



ANALYSIS OF HMIE REVIEWS OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN FURTHER EDUCATION

ACADEMIC YEARS 2004-06

A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS OF EDUCATION FOR THE SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL

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Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Confidence statements	2
3.	Analysis of subject review	4
3.1	Learning and teaching process	4
	3.1.1 Distribution of grades awarded by subject area	4
	3.1.2 Analysis of the grades awarded	6
3.2	Learner progress and outcomes	7
	3.2.1 Distribution of grades awarded by subject area	7
	3.2.2 Analysis of the grades awarded	7
3.3	Other significant factors	8
4.	Analysis of cross-college review	9
4.1	Analysis of strengths identified in cross-college review: Educational provision: design, planning and management	11
4.2	Analysis of strengths identified in cross-college review: Learner services, resources and staff	11
4.3	Analysis of strengths identified in cross-college review: Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement	12
5.	Main points for action	13
5.1	Analysis of <i>main points for action</i> identified in cross-college review: Educational provision: design, planning and management	13
5.2	Analysis of <i>main points for action</i> identified in cross-college review: Learner services, resources and staff	14
5.3	Analysis of <i>main points for action</i> identified in cross-college review: Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement	14
6.	Sector-leading and innovative practice	15
7.	Some key messages from 2004-06 reviews: summary	17
8.	College staff evaluations of the review process	19
8.1	Evaluations from review phase one	19
8.2	Evaluations from the follow-through phase	22
9.	Sector-leading and innovative practice for cross-college and subject reviews by quality element.	26
10	Glossary	47

1. Introduction

The service level agreement between the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) details the number of college reviews to be delivered each year. Over academic years 2004-05 and 2005-06 (referred to in this report as 2004-06) the Inspectorate carried out reviews of 19 of Scotland's colleges.

The revised review model which was introduced in academic year 2004-05, has two phases. Phase one is similar in all colleges. During it, college reviewers focus on elements related to leadership and quality improvement. Subject reviewers focus on the learning and teaching process and learner progress and outcomes. Evaluative activity only focuses on the other quality elements during the subject review insofar as they highlight *other significant factors* that have an impact on the quality of learning and teaching or learner progress and outcomes.

The follow-through phase of the review is a differentiated one where activity is proportionate to the strengths and points for development identified during the first phase. It may be at any point on a continuum from 'light touch' to 'comprehensive' and its focus may range from areas of weakness to areas of sector-leading and innovative practice.

Chapter 9 in this report presents summaries of the *sector-leading and innovative practice* examples identified during reviews, organised by quality element.

An important aspect of the review model is the inclusion in reports of *confidence statements*. These statements are additional to the grades for each cross-college quality element and for the grades in each subject area for *A5: Learning and teaching process* and *A7: Learner progress and outcomes*. The confidence statements apply at the whole-college level to *Learning and teaching process*; *Learner progress and outcomes*; and *Leadership and quality management*.

Percentages in this report have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. This has resulted in totals not necessarily adding up to 100% in some calculations and charts.

The four-point scale (*very good, good, fair* and *unsatisfactory*) is used in college reviews. The definition of the grades used in HMIE college reports is:

Very good	major strengths
Good	strengths outweigh weaknesses
Fair	some important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

2. Confidence statements

HMIE issued confidence statements for each college reviewed, covering the three main focal points of review: *Learning and teaching process*; *Learner progress and outcomes* and *Leadership and quality management*.

Statements of confidence can be:

- unqualified;
- qualified by the term “overall” drawing the college’s attention to some inconsistency in practice or outcomes; or
- qualified by reference to specific points.

HMIE expressed confidence in all 19 colleges reviewed in 2004-06 in relation to *Learning and teaching process*. In two colleges, the statement of confidence was qualified by identification of the college’s need to address weaknesses in a specific subject area.

HMIE expressed confidence in 17 colleges reviewed during 2004-06 in respect of *Learner progress and outcomes*. In one college, HMIE reported that learners were progressing very well and were achieving highly successful outcomes. However, in two colleges HMIE was not confident that learners were progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes. In nine colleges, statements of confidence were qualified. For five of the colleges the report identified the need to address weaknesses in retention and attainment. In one college, qualifications related to low retention, and in two colleges, to low attainment.

HMIE also expressed confidence in 17 colleges reviewed in 2004-06 in respect of *Leadership and quality management*. In eight colleges, HMIE concluded without qualification that the college being reviewed was managing well and improving the quality of experience for learners. In two colleges, HMIE reported that it was not confident that the college was managing well and improving the quality of its services for learners. In the other colleges, qualifications related variously:

- to the need to improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation processes;
- develop further some aspects of monitoring, evaluation and improvement; and
- to address some important weaknesses in relation to:
 - guidance
 - access and inclusion
 - health and safety
 - staff
 - resources and services to support the learner

Following the publication of review reports SFC informs colleges if they require to submit a formal action plan to the Council. Often this is not required and colleges simply incorporate actions into their own planning process. The Council and HMIE monitor the college's progress following the review through existing mechanisms, in particular the information contained in the college's strategic and operational plans and HMIE's ongoing dialogue with the college. Where HMIE has indicated a statement of no confidence in one of the focal points for college review, the Council requires a formal follow-through review, usually about 18 months following publication of the report.

3. Analysis of subject reviews

3.1 Learning and teaching process

Subject reviews under the revised SFC/HMIE quality framework concentrate on the learning and teaching process, and learner progress and outcomes. This section of the report focuses on the grades awarded for quality element *A5: Learning and teaching process*.

3.1.1 Distribution of grades awarded by subject area

The 17 subject areas which were reviewed over 2004-2006 were:

- Art and design
- Business, management and administration
- Care
- Computing and Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Construction
- Engineering
- Hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies
- Hospitality and tourism
- Land-based industries
- Languages and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Media
- Nautical studies
- Performing arts
- Science
- Social studies
- Special programmes
- Sport and leisure

Figure 1 shows the range of subject areas covered by the reviews, and the grades awarded for *A5: Learning and teaching process*.

Subject Area	Number of reviews	Very good	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory
Art and design	7	4	3	0	0
Business, management and administration	19	4	15	0	0
Care	14	9	5	0	0
Computing and ICT	13	2	10	1	0
Construction	12	2	10	0	0
Engineering	14	5	9	0	0
Hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies	11	3	7	1	0
Hospitality and tourism	8	5	3	0	0
Land-based industries	4	2	2	0	0
Languages and ESOL	3	2	1	0	0
Media	1	0	1	0	0
Nautical studies	1	1	0	0	0
Performing arts	4	2	2	0	0
Science	3	1	2	0	0
Social Studies	1	1	0	0	0
Special programmes	15	12	3	0	0
Sport and leisure.	4	2	2	0	0
Total	134	57	75	2	0
Percentages		43%	56%	1%	0%

Figure 1: The grades awarded for *A5: Learning and teaching process* by subject area in 2004-06

In 2004-06 a total of 134 subject reviews were conducted in these 17 subject areas. Figure 1 shows that 43% of grades awarded for *A5: Learning and teaching process* were *very good*, 56% *good* and 1% *fair*. There were no *unsatisfactory* grades awarded for this quality element in 2004-06.

The learning and teaching process is the core of colleges' work so it is a positive finding that 99% of grades awarded for *A5: Learning and teaching process* were *good* or better. However, the definition of *good* in the SFC/HMIE framework is "*strengths outweigh weaknesses*". In 2004-06, 56% of grades for this quality element were recorded as *good*. With under half of the grades for *A5: Learning and teaching process* recorded as *very good*, colleges should consider how to eliminate the weaknesses which were identified in the learning and teaching process.

Three subject areas recorded particularly high proportion of *very good* grades for this quality element during the review period. Special programmes recorded 78% *very good* grades, Art and design recorded 67% *very good* grades and Care recorded 64% *very good* grades.

3.1.2 Analysis of the grades awarded

During each review the subject reviewer records strengths and weaknesses identified for each quality element. Some main themes for strengths in *Learning and teaching process* were as follows:

- Learners were enthusiastic about their learning experiences, showing high levels of engagement and motivation.
- Teaching staff applied their specialist knowledge effectively to the teaching and learning process and generally kept their subject knowledge up to date. In doing this they were able to enhance the learning experience for learners.
- Staff identified appropriate learning goals for learners and planned activities to ensure learners were able to achieve their learning objectives.
- Learners displayed confidence in using a range of learning resources, including online and other ICT resources.
- Effective relationships between staff and learners contributed to enhancing the learner experience.

The most prominent theme from the weaknesses identified related to the use by staff of resources, including ICT. This theme accounted for 21% of weaknesses reported from the colleges reviewed during 2004-06. Others included:

- too narrow a range of teaching methods being deployed by staff;
- in more than a few cases learners were not sufficiently engaged; and
- staff not systematically checking learners' understanding or providing effective feedback.

3.2 Learner progress and outcomes

This section of the report focuses on the grades awarded for the quality element *A7: Learner progress and outcomes*.

3.2.1 Distribution of grades awarded by subject area

Subject area	Number of reviews	Very good	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory
Art and design	7	0	7	0	0
Business, management and administration	19	3	12	4	0
Care	14	2	10	2	0
Computing and ICT	13	0	7	5	1
Construction	12	3	9	0	0
Engineering	14	3	9	2	0
Hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies	11	3	6	2	0
Hospitality and tourism	8	2	5	1	0
Land-based industries	4	2	2	0	0
Languages and ESOL	3	2	1	0	0
Media	1	0	0	1	0
Nautical studies	1	0	1	0	0
Performing arts	4	2	1	1	0
Science	3	0	1	2	0
Social Studies	1	0	1	0	0
Special programmes	15	10	5	0	0
Sport and leisure	4	1	2	1	0
Totals	134	33	79	21	1
Percentages		25%	59%	16%	1%

Figure 2: The grades awarded for *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* by subject area in 2004-06

The grades awarded for the quality element *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* were 25% *very good*, 59% *good*, 16% *fair* and 1% *unsatisfactory*.

The grades indicate that out of 134 subject reviews 84% of grades recorded were *good* or better. However with only 25% of grades recorded as *very good*, it is clear that most subject areas reviewed for *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* had weaknesses or important weaknesses.

3.2.2 Analysis of the grades awarded

The main themes from the strengths recorded in *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* were as follows:

- There were high levels of retention and attainment on specific programmes, particularly SQA programmes.
- Learners were taking advantage of effective progression and transition arrangements into further study or employment.

- Learners were generally making good progress in achieving their learning goals and developing appropriate vocational skills.

The main themes in the weaknesses recorded related to specific attainment and retention issues for individual programmes within each of the subject areas reviewed. Of the total number of weaknesses recorded in *A7: Learning progress and outcomes*, 86% were related to low retention and low attainment factors in programmes and in key units.

The next most frequent weakness identified was the insufficient development of learners' core skills, which accounted for 4% of recorded weaknesses.

3.3 Other significant factors

Reviewers in subject reviews concentrate on the two quality elements:

A5: Learning and teaching process and *A7: Learner progress and outcomes*. However, reviewers also comment on factors related to the other quality elements in the quality framework which had a significant impact on the quality of the learner experience.

In 2004-06, review teams reported 485 other significant factors. Of these 277 were considered to have had a positive impact (recorded as strengths) and 208 a negative impact (recorded as weaknesses).

The main positive feature across *other significant factors* reported during 2004-06 was the impact that high standards of accommodation had on the learning experience. In much of the provision reviewed, a professional working environment met the needs of learners well and prepared them for future employment opportunities.

Other prominent positive features reported in *other significant factors* were that:

- the use of personal learning plans (PLPs) helped monitor learner progress and set appropriate learning targets;
- strong links with partner organisations led to better provision for learners; and
- staff identified appropriate learning support for learners and provided a range of support measures.

The main negative themes in the *other significant factors* were, in order of frequency, as follows:

- Accommodation was poorly designed with insufficient space for learning activities.
- Insufficient access to resources, including ICT resources, impeded learners' progress.
- Specific programmes were poorly designed and did not match the needs of the learner group.
- There was insufficient analysis by staff of performance indicator data and poor action planning to improve the learning experience.

4. Analysis of cross-college review

The cross-college quality elements in the SFC/HMIE quality framework reflect the capacity of the college to support the quality of the learner experience and improve outcomes.

The cross-college elements in the quality framework are as follows:

- *B1: Educational leadership, direction and management*
- *B2: Access and inclusion*
- *B3: Guidance and support*
- *B4: Resources and services to support the learner*
- *B5: Staff*
- *B6: Quality assurance*
- *B7: Quality improvement*

Distribution of grades accorded in college review

ELEMENT CODE	Very good	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory
B1	12	5	2	0
B2	11	5	3	0
B3	10	6	3	0
B4	8	10	1	0
B5	5	11	3	0
B6	7	11	1	0
B7	6	10	3	0
Total	59	58	16	0
Percentages	44%	44%	12%	0%

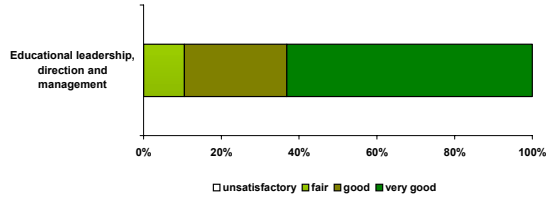
Figure 3: The cross-college grades awarded in reviews 2004-06

In 2004-06, 133 grades were awarded in the nineteen colleges reviewed. The table shows that 44% of grades awarded during the cross college reviews were *very good*, 44% *good* and 12% *fair*. There were no *unsatisfactory* grades. In cross-college reviews in 2004-06, 88% of grades awarded were *good* or better.

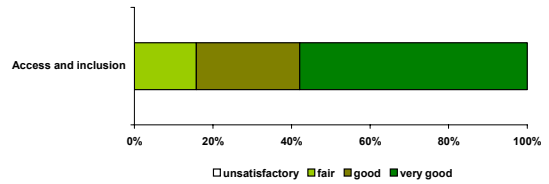
The graphs on the next page show the proportion of grades awarded for each of the quality elements in 2004-06.

Distribution of review grades in cross-college elements in college reviews, 2004-06

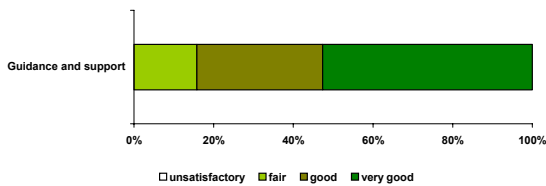
B1: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT



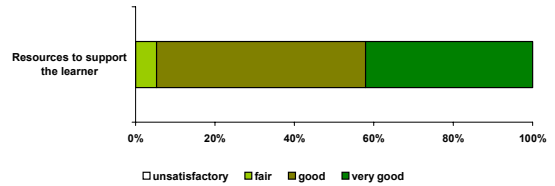
B2: ACCESS AND INCLUSION



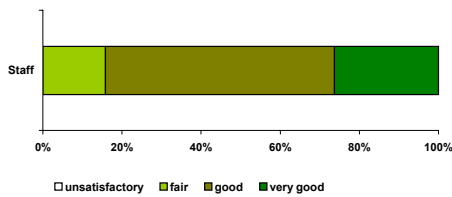
B3: GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT



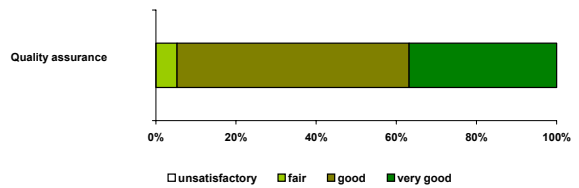
B4: RESOURCES AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE LEARNER



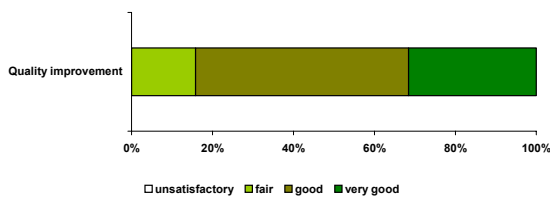
B5: STAFF



B6: QUALITY ASSURANCE



B7: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



4.1 Analysis of strengths identified in cross-college reviews: Educational provision: design, planning and management

In this section the strengths recorded for the quality elements *B1: Educational leadership, direction and management* and *B2: Access and inclusion* are brought together. In 2004-06 the strengths that were identified most frequently in these two elements were that:

- the senior management team and the principal shared a clear vision and provided effective and enthusiastic leadership;
- effective partnerships and links with stakeholders helped extend learner participation;
- college aims were communicated effectively to all staff; and
- strong links with the community helped the college to deliver a good range of programmes in a variety of modes.

4.2 Analysis of strengths identified in cross-college reviews: Learner services, resources and staff

This section covers the three quality elements *B3: Guidance and support*, *B4: Resources and services to support the learner* and *B5: Staff*.

The common strengths identified under *B3: Guidance and support* were as follows:

- Helpful and approachable staff supported learners needs well.
- The college provided effective access to guidance and support to meet learner needs.
- Extended learning support was well coordinated and effective.
- Early identification of learning needs, including core skills, helped support learners well.

For *B4: Resources and services to support the learner* the following common strengths were identified.

- Learner accommodation and resources met learner needs well and were linked to developments in the curriculum.
- The college's ICT strategies met learner needs well.
- Learners had good access to appropriate facilities and accommodation.

In *B5: Staff*, the following common strengths were identified.

- Continuing professional development (CPD) provision met staff training needs effectively.
- Staff were well-qualified and had relevant vocational experience.
- Staff review processes identified training needs well.
- There was a strong commitment to teamwork among staff.

4.3 Analysis of strengths identified in cross-college reviews: Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement

This theme includes the quality elements *B6: Quality assurance* and *B7: Quality improvement*. The following common strengths were recorded.

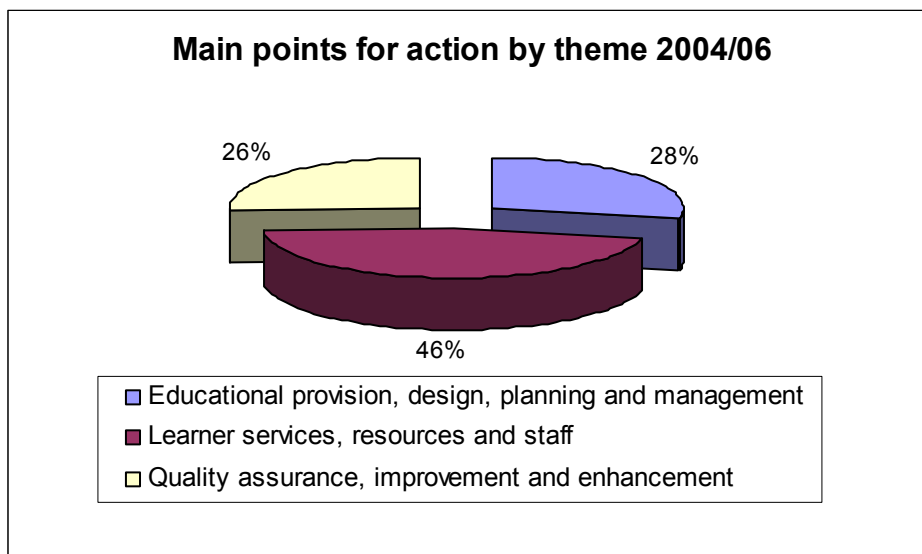
- Well-developed and comprehensive quality systems helped improve the learner experience.
- Staff demonstrated good levels of knowledge of quality procedures.
- Documentation was readily available on the college intranet or as accessible paper copies.
- Staff were committed to improving the quality of learner experience.
- The college had a strategic commitment to self-evaluation and staff were involved in self-evaluation procedures.

5. Main points for action

Main points for action are recorded by HMIE only for the cross-cutting B elements in reviews. In 2004-06 there were 182 *Main points for action*. They have been organised under the same themes as in the previous section.

- Educational provision, design, planning and management;
- Learner services, resources and staff; and
- Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement.

The pie chart below shows the distribution of main points for action for each of these themes.



5.1 Analysis of *main points for action* identified in cross-college review: Educational provision: design, planning and management.

Twenty-eight per cent of all *main points for action* related to quality elements *B1* and *B2*. The most frequent areas in which HMIE identified *main points for action* were as follows:

- The college should improve communication links across college functions to inform strategic and operational planning.
- The college should monitor all learner applications to help implement equality and diversity policies.

**5.2 Analysis of *main points for action* identified in cross-college review:
Learner services, resources and staff.**

Forty-six per cent, or almost half of all cross-college *main points for action*, related to quality elements *B3*, *B4* and *B5*. The most frequent areas for *points for action* related to:

- systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD opportunities for staff;
- progressing action plans on building adaptations to support access for all learners; and
- the systematic profiling of learners' core skills.

**5.3 Analysis of *main points for action* identified in cross-college review:
Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement.**

Twenty-six per cent of all cross-college *main points for action* related to quality elements *B6* and *B7*. The three most frequent areas for *main points for action* were that:

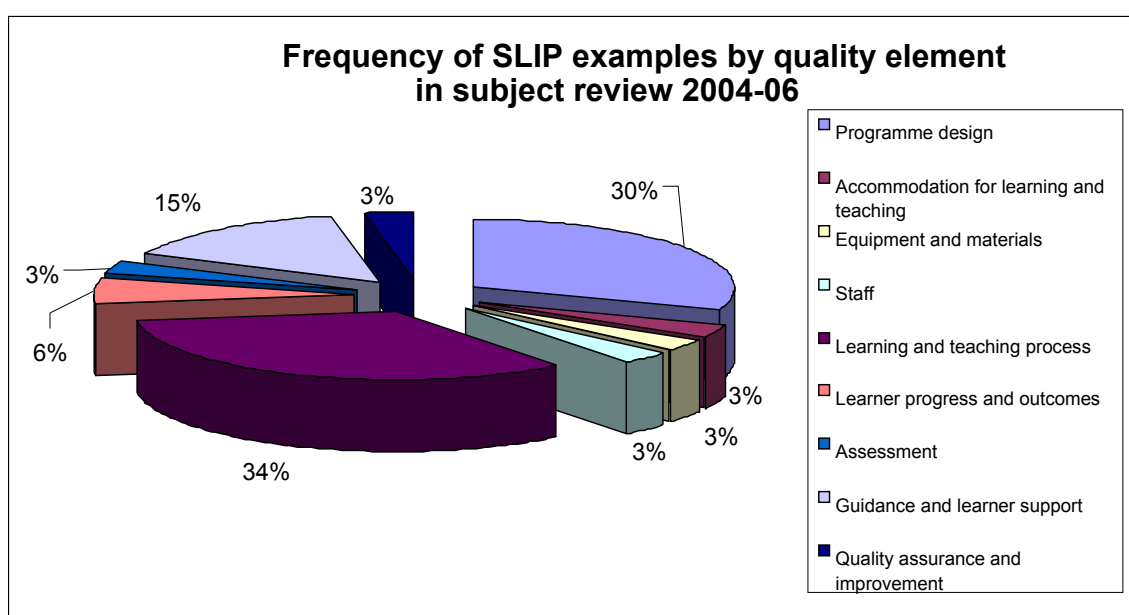
- team action plans should include specific, measurable targets to help address weaknesses;
- the college should develop procedures to systematically identify and evaluate best practice in learning and teaching; and
- self-evaluation procedures should be extended to cover all aspects of college services and be linked to improvement planning activity.

6. Sector-leading and innovative practice

Review reports identified and described a range of practice that was:

- sector-leading and innovative;
- particularly effective in terms of impact or outcomes; and
- able to be replicated, adopted and customised by other colleges.

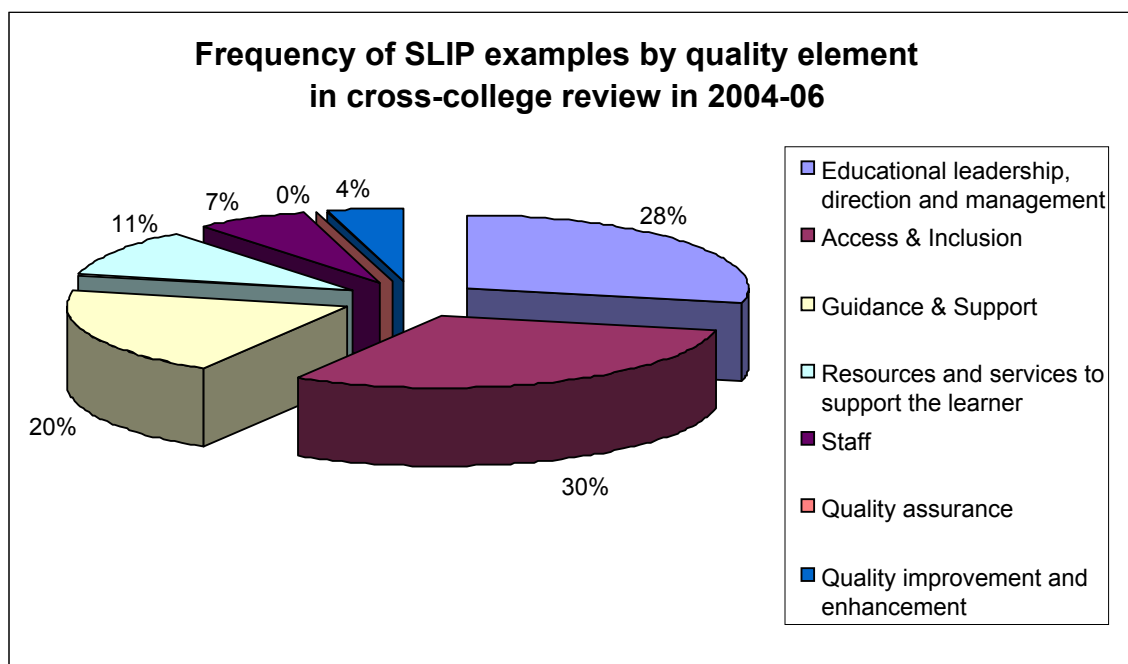
During the review process, such sector-leading and innovative practice (SLIP) examples were identified in both subject and cross-college quality elements. In the subject elements, reviewers identified 33 examples of SLIP from the 19 colleges reviewed. The pie chart below shows the frequency of SLIP examples for each of the quality elements in which they occurred. For this analysis, quality elements A1-A4, A6, and A8-A9 are considered separately, not under the general heading of *other significant factors*.



The pie chart shows that in the 19 reviews, 34% of SLIP examples were identified in the quality element *learning and teaching processes*. *Programme design* accounted for 30% and *guidance and learner support* 15%.

There was one SLIP example recorded in each of the quality elements *quality assurance and improvement*, *accommodation for learning and teaching*, *equipment and materials*, *staff* and *assessment*.

In cross-college reviews, 46 SLIP examples were identified. The pie chart below shows their distribution across the cross-college quality elements to which they related.



The pie chart shows that almost two-thirds of SLIP examples related to the quality elements *B1: Educational leadership, direction and management* and *B2: Access and inclusion*. The quality element with the next greatest number of SLIP examples was *B3: Guidance and support*, with 20% of SLIP examples.

There were no SLIP examples for *B6: Quality assurance* and only two examples recorded in *B7: Quality improvement*.

The full range of SLIP examples identified in both the subject and cross-college reviews is available on the HMIE website using the following link <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/hmiegoodpractice/Default.aspx>. They are also classified and reported by quality element in chapter 10 of this report.

7. Some key messages from the 2004-06 reviews: summary

Colleges have a critical role to play in meeting the lifelong learning needs of their communities. In recent years colleges have further developed policies, quality systems and procedures which are designed to meet the needs of their learners and improve the learning experience.

The HMIE report *Improving Scottish Education* summarised findings in college reviews on the 2000-2004 review cycle. It identified areas where colleges were doing things well and others which were priorities for improvement. The report outlined the need to:

- identify, capture and use effectively the good practice which exists in colleges;
- ensure there is sufficient staff expertise, variety in teaching approaches and effective contribution of ICT to the learning process;
- focus on self-evaluation procedures to improve the quality of learning and teaching; and
- make better use of performance indicator data to evaluate the effectiveness of programme delivery.

The key strengths and weaknesses which emerged from the subsequent reviews between 2004 and 2006 are presented below. Particular strengths identified in *A5: Learning and teaching process* and *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* were as follows:

- Teaching staff applied their specialist knowledge in order to enhance the learning experience for learners.
- Learners displayed a high level of motivation and engagement in their programmes.
- Learners were generally making good progress in achieving their learning goals and developing appropriate vocational skills.
- A high proportion of learners progressed successfully into employment or further study.

However, the review process also identified weaknesses in *A5: Learning and teaching process* and *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* that were relevant to attrition from specific programmes or learners' low success rates in award-bearing programmes. They included the following.

- Resources, including ICT, were not used effectively in support of learning.
- In a few cases staff utilised too narrow a range of teaching approaches.
- In a few cases learners were making insufficient progress in developing core skills.

These strengths and weaknesses were underpinned by *other significant factors* that had a positive or negative impact on the learning experience. Positive *other significant factors* included:

- recent improvements in accommodation and facilities;
- strong links with partner organisations;
- the use of PLPs to monitor and set learning targets; and
- identifying appropriate learning support for learners and providing a range of support measures.

Other significant factors which had a negative impact upon the learning experience included:

- accommodation that was poorly designed for learning activities; and
- insufficient access to resources, including ICT resources.

It is clear from the strengths recorded during reviews that senior management in colleges had been proactive in developing and implementing systems and procedures to improve the quality of the learner experience. In the cross-college quality elements in the reviews for 2004-06 HMIE identified major strengths where senior managers had:

- developed effective partnerships and links with stakeholders which helped extend learner participation by offering a range of programmes in a variety of modes;
- implemented CPD procedures which met the training needs of college staff effectively;
- implemented comprehensive and well-developed quality systems to improve the learner experience;
- provided appropriate access to well-coordinated guidance and support which met learner needs effectively; and
- provided learner accommodation which met learner needs and expectations well.

In other cases, colleges had developed processes and systems for quality improvement and enhancement but the impact on the learner had been less. Issues included:

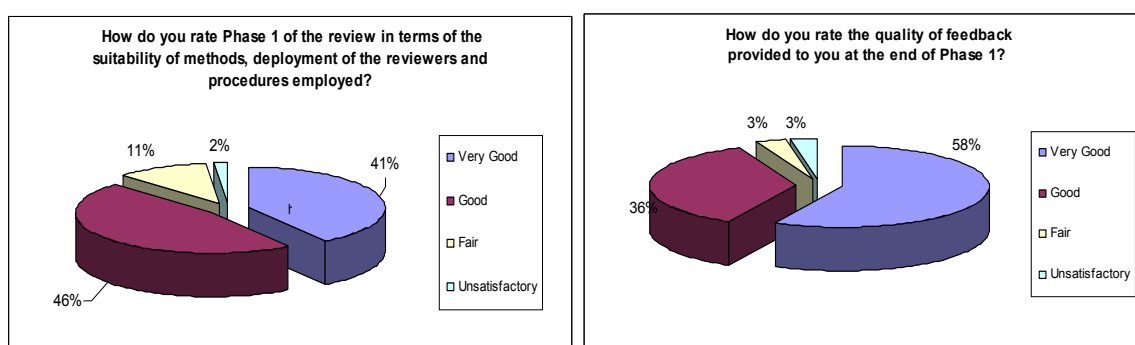
- insufficient targeting of college and subject team action plans on specific issues to help address weaknesses in key areas;
- the lack of systematic procedures to identify and evaluate best practice in learning and teaching;
- in more than a few cases the lack of systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD opportunities for teaching staff hindered plans for the improvement of the learner experience; and
- self-evaluation procedures and operational planning which did not adequately cover all cross-college and support functions.

8. College staff evaluations of the review process

HMIE invites and encourages colleges to provide feedback about the review process and its outcomes through the use of questionnaires and a discussion with the principal after both phases of the reviews are complete. Some comments taken from staff questionnaire returns are detailed later in this chapter. All comments from college staff are considered by HMIE in adjusting and in developing procedures for future reviews.

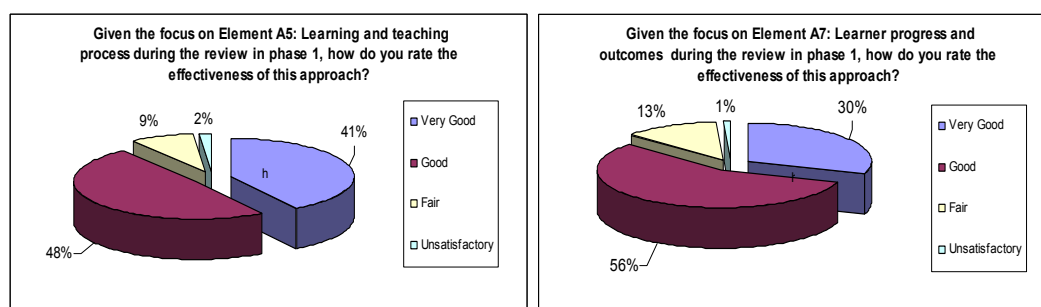
8.1 Evaluations from review phase one

The pie charts below summarise the feedback received by HMIE on college perceptions of the suitability of methods employed by reviewers during reviews, the quality of the feedback given and the overall helpfulness of the review process to the college. The first set of pie charts deals with perceptions from staff responsible for subject areas reviewed during phase one:



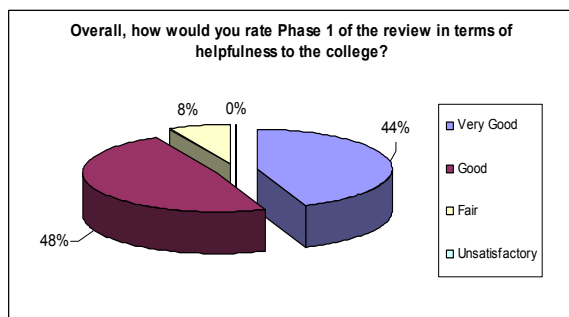
Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents felt suitability of methods, deployment of reviewers and procedures employed were *good* or better. Ninety-four per cent of respondents rated the quality of feedback as *good* or better. Of those who rated the review unsatisfactory in terms of suitability of methods, deployment of reviewers and procedures employed, some felt that while the review had caused anxiety and additional workload, they would be less anxious when the next review came around. Of those who rated feedback as unsatisfactory some disagreed with review team evaluations, and others indicated that they had not been involved in the groups of staff to whom reviewers fed back.

Staff were also asked how they rated the effectiveness of the focus on *A5: Learning and teaching process* and *A7: Learner progress and outcomes* during the review. The responses are shown in the pie charts below.

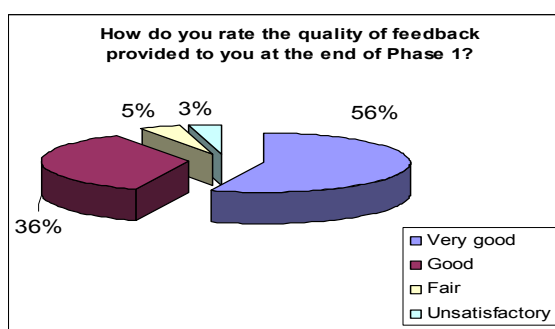
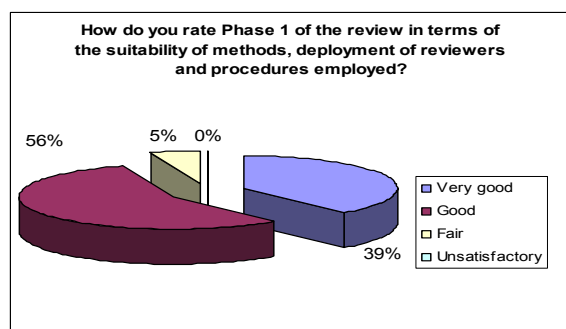


Eighty-nine per cent of respondents rated the effectiveness of the focus on *A5* as *good* or better. A similar pattern emerged for the response to the effectiveness of the focus on *A7*, with 86% rating it *good* or better.

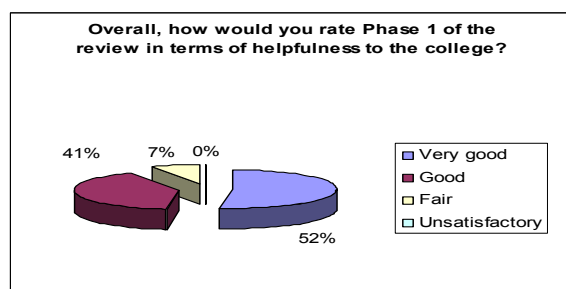
Responding to how helpful the review was to the college, ninety-two per cent of staff involved in the subject review process felt that the helpfulness of the review process to the college was *good* or better. The results are shown in the pie chart below.



The pie charts below consider the responses from staff responsible for areas reviewed in college review, to questions similar to those addressed in the previous section.



Respondents rated the suitability of methods, deployment of reviewers and procedures as *good* or better in 95% of cases. Ninety-two per cent of respondents rated the quality of feedback as *good* or better, including 56% of respondents rating it *very good*.



In terms of helpfulness to the college, 93% of respondents rated the review process as *good* or better.

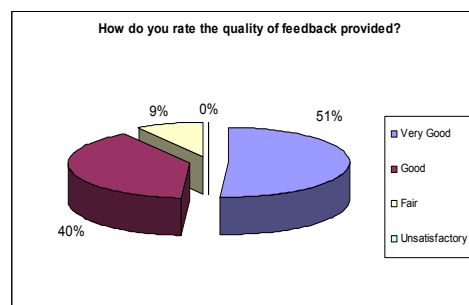
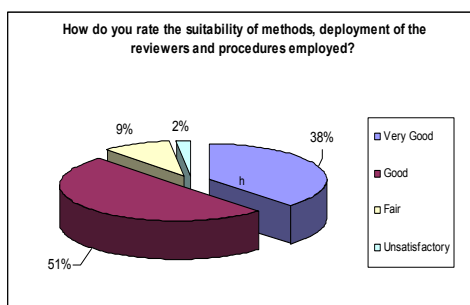
The following collection of views from college managers and subject leaders has been chosen to reflect the range of perceptions of the review process on specific aspects of the quality of provision in colleges:

- *The initial meeting between the Head of School and the reviewer was very productive and helpful.*
- *The AA was very professional and the staff found his comments very constructive and helpful. Overall, we found the review was very fairly conducted.*
- *Excellent feedback (both oral and written) will help to inform our subject action-planning and target-setting, as we strive to enhance the quality of our learners' college experience.*
- *Extremely learner-centred which was wholeheartedly endorsed by all staff and learners.*
- *Our learners felt that they were being listened to and their opinions given value.*
- *The review team for A5/A7 in particular were more than considerate, reasonable and understanding towards all those involved, being experienced practitioners themselves.*
- *The reviewer's observations, comments and suggestions were appropriate, reasonable and supportive providing us with practical recommendations for future.*
- *The process of joint subject and college review gives an opportunity to demonstrate the holistic nature of the learner experience and the impact that one has on the other.*
- *The review concentrated my mind on how far the college has come but more particularly on how far we need to go to achieve best practice in the sector.*
- *HMIE should hold a conference at the start of the year (Aug) for those colleges being reviewed during the academic year.*
- *Some subject areas were reviewed quite heavily (and had been reviewed in the previous inspection visit) whilst other subject areas were not reviewed and had not been reviewed previously.*
- *Verbal feedback session to the School staff team was excellent. The information for learners is too formal and creates anxiety. A more user-friendly learner centred approach would be preferred.*
- *HMI were open to discussion and demonstrated a determination to be clear about the methodologies, resources and decisions made at the college.*
- *The 'end of day' feedback was a very good approach.*
- *HMI and AAs made the review process work well and opportunities to comment or discuss elements were well focused and well balanced.*
- *A wider range of Outreach Centres could have been visited by reviewers to gain knowledge and understanding about the diversity of our provision.*
- *A thorough review which was helpful in confirming what we are getting right, informing action planning and providing encouragement and motivation to staff.*
- *The number of classroom observations in one subject area reviewed could not review the breadth and depth of the subject area.*
- *Written feedback is a massive leap forward, as staff can digest comments and reflect upon them.*
- *The written feedback is undoubtedly useful and given the depth and breadth of the review it is extremely useful to have been given verbal feedback to clarify the written reports.*

- *It proved difficult to schedule all the interviews for the College Review simultaneously with the Subject Review. It is extremely difficult to get groups of learners from across the College together, especially at short notice, and staff spent a great deal of time and effort organising this.*
- *The process appears to be more rigorous in some respects when compared with the previous model particularly in relation to the interaction between subject and college reviews and how this supports evaluation of the B elements.*

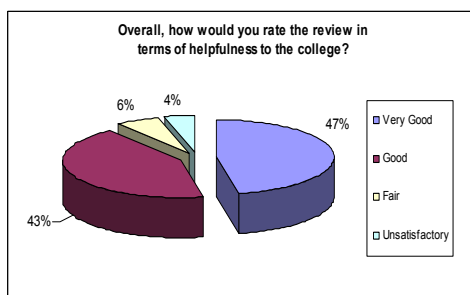
8.2 Evaluations from the follow-through phase

The pie charts below summarise the feedback received in the follow-through phase of reviews. As in the previous section the questions focus on the suitability of methods employed by reviewers, the quality of the feedback given and the overall helpfulness of this phase to the college. The first set of pie charts deals with perceptions from staff responsible for the subject areas engaged with during the follow-through phase.

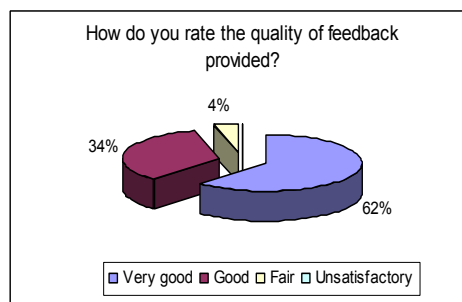
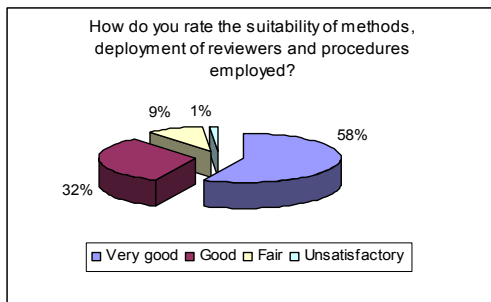


Eighty-nine per cent of the respondents felt the suitability of methods, deployment of reviewers and procedures employed were *good* or better. Ninety-one per cent of respondents rated the quality of feedback as *good* or better with over half rating it *very good*.

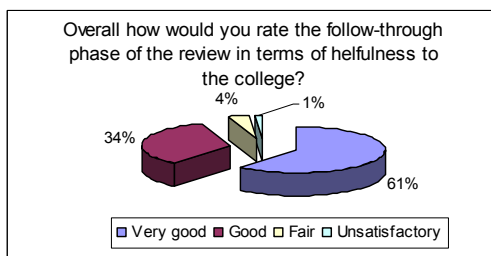
Overall, ninety per cent of staff involved in the subject areas reviewed during the follow-through phase felt that the helpfulness of the review process to the college was *good* or better.



The second set of pie charts deals with perceptions from staff responsible for the cross-college areas engaged with during the follow-through phase.

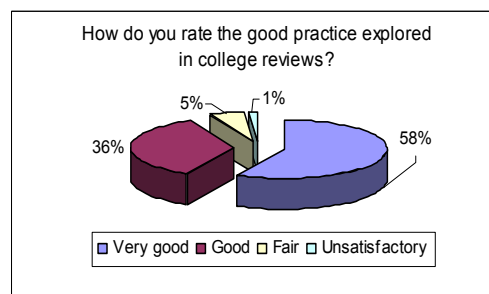
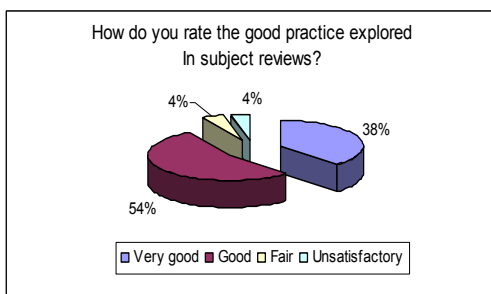


Respondents rated the suitability of methods, deployment of reviewers and procedures in the cross-college follow-through phase as *good* or better in 90% of cases. Ninety-six per cent of respondents rated the quality of feedback as *good* or better, with 62% of respondents rating it *very good*.



In terms of helpfulness to the college, 95% of cross-college respondents rated the follow-through phase of the review process as *good* or better, including 61% of respondents who rated it *very good*.

An additional question for both the subject and college staff involved in the follow-through phase was how they rated this phase of the review in terms of the exploration of good practice. The pie charts are shown below.



In the subject review follow-through phase, 92% of respondents rated the exploration of good practice as *good* or better with 94% of respondents in the college review follow-through phase rating it *good* or better.

The following collection of views from college managers and subject leaders has been chosen to reflect the range of perceptions of the follow-through phase of the review process:

- *Feedback was very helpful and informative. This contributed to the development and refining of the college action plan.*
- *It has provided us with an opportunity to discuss in some detail good practice elements in the context of the whole college.*
- *Some written feedback would be helpful even at this early stage as there was a tendency to miss valuable points during feedback.*
- *I have found this particular college review to be very useful. It has confirmed areas for further development and increased my level of consideration of certain aspects for the future development of the college.*
- *The level of engagement felt appropriate in relation to the outcomes from phase one, with an appropriate balance between the follow-through on weaknesses identified and good practice.*
- *I found the HMI extremely approachable and supportive.*
- *Staff were pleased to be so actively involved in the follow-through phase. Their participation gave them a clear sense of ownership and responsibility in taking forward improvements in the learning and teaching process.*
- *The feedback was good, helpful suggestions for development where applicable and clear information on issues.*
- *Phase two was much more developmental and relaxed with opportunities for discussion.*
- *It might be helpful for HMIE to ensure the phase two reviewer who is considering good practice liaises with the phase one reviewer who proposed it.*
- *I, like other colleagues, welcomed the opportunity to take advantage of the consultancy aspect of the review which was very helpful and non-threatening.*
- *Tended to be directed at senior management so consideration should be given to a wider audience.*
- *The HMIE team worked methodically with minimum disruption to staff.*

The examples above include comments from college managers and staff that conveyed some reservations about the process and criticisms about operational aspects. Often, these comments were the views of individuals rather than reflective of widespread misgivings. However, there were two recurring themes, to which HMIE has responded as noted below.

- In the reviews of 2004-05 more than a few respondents felt that the smaller number of lesson observations in each subject area compared with the previous cycle either led to rushed processes or did not provide a sound underpinning of the grades awarded for *learning and teaching process*.

HMIE decided that the number of lesson observations normally to be undertaken for 2005-06 reviews would be increased from six to eight or nine.

- It was evident that in more than a few colleges, the selection of subjects for review in 2004-05 meant that other subjects had not been reviewed over a long period of time.

In selecting subjects for reviews in 2005-06, HMIE has taken greater account in its planning of the coverage of subjects in previous reviews of the colleges involved.

9. Sector-leading and innovative practice for subject and cross-college reviews by quality element.

This section presents summaries of the SLIP examples from subject and cross-college reviews between 2004-06. The examples have been organised by quality element for subject and college reviews.

Subject review quality elements

Programme design
<p>Cross-college - John Wheatley College</p> <p>The college had established effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies to facilitate the design and delivery of programmes for at-risk learners in the local community, eg the Youthstart programme with local secondary schools. A positive approach to behaviour management, recognition of learner achievement and a high practical content in learning were key features in the development of the programme. The development and effective delivery of the project over a number of years had significantly improved the motivation and achievement of at-risk learners.</p>
<p>Cross-college - John Wheatley College</p> <p>Almost all subject areas had responsibility for delivering part-time Access 3 courses that gave opportunities to learners with additional support needs to follow certificated programmes in a mainstream subject area. Staff development arrangements and the appointment of inclusion tutors ensured appropriate support was available for learners with additional learning needs and delivered an effective and inclusive learning experience.</p>
<p>Business, management and administration - Dundee College</p> <p>Flexible provision in NQ and HNC business and management programmes helped learners learn at times and in places that it suited them and improved their motivation by integrating HN unit content within NQ level studies. Learners built upon prior learning quickly and were better prepared for subsequent HN studies.</p>
<p>Care - Stevenson College, Edinburgh</p> <p>An initiative to address the low numbers of males employed in child care involved the design of progressive childcare programmes in care targeted at men. The success of the initiative had prompted other local authorities and colleges in Scotland to adopt the programmes and the models of delivery utilised at the college.</p>

Programme design (continued)

Business, management and administration - Stevenson College, Edinburgh

The Flexible Office Skills programme offered a wide range of skills for new entrants to the labour market, adult returners and long-term unemployed. The flexible nature of the programme allowed learners the opportunity to study at times and places convenient to them. Most learners had achieved success on the programme, with several progressing to employment in administrative posts.

Special programmes - Dundee College

The college provided innovative provision for disaffected young people incorporating multi-agency planning and support. This approach used individual profiles of young persons to recognise their needs and aspirations. By focusing on achievement, it helped engage learners by developing their self-esteem and confidence and recognising and celebrating their achievements.

Special programmes - Motherwell College

Support for Learning programmes were designed around the theme of *citizenship* and offered learners opportunities to explore issues about their rights and responsibilities within the local community, Scotland and the international community. Learning strategies and the material to support learning and teaching were differentiated, to take account of the specific needs of individual and groups of learners. Hyperlinks to a range of shared learning and teaching resources facilitated staff choice of appropriate material for learners and further encouraged a team approach to curriculum planning and development.

Science - Coatbridge College

In recognising the importance of encouraging learners to develop an interest in science and their physical environment at an early age, teaching staff had been involved in several initiatives that had encouraged greater participation in science by young learners. In one example, discussions with staff from a local children's nursery led to college staff developing a programme of learning based on an interactive and easy-to-use resource pack designed to capture the imagination of very young learners. The initiative had been successful in raising the profile of science in the local community and other groups had expressed keen interest in having a similar involvement with the college.

Programme design (continued)

Performing arts - Anniesland College

Staff had extensive links with professional performers and ongoing relationships with a range of companies and schools particularly local dance schools, Scottish Ballet, The Dance School of Scotland and mainstream dance within Knightswood Secondary School. These links were structured into all programmes to enhance the experience of learners and prepare them effectively for future careers. Learners had very high success rates in achieving related employment or progressing to relevant degree courses. Learners planned and organised performances often attended by a large cross-section of the community. These activities helped build the confidence of learners and provide them with practical experience of life as a community dance artist.

Care - Borders College

The care team had identified weaknesses in learner performance in entry-level care programmes. Many of the learners had additional support needs and had a range of personal difficulties including low self-esteem and negative experiences of previous education. A preparatory programme which focused on personal development to improve self-confidence and the development of the social skills necessary for a career in care was devised. As result of this programme, learner confidence and self-esteem increased, which resulted in improved behaviour and motivation. A high number of learners progressed successfully to the Intermediate 1 Care programme and then to employment.

Accommodation for learning and teaching

Performing arts: music - James Watt College

The college had designed and developed a high-quality facility for sound recording which maximised learner access to industry-standard equipment and resources that supported practical skills development. The well-thought-out design and the high quality equipment provided learners with good opportunities to develop appropriate skills for employment.

Equipment and materials

Languages and ESOL - Stevenson College, Edinburgh

The college had brought together in a single area a comprehensive range of ICT and technology-based resources for language learning. The languages teaching and support team had packaged the ICT-based resources in a very attractive and integrated way, and learners had easy access to a wide range of learning materials that contributed effectively to their acquisition of language skills.

Staff

Performing Arts - Jewel and Esk Valley College

Staff recognised that fast-changing technology in the music industry had created a need for improving their own skills. They conducted an ICT skills audit and planned actions to rectify skills gaps which included in-house sessions led by staff with up-to-date knowledge of the industry augmented by visits to external conferences. All staff in the curriculum area had taken part in this process which had led to other curriculum areas in the college adopting this professional and enterprising approach.

Learning and teaching process

Business, management and administration - Angus College

The *Angus Gold* project was designed to help volunteer learners work in the local community as information technology tutors to over one hundred learners. The volunteers developed their own interpersonal and employability skills, gained experience in working with others from their local community and enhanced their self-esteem and self-confidence levels.

Business, management and administration - Central College of Commerce

An intranet learning resource in legal studies presented learning materials in interesting ways tailored to learner needs. Its primary purpose was to allow learners to undertake a more in-depth consideration of law to take their studies further and to allow them to consider the direction that the law takes and why. This approach helped learners develop independent learning strategies and broadened their understanding of legal principles.

Business, management and administration and special programmes - James Watt College

The vocational matters programme, delivered in conjunction with the college's supported learning faculty, met the needs of learners with additional support needs who were not in education, employment or training. Lecturers encouraged the learners to look at their own strengths and be honest about areas which required development. Staff had effectively integrated subject areas on the programme to make the learning experiences more meaningful for learners. Learners expressed renewed self-confidence, and enthusiasm about their plans for the future, as a result of attending the programme.

Computing and ICT - Dundee College

Blended learning in HNC Computing and ICT helped improve retention and achievement rates. Based upon extensive bespoke and interactive course materials, effective online materials with support from web tutors helped learners reflect upon their progress and interact with other learners and staff. These activities were underpinned by comprehensive evaluation procedures involving learners.

Hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies - James Watt College

Staff in hairdressing and beauty made very good use of digital images in the form of video clips and photographs in a variety of ways to support learning. Learners could progress through tutorials at their own pace, and check their understanding of applications. Learners developed an autonomous approach to their learning by accessing tutorials through the college's intranet, which allowed them to continue their studies at home or at work.

Learning and teaching process (continued)

Hospitality - Angus College

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in hospitality allowed learners access to a range of information useful for their studies, including learning materials, assessment schedules and then our work-in-progress and assessment schedules. Widespread use of the resource had encouraged learners to be more independent in their learning and developed their range of ICT skills.

Hospitality - James Watt College

Learners developed skills and knowledge across a diverse range of work environments. These work environments included an industrial environment in a nearby shipyard, a high-quality restaurant and an e-Kafe at the main college campus. Learners developed self-confidence and acquired vocational and core skills. The innovative approach to the learning and teaching process supported progression to further study options and prepared learners well for a range of careers.

Performing arts - Dundee College

Learner engagement with external professionals in performing arts incorporated workshops, residencies, guest teachers and attendance at rehearsals. This helped to establish professional standards of work in technique and creative performances. These links enhanced the learner experience, promoted achievement and attainment and prepared learners well for a career in performing arts.

Sport and Studies - Central College of Commerce

The use of interactive digital media in sport studies allowed learners access to a range of online folders/resources in college or at home or in their work placements. Learners contributed to footage of practical activities and fully engaged in the analysis of the activities with their peers. Learners could engage with their studies at times and places suitable to them and developed good ICT skills within the relevant context of their chosen vocational area.

Hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies - Coatbridge College

Learners on the NQ Beauty Therapy programme undertook beauty therapy sessions with a group of special programme learners to develop their personal skills and skills for citizenship. Learners managed the project largely by themselves and developed their skills in oral and written communication, team working and problem solving. Learner evaluation of the project pointed to a highly successful experience for all participants. It helped them to reflect on a range of social issues they may not have otherwise considered as they learned to relate to groups of people different to themselves.

Learner progress and outcomes

Engineering - Motherwell College

Learners on a Modern Apprenticeship programme for an international automotive manufacturer made good use of a web-based tracker reporting and assessment system. The award incorporated the BTEC National Certificate for Vehicle Maintenance and Repair and a City and Guilds National Vocational Qualification and was delivered by block release over a three-year period and assessed by project assignments. Learners were able to track their progress online when they returned to work between blocks, and access additional learning resources if they had outstanding assessments.

Care - Ayr College

The Making a Difference project was designed to encourage a more significant degree of autonomy and responsibility for citizenship development amongst learners. Learners submitted proposals in which they planned, implemented and evaluated projects designed to make a positive difference to the lives of people who were socially excluded, vulnerable or in some other way disadvantaged. Approximately 100 learners from made a contribution across a range of projects and received a certificate of achievement. The increase in self-confidence, self-worth and personal responsibility achieved by Making a Difference permeated the course experience long after projects were completed.

Art and design - Shetland College

The Textile Facilitation Unit (TFU) had established partnership working between the college and the local knitted textile industry in Shetland and Orkney which contributed to the development of traditional indigenous textile skills and helped address skills gaps in the local labour market. Learners on programmes utilised the latest technology to design and manufacture products using CAD/CAM techniques and accessed the range of resources within the TFU to produce high quality portfolio work. Learners gained enhanced skills levels in design and production in knitted textiles and high levels of retention and achievement were evident.

Assessment

Care - James Watt College

A paper-free approach to record electronically candidate evidence in SVQ care replaced the use of conventional ring binders as evidence portfolios. It collated electronic media from a range of sources including video clips of real work practice, digital photographs, voice tape and computer-generated documentation. This system used the same evidence-gathering methods as required by the awarding bodies. Candidates received printed reports of their progress and a visual percentage of how much of the award they had completed. On completion, candidates received a CD-ROM containing their portfolio of evidence.

Guidance and learner support

Languages and ESOL - Stevenson College, Edinburgh

At enrolment, staff identified learners' current level of competence in the four basic language skills and recorded this information in an initial assessment document. Over an induction period, teaching staff, in consultation with each new learner, identified initial goals and what the learner hoped to gain from the programme. In this way, staff and learners collaborated in the production of an appropriate learning plan with clearly expressed language objectives which related well to the personal circumstances and needs of learners.

Business, management and administration - Jewel and Esk Valley College

A programme of learner review and personal development pioneered approaches to pastoral support which integrated SQA units in personal effectiveness, improving performance and developing team skills into a number of programmes. Staff were able to develop a structured programme which focused on 'soft skills' and the development of individual learning plans. Improved retention and progression rates and positive feedback from employers offering work placement to learners were some of the benefits of this approach.

Languages and ESOL - Anniesland College

A programme had been devised for a diverse range of young people new to Scotland who were not English speakers. A key element of the programme was guidance, support and personal development involving a range of external agencies. Staff delivering the programme were experienced in working with people from non-British backgrounds, understood the cultural backgrounds of the learners well, and responded helpfully to the social, emotional and educational issues which arose for individuals in the group. The learners gained in confidence, motivation and self-esteem, benefited from learning in a peer group, and were better prepared to engage in work or further education and to settle in Scotland.

Hairdressing, beauty and complementary therapies - Moray College

Staff designed self-development workshops to engage learners with the requirements of a full-time programme and to develop learners' transferable skills for application within studies. Developing study and core skills early in learners' programmes would have a positive impact on learners by engaging them in learning and building self-confidence at an early stage and in developing relationships within the group and with teaching staff. Staff found that the confidence and motivation of learners increased and that this had improved retention levels in the current session.

Guidance and learner support (continued)

Special programmes - Glasgow College of Nautical Studies

The college had developed a dedicated programme for learners with Asperger's syndrome. It was the only Asperger-specific programme in Scotland. The programmes aimed to support the transitions of learners with Asperger's syndrome and promote their inclusion into mainstream settings through progressively placing learners in new learning and working environments which were highly challenging but in which they felt they could take risks safely. Staff had identified significant key factors which contributed to the successful progression of learners. The college had very good links with the National Autistic Society and had established a national reputation as a specialist centre in this area of work. Staff had provided advice to and given seminars for other colleagues within the FE sector on good practice.

Quality assurance and improvement

Care - Stevenson College, Edinburgh

Learner self-evaluations of their learning experience in care helped improve quality control exercises. Learners reported that the process enhanced their sense of involvement with the quality assurance of their programme and increased their sense of participation in the learning and teaching process. Learners appreciated the importance of gathering and acting on the views and opinions of clients and this contributed well to learners' understanding of its application in their occupational specialisms.

Cross-college quality elements

Educational leadership, direction and management

Central College of Commerce

The college's close association with the business community helped to provide learning and business services to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in business development. The development of the *CBLZ* which housed the *Business Gateway* provided learning and teaching facilities and resources which assisted businesses to develop. The focused training, development and support provided by the college had allowed the new SMEs to concentrate their energies on business development at the critical early stages.

Central College of Commerce

A financial modelling tool (FinPlan) helped college managers plan a balanced and controlled curriculum. A comprehensive database, including units linked to information on SUMs and staff and room availability, outlined the potential effects of course decisions on income and resources. It had been a key factor in enabling the college to meet the targets it had set itself for income and weighted SUMs, and helped to provide a curriculum in line with the college's overall strategic aims.

Dundee College

The development of a Strategic Forum helped the college to develop and implement strategies effectively and efficiently. Comprising 30 senior and middle managers and chaired by the principal, the Strategic Forum enabled the college to respond quickly to strategic issues as a corporate entity. This approach ensured managers across academic and support functions played a crucial role in the strategic direction of the college and was an important vehicle for the principal's exercise of leadership.

Dundee College

The learning and teaching strategy developed by the college helped staff at all levels improve their learning and teaching techniques and share good practice. A curriculum resources development team collated data on the range of learning and teaching techniques employed across the college which were made available to course teams to assess for their own curriculum areas. This has resulted in a closer focus on the learning experience and in the design and delivery of programmes making them more relevant and interesting.

Educational leadership, direction and management (continued)

Dundee College

A systematic and comprehensive approach to strategic partnership had been developed which enabled joint planning and development between partners to take place and which improved the quality of the learning experience for the learner. The partnership included local authorities, community agencies, HEIs and other FE colleges and focused on integrating objectives jointly to maximise the learner experience. This approach resulted in an improvement in the quality of the learning experience based upon enhanced capacity of the partners to deliver the product.

James Watt College

The college had established a comprehensive range of links with higher education institutions (HEIs) in Scotland and England. The links with HEIs supported the college's international strategy to attract more overseas learners to Scotland, to increase its scale of programme delivery and consultancy overseas, and to develop partnerships with overseas government bodies. The links with HEIs also provided platforms for the college's partnerships operating in the area of knowledge transfer.

John Wheatley College

The college worked effectively with a range of partners to identify and prioritise training which matched the needs in the local community. This approach had enabled the college to make a significant contribution to regeneration of the local community by helping learners overcome barriers to participation and deliver a range of stimulating and successful learning experiences.

Jewel and Esk Valley College

The principal had led a group of key staff in developing a 'positive behaviour' framework based on clear expectations of pupils from local schools relating to behaviour, timekeeping and preparedness for classes. Implementation of the positive behaviour framework since 2003-04 had significantly improved learner attendance, motivation and classroom behaviour. Learner motivation, retention and progression on programmes had improved as a result of this initiative.

Jewel and Esk Valley College

The college had developed a highly effective approach to curriculum delivery planning, incorporating labour market intelligence (LMI), learner demand and resource considerations. The college's strategic planning process generated LMI data and provided insights into the strategic direction adopted by the Board and the senior executive team. Teaching staff and technicians were able to bring to bear their own specialist knowledge to ensure ownership of what was being proposed. The process enabled the development of new programmes to meet learners' employability and progression needs, encouraged the introduction of new provision to meet evolving market needs, and allowed for the phasing out of obsolete programmes.

Educational leadership, direction and management (continued)

Jewel and Esk Valley College

Cross-college learning support and curriculum area staff had worked effectively together to establish and operate a particularly coherent approach to learners' core skills development. The process involved screening individuals by well-trained course tutors. The analysis of the results quickly led to the provision of additional individual or small-group support where required. Central services and curriculum area staff developed materials jointly with an emphasis on contextualisation to enhance learner motivation and attention to transferable, employability and citizenship skills. The effective adoption of this holistic approach to core skills development had improved learner retention and attainment on several programmes.

Anniesland College

The college successfully supported a range of activities and projects in pursuit of its strategic aim of promoting an ethos that was innovative, inclusive and outward looking. One project was the college's annual poetry competition. The competition was open to both staff and learners and almost two hundred poems had been collected over the five years since its inception. The project was linked to the college's literacy strategy and was successful in encouraging learners to identify with different forms of communication. Many of the learners who had entered the competition had never written poetry before. The project provided tangible evidence of the lively ethos of the college and the sense of community and citizenship that pervaded its activities.

Glasgow College of Nautical Studies

The college had established links with educational institutions in India, Turkey and Pakistan, which allowed 200 learners each year from these countries to study for internationally recognised maritime qualifications in their own country. The college had agreed memoranda of understanding with the overseas educational institutions and staff had developed the programmes to include progression to university or further professional qualifications. Importantly, the arrangements enabled international learners to progress from entry level to degree level studies and provided the opportunity to improve their English language skills

Borders College

College managers had identified that insufficient teamwork and communication between staff had resulted in inconsistent practices and duplication staff time and resources. The college created cross-college roles in key areas such as learner resources and college committees were restructured to bring together cross-college managers. Senior managers communicated the new staff and committee roles and responsibilities effectively to all staff. The senior management team met regularly with staff and learner groups on each of the college sites. These activities had created very effective teamwork between and across all college areas which had resulted in consistency of practice, good staff relationships and improved services for learners.

Access and inclusion

Angus College

A school-college partnership provided a wide range of programmes and progression opportunities for learners supported by a sound infrastructure involving staff from each establishment. The college provided community programmes for pupils with additional support needs and provided an alternative curriculum for disaffected and “at risk” pupils. This approach broadened academic and vocational choices and enhanced progression opportunities for school pupils of all abilities in the local community.

Banff and Buchan College

The applied vocational study skills programme involved construction staff and core skills staff working together to improve learners’ skills and improve retention rates. Craft and core skills tutors incorporated a programme of core skills into the pre-vocational building craft programme and collaborated in workshops to support the learners. This programme had helped learners develop their core skills and had significantly improved retention rates on this programme.

Central College of Commerce

The *Ya Beauty* programme offered enterprise and beauty units to S5/6 pupils in Glasgow, giving them a sense of what it is like to be employed as a hairdresser in a salon or running their own business. The pupils were set a target for the end of the programme to plan, promote and run a ‘pampering day’ in each of their schools. This was effective in developing learners’ vocational and employability skills. Learners’ confidence and self-esteem were enhanced through self-reflection.

Ayr College

The North Ayr Community Tutor Project was a two-year project aimed to assist North Ayr Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) residents to become ICT community tutors able to develop the IT skills of members of the local community. It enabled unemployed or low-income learners in receipt of benefits, with no or low qualifications to join the project. The learners acting as community tutors provided positive role models for young people and adults within the SIP area, promoting active citizenship. Each tutor had grown in self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills. When applying for future study or jobs their newly gained presentation skills served them well.

Access and inclusion (continued)

Dundee College

Coherent arrangements for financial advice had been developed by a learner financial support committee. This committee developed transparent and consistent procedures to distribute learner support funds and employed a case history approach to ensure the backgrounds and needs of learners were taken into account. Well-considered arrangements for disbursing funds and monitoring the effectiveness of arrangements impacted positively on retention and assisted learners in their efforts to engage in lifelong learning.

Stevenson College, Edinburgh

Over one hundred learners on the Adult Returners and the College and Work Preparation programmes benefited each year from an 18-week core skills development programme. Learners developed their skills in a positive environment within one or more core skill areas while working to improve in other areas of relative weakness. Most learners progressed to mainstream college courses.

Stevenson College, Edinburgh

The Out and About component of the College and Work Preparation programme comprised sessions on citizenship and enterprise during which learners focused on the development of social and practical skills associated with their vocational area. Learners undertook a range of activities including visits, exhibitions and events in Edinburgh. They also took part in fund-raising and other socially useful activities in the local community.

Stevenson College, Edinburgh

The range and quality of pre-entry guidance arrangements for school links were particularly effective. There were very close working relationships between college staff and school managers and guidance teachers. School and college staff used learner profiles effectively to inform the placement of pupils on appropriate programmes and their development. These links were very effective in ensuring pupils made appropriate choices in accessing opportunities for further training on leaving school.

Motherwell College

The college deployed an effective evaluation, planning and development process within the college which promoted discussion and enabled staff to reflect on their own contributions to the overall access, inclusion and support strategies and how they linked with the contributions of others. The importance of communication and awareness of the services to the learner experience were critical to the success of this process and confirmed the importance of team working with curriculum delivery departments. These arrangements ensured that learners were able to access learner services that were comprehensive and coherent.

Access and inclusion (continued)

Anniesland College

The college participated in a strategically planned range of research and action research projects which contributed to a wider understanding of how to best address the needs of learners. The projects related to the college's strategic objectives in the areas of continuing quality improvement and inclusiveness. The findings were used to reflect on learner needs and develop practice. This promoted a culture which was open to change and responsive to the learner voice, and which encouraged staff to develop imaginative learning and teaching approaches. Learners throughout the college benefited from the more motivating and relevant approaches to learning and teaching adopted by staff.

Borders College

A collegiate approach, involving staff in all areas of the college was successful in raising the profile for citizenship across curriculum and support areas. College teams worked effectively to identify and embed activities which raised learner awareness of social issues and community responsibility. All staff were involved in the sharing of ideas to develop citizenship and the impact of these activities on learners was wholly positive. Those undertaking citizenship projects gained social awareness and confidence and engaged more actively in college life. Relationships between staff and learners had improved, and the college and wider local community benefited from an increased focus on the needs of others.

Borders College

The senior management team promoted social interaction and life skills as an important aspect of college programmes and carried out a review of learner engagement which highlighted behaviours that interrupted or constrained the teaching process. Regular staff-student council meetings successfully encouraged and enabled learners to take wider responsibility for developing a positive and respectful learning environment. College staff involved employers and representatives from community organisations in a wide range of events to celebrate group and individual success. These activities had resulted in very good relationships between staff and learners, built on shared understanding and promotion of positive behaviour across the college, which had contributed to improved learner retention and achievement.

Access and inclusion (continued)

Anniesland College

The college worked successfully with a wide range of partners to help people from black and ethnic minority communities, asylum seekers and refugees gain access to qualifications and to professional and vocational employment. One initiative involved the production of a booklet aimed at beginner English language learners. The college had used the booklet successfully as a teaching resource with ESOL learners starting to read independently in English. The resource had also been shared with and used by other colleges. Learners on these projects were well supported in developing and gaining qualifications in English language, in preparing for employment and in contributing to Scottish society. Their presence in college contributed to a highly positive ethos of diversity, which benefited staff and other learners.

Shetland College

The college made very effective use of videoconferencing to provide learners in remote locations with opportunities to access both FE and HE programmes. In collaboration with employers and the Childcare Partnership (Shetland), learners in employment accessed FE programmes. Learners were also extensively supported through videoconferencing on a range of advanced programmes. In one example, a member of the culture studies team delivered a module on the history of material culture to 54 learners based in 15 different campuses. The increased flexibility provided through videoconferencing resulted in high retention and achievement rates for learners on both FE and HE programmes.

Guidance and support

Angus College

College support to learners involved screening all learners to identify literacy and numeracy support needs. The college was able to offer contextualised help and support through a range of options, including drop-in and in-class systems. By adopting an approach that related literacies development with wider needs and barriers to learning, learners showed increased confidence, greater motivation and deeper engagement with their programmes. For staff, this approach had added to their appreciation of literacies in an employment context and raised awareness of the wider issues of literacies development.

Guidance and support (continued)

Motherwell College

An online induction package was available in a highly accessible and useful format for learners. It used straightforward language, had high levels of accessibility, and was simple to navigate through a step-by-step guide, through a browse facility, or through a resources section. Staff monitored usage trends and responded to feedback. The package widened participation in induction, provided an alternative for learners who could not attend tutor-led induction, and made the induction content available all year as a useful and readily accessed source of key information.

Anniesland College

The college had a well-established learner liaison committee, chaired by an assistant principal, which focused on non-curricular issues raised by learners. The learner liaison committee reported directly to the learning and teaching committee of the Board of Management. This was an effective arrangement in allowing learners to raise issues with staff, track the action taken and witness improvements made. Learners developed citizenship skills by their involvement in the work of the committee. Throughout the college, learners benefited from the improvements the committee made to the resources and services provided.

Ayr College

SkillZone was set up in partnership with the Learning Shop (formerly Adult Basic Education) for learners from the community and learners who were dyslexic. *SkillZone* was a fully-equipped multi-purpose suite with computers, dyslexia software and appropriate materials. Screening for dyslexia was a successful part of the service, which subsequently provided for learners to improve their literacy, numeracy and IT skills. The flexible and positive ethos of *SkillZone* provided the learners with confidence to take up and benefit from further learning opportunities, at the level appropriate to their individual interest and needs.

Anniesland College

The college had developed and used a text messaging service to improve communication with its full-time Higher learners. The college had recognised that this group was very different from the college norm in its attendance pattern, combination of level and variety of subjects. The college had set up a version of group e-mail which communicated by text directly to learners' mobile phones. This initiative had proved successful in terms of improved absence monitoring, improved learner attendance levels in general, and increased learner attendance at guidance appointments.

Guidance and support (continued)

Glasgow College of Nautical Studies

The college emphasised the importance of core skills in the development of employability and citizenship by raising the awareness of learners to their importance and providing opportunities to develop them. This approach ensured that learners made good progress and improved their levels of core skills attainment. A core skills profile for each learner was generated and each programme had been audited for its core skills content and generated a programme report. Staff were aware of the core skills levels learners required to complete their programme successfully. Learners generally made very good progress towards skills for employment and further learning.

Borders College

The college had carried out a review of reasons for learner withdrawal and had identified mental health issues as a significant factor. Further research established that many learners with mental health issues would be able to sustain their studies with additional support. The college deployed a specialist lecturer with experience of mental health nursing for part of each week to establish and deliver a support service for learners. The service operated in partnership with local support agencies and was available to all learners, through self-referral, referral from an outside agency or a member of college staff. The response from learners who had accessed the service was overwhelmingly positive. Most had been able to sustain their studies, which had improved their self-confidence, performance and progression.

Orkney College

The college had adopted a strong collegiate approach to core skills development with staff working together across the college. For example, the communication lecturer worked closely with vocational specialists to link the communication element to specific vocational tasks. College staff liaised closely with guidance and learning support teachers in local secondary schools to identify issues which might impede progress. The high level of teamwork across curriculum, core skills and support staff had resulted in core skills development and approaches which were closely aligned to learner needs and prepared learners well for further learning or employment. As a result of these measures the college had increased retention and attainment.

Orkney College

An action research project had led to the development of new guidelines on reflective practice for use by care staff. This led to the creation of learner personal learning plans in which specific developmental objectives were set for each learner, with both staff and learners contributing to the identification of learning objectives. The guidelines were developed into an online reflective diary, for use by learners. Structured reflective sessions assisted learners to develop knowledge and understanding, skills, values and creativity. Feedback from employers highlighted the increased confidence and abilities of learners.

Resources and services to support the learner

Central College of Commerce

The computerised MIS system *Enquirer* helped staff make decisions based upon relevant/current MIS data. Staff had developed these systems to overcome the difficulties encountered in acquiring and reconciling data from a range of individual computerised systems. The system allowed the college to track and manage fee recovery and to help assist learners with financial arrangements. A planned approach to intervention assisted learners with financial difficulties and helped improve retention on courses.

Dundee College

College staff identified resources necessary for the delivery of future planned provision of programmes some 15 months before the provision was due to be delivered. Through the operational planning process, curriculum managers consulted their staff and liaised with central budget holders to ensure that resources were planned and allocated at an early stage of development. This system allowed for unexpected alterations where required and helped the college to deliver well-integrated and systematic planning of resources for future provision.

John Wheatley College

An ILT champion in each curriculum team was allocated time to take forward the college's commitment to using ICT to enhance learning and teaching. The ILT champions identified and developed flexible learning resources, developed curriculum team targets to enhance learning and disseminated good practice within their curriculum team. Many learners had successfully extended their studies by using the resources, and lecturers had improved their ICT skills and considered new approaches to learning and teaching.

John Wheatley College

Personal learning plans (PLPs) helped staff work with learners to identify targets and reflect upon performance and progress. It helped transform learners into independent learners. An integration matrix charted learning activities and progress, and established remaining targets for successful learning. These approaches enabled learners to build confidence and positive attitudes to lifelong learning.

Ayr College

The college had introduced a system of workplace inspections as a means of internal audit of health and safety practice. Each section within the college had an appointed health and safety coordinator who was a member of the health and safety committee within the college. The inspections were arranged at specific times in the year in advance by the health and safety manager in liaison with the line manager of each section, to cover all college operational sections. The system raised awareness of health and safety throughout the college and reduced accidents and incidents.

Staff

Angus College

An online CPD log collated staff CPD participation. The log recorded ongoing CPD with the opportunity for staff to enter details, identify any follow-up activities resulting from the CPD and evaluate the activity. Human Resources staff could also enter the details onto central records and relate this activity to the individual staff review. These procedures helped senior staff identify and highlight gaps and opportunities for development and enabled staff to identify follow-up or future CPD needs.

Lews Castle College

The college had successfully developed a versatile suite of part-time postgraduate staff development awards, designed to enhance the professional competence of its staff. The flexible course structure allowed staff to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Professional Development or continue to gain either a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) or MA Professional Development. Staff who completed the awards reported on the positive impact the programme had made to their own personal development and the teaching and support for learning that they provide.

Moray College

The college had developed a systematic and effective approach to ensure equitable workloads among staff across the college. The college had devised a workload analysis tool based for the purpose and included agreed tariffs for the various categories of task and for different staff posts. Heads of division used the analyses to produce reports for SMT on the deployment of staff and efficiency levels. The approach helped managers to deploy staff efficiently and address concerns from teachers' representatives that staff were not treated consistently and equitably across the college. The approach provided for the allocation of designated time for staff to improve the quality of experience for learners.

Quality improvement

Angus College

Team evaluation and operational plans (TEOPs) incorporated team self-evaluations, programme reviews and action planning into a single package and linked them to college objectives. Each academic and support team developed a TEOP for its own functional area which included review and reflection, and evaluation and planning. This process identified links across college activities and helped staff reflect upon performance and plan improvements. The TEOPs became key working documents which underpinned the activities of all college teams.

Borders College

The college established staff teams to review existing quality procedures and documentation and identify improvements required. Evaluation documentation was adapted to incorporate the college's strategic aims within the SFC/HMIE quality framework and created a user-friendly database to enable staff to input information online. Staff regularly updated their achievement of targets online and college managers made good use of this real-time information to collate reports for college and course team meetings and as a basis for individual staff reviews. Staff successfully linked evaluation with the planning process and made good use of the wide range of information to monitor, cross-reference and identify college-wide progress in making improvements.

10. Glossary

CBLZ	Central Business Learning Zone
CD-ROM	Compact Disk Read Only Memory
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HN	Higher National
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NQ	National Qualification
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
SFC	Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council
SFEFC	Scottish Further Education Funding Council
SIP	Social Inclusion Partnership
SLIP	Sector-leading and Innovative Practice
SUM	Student Unit of Measurement
TEOP	Team Evaluation and Operational Plan
TFU	The Textile Facilitation Unit