculum.

In Key Question 2, inspectors will report on the provision for skills. In the overall judgement on teaching, inspectors will take account of how well these meet learners' needs, including the development of their practical skills.

In Key Question 3, as part of their judgements about leadership and quality assurance, inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers develop, support, monitor and evaluate the college's strategies and policies for developing learners' skills.

Lines of enquiry

This part of the section will provide you with information about how inspectors identify and follow lines of enquiry.

The guidance handbook for your sector explains that the starting point for inspection is the college's assessment of its own performance, supported by relevant performance information. You should be aware that inspectors will not inspect all aspects of work in depth during an inspection. They will sample evidence to test the college's own judgements about its work.

The reporting inspector will formulate lines of enquiry after scrutinising the self-assessment report and other information provided by the organisation as well as any other information held by the inspectorate.

The inspection will be planned so that the team can pursue the identified lines of enquiry that are specific to the college and cover the requirements of the common inspection framework that all inspections will address.

Hypotheses and lines of enquiry will be recorded in a pre-inspection commentary (PIC), which will be placed in the VIR on the Friday before the inspection. The PIC will be discussed in detail by the RI in the briefing with the inspection team at the start of the inspection.

Inspectors will use learner questionnaires to assess and make judgements on learners' views about their learning. Inspectors may also want to scrutinise any in-house learner questionnaires carried out by your college. As nominee, it will be useful if you will make sure that collated results from these in-house questionnaires are available to the team. Inspectors may use the questionnaires to pursue a line of enquiry.

Documentation

This final part of this section will provide you with information about the documentation that inspectors will request before the inspection to help them inform their judgements.

Part 2 of the handbook will provide you with information about which documentation may be required during the inspection. You will find full details of the sources of evidence in Annex 2 of the guidance handbook.

Documentation required before the inspection

Almost all of your contact before the inspection will be with the Inspection Co-ordinator (IC). The IC will contact you by telephone about four weeks before the inspection to let you know the date of the inspection. During this telephone call he/she will provide you with details of your inspection team and discuss arrangements for the inspection. Once you have been notified that an inspection is to take place, you will be asked to provide the following information for the virtual inspection room:

- key background information about the college; and
- a copy of your most recent self-assessment report and improvement plan.

If the inspection is to take place early in the academic year, you will be reminded that samples of learners' work from the previous year may be needed during the inspection. You should make these samples available to inspectors during the on-site part of the inspection at their request.

Summary

In this section, you read about how inspectors judge skills, the sources of evidence they will use to make their judgements and how they will report on skills. You also read about how inspectors may identify a line of enquiry and the documentation that inspectors will request before the inspection. You may wish to consider how this information can be shared with managers and staff so that they gain an understanding of the inspection process.

Part 2: During the inspection

Section A will familiarise you with your role during the inspection.

Section B provides information about what happens during the onsite part of the inspection.

Section C explains how documentary evidence requested by the inspection team during the inspection supports lines of enquiry.

Section D clarifies the inspectorate's quality assurance processes.

Section E contains a series of frequently asked questions.

Section A: Role and responsibilities

This section will provide you with information about your role and responsibilities during the inspection. Guidance in the sector handbook tells you that during the inspection you should:

- liaise with the reporting inspector about administrative arrangements;
- respond to team requests for additional information;
- assist in resolving any problems that arise;
- contribute to discussions about excellent and unsatisfactory features in team meetings;
- be proactive in providing additional evidence following team meetings or the scrutiny of learners' work;
- take no active part in the final team meeting when judgements are being awarded; and
- where appropriate, ask the inspection team to clarify its judgements.

Summary

In this section you read about your role and responsibilities during the inspection. It will be useful to share this with managers and staff so that they have a better understanding of what you will be expected to do.

Section B: A walk through the inspection period

This section will enable you to have a better understanding of:

- what the inspection team will do during the inspection week; and
- your role in team meetings.

Annex 1 provides a possible model of how inspectors may use their time during the inspection. It will be useful to share this information with managers, staff and proprietors before the inspection.

A very important feature of the inspection process is the team meetings. As a nominee and part of the inspection team, you can and should attend all team meetings, including the pre-inspection team meeting. Below is an example of an agenda for the pre-inspection team meeting. The reporting inspector will share this alongside the pre-inspection commentary on the first day of the inspection. It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with this agenda beforehand as you may be asked your advice about where certain evidence can be obtained or who to speak to confirm lines of enquiry.

Pre-inspection team meeting sample agenda:

- welcome and introductions;
- domestic arrangements, health and safety issues, and safeguarding arrangements;
- where appropriate, specific issues/activities during the week that will affect the inspection programme;
- team responsibilities – allocation of key questions and quality indicators, and writing sections of judgements forms;
- pre-inspection commentary – hypotheses, issues and lines of enquiry ;
- issues arising from learner questionnaire;
- session observation timetable – allocation of team members to sessions ;
- arrangements for listening to learners; interviews with staff, senior managers and proprietors;
- identification of samples of learners' work for scrutiny;
- completion of Judgement Evaluation Forms;
- team meetings for the rest of the inspection; and
- arrangements for reporting/feeding back on the last day of the inspection.

It is important that, as the nominee, you pay due regard to the nominee protocol. This is particularly the case in team meetings where discussions will cover the strengths and weaknesses of the college. A good nominee is well prepared, briefed and contributes positively to team discussions. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification if something is said that you don't understand. After all, you are the person who is likely to be the key to helping move the college forward following the inspection so it is important that you know why things are being said.

Summary

In this section, you read about the inspection week. You may wish to consider how this information can be shared with managers and staff so that they gain a better understanding of the inspection process.

Section C: Documentation required during the inspection

This section will provide you with information about the range of documentation that inspectors may request to help them judge the provider's work in relation to the Common Inspection Framework.

Annex 2 in your sector handbook contains details of the main sources of documentary evidence. Please read the information in this annex before continuing.

Now that you have read about the main sources of documentary evidence, you will be aware of the type of information inspectors may request. You should note that inspectors may not request all of this information, but will choose the evidence they need to support their lines of enquiry. The following examples focus on the types of documentary evidence that inspectors may request to pursue a line of enquiry. In addition to documentary evidence, they may observe the implementation of policies and procedures in practice and seek the views of learners and staff.

Summary

In this section, you have read about how documentary evidence may be requested in order to support a line of enquiry. It will be useful to share this information with managers and staff so that they have a better understanding of the inspection process.

Section D: The inspectorate's quality assurance processes

This section will provide you with information about how the inspectorate quality assures inspections.

Monitoring inspections and inspection reports allows the inspectorate to:

- assess the work of team inspectors on inspection visits, as well as that of the reporting inspector; check how well the nominee understands his/her role and the nominee protocol;
- ensure that all inspectors comply with the requirements of the relevant inspection framework and guidance;
- raise issues of consistency in practice from inspection to inspection;
- challenge the inspection team;
- use the information to determine the quantity of future work for inspectors directly employed by the inspectorate; and
- use all quality assurance information to inform training and further guidance.

Summary

In this section, you have read about how the inspectorate monitors the quality of work of its own inspectors and contracted inspectors. It will be useful to share this information with staff and proprietors so that they are well prepared if the inspection is quality assured.

Part 3: After the inspection

This section reviews, briefly, the role of the nominee after the onsite inspection is complete. Guidance in the sector handbook tells you that after the inspection you should:

- attend the feedback meeting at the end of the inspection;
- contribute to checking the factual accuracy of the draft of report; and
- play a full part in updating an action plan, if required, following the inspection.

You have now read through the handbook and can begin to prepare for your inspection. You may now find it useful to read Estyn's guidance on preparing for inspection. Please see the Estyn website for the for Inspections handbooks.

Annex 1: A walk through the inspection week

The following information is intended to provide further general information about the model of Estyn inspections. Nominees should also note that model outlined below will vary slightly according to the size of the provider and to the sector being inspected.

Each inspection will take place from Monday to Thursday. The size of the team may also vary according to the size of the provision.

The timetable below is a basic model of an inspection week. However, each inspection may vary slightly due to the context.

Day	Team member	Activity
Monday		
12.30	All team and nominee	Inspection team travels to the college Welcome and short presentation by the Principal and nominee to provide a context for the inspection. Health, safety and safeguarding briefing for the inspection team. Pre-inspection team meeting attended by the nominee Scrutiny of learners' work
5.00	RI	Meet with Principal to share lines of enquiry
Tuesday		
09.00 – 16.00	All team	Inspection activities - observations, interviews, listening to learners and scrutiny of documentation and learners' work Team meeting at the end of the day, attended by the nominee
16.00	All team and nominee	Team meeting to discuss emerging findings
17.30	RI	Meeting with Principal if required
Wednesday		
09.00 to 16.00	All team	Inspection activities – observations, interviews, listening to learners, scrutiny of documentation and pupils' work
16.00	All team and nominee	Team meeting at the end of the day, attended by the nominee
17.30	RI	Meeting with Principal if required

Thursday		
09.00	All team	<p>Inspection team meet to agree and moderate findings. Team to discuss and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgement for each key question • Providers' current performance • Providers' prospects for improvement • Recommendations
12.30	All team and nominee	Inspection team report to the Principal and proprietor before leaving the college