

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Broomfield College**

**March 1996**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

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

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

### **College grade profiles 1993-95**

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

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 16/96

**BROOMFIELD COLLEGE  
EAST MIDLANDS REGION**

**Inspected September-November 1995**

## Summary

Broomfield College in Derbyshire specialises in vocational education and training for the land-based industries. The college has close links with the local rural community that it serves. Major strengths are the widening range of provision and the increasing availability of flexible modes of attendance. The estate reflects the range of farming patterns and diverse land use in the county. These are used effectively as an educational resource by teaching staff who have extensive industrial and commercial experience. There are well-established and evolving quality assurance practices and procedures. The college has implemented a 10-year plan for buildings maintenance. The quality of some teaching is good but there is significant variation between classroom sessions. Tutorial and learning support need further resources and development to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student population. Equipment and general learning resources also require investment and a plan for replacement. The college should implement its plan to convert residential to teaching accommodation as soon as possible if it is to deal with the curriculum changes and the higher student recruitment targets it has set itself. Long-term planning and the provision of management information both require improvement.

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

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Agriculture including mechanisation, countryside and horse studies	3	Horticulture and floristry	3
		Animal care	2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Broomfield College was inspected during the period September to November 1995. Eight inspectors spent a total of 36 days in the college. They visited 52 classes and examined samples of students' work and college documents. They held discussions with governors, students, college managers, teaching and support staff, local employers, parents, and representatives of higher education and the Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Broomfield College, situated on the outskirts of Derby, is the only land-based college in Derbyshire. The college was established in 1947 to serve the education and training needs of the local farming industry. Students come mainly from an area within a 40-mile radius of the college. The college also recruits nationally and internationally.

3 Although the main provision is at Broomfield, the college has centres in the north-east and north-west of the county. The estate includes a 400 hectare upland farm, North Lees, at Hathersage some 40 miles north of the college. Broomfield Hall and the main buildings of the college campus are surrounded by 10 hectares of gardens and grounds landscaped by William Barron in 1870. These contain the original specimen trees and Victorian fish ponds. Broomfield Hall is surrounded by three college farms which, although bisected by the A608, are all in one block. The farms are Broomfield Farm, Lime Farm and Newtop Farm covering an area of 202 hectares of which 179 hectares are farmed. A large proportion of the remaining 23 hectares is actively-managed small woodland and conservation areas. A block of 71 hectares, comprising all of Newtop Farm and a part of Broomfield Farm, is farmed organically and has the Soil Association's Symbol of approval.

4 Teaching and learning areas for practical work include the commercial farm units, engineering and construction workshops, glasshouse and nursery, floristry workshops, golf and sports areas and the small animal units. Other facilities include lecture rooms, computer suites, library and supervised study areas. Residential accommodation is currently available for 100 students on the campus. For the 1994-95 year, the college had 2,033 enrolments. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum areas are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

5 There are over 60 schools in the area surrounding the college. The nearest land-based colleges are Brackenhurst in Nottinghamshire and Brooksby in Leicestershire. Within a seven-mile radius of Broomfield there are three large tertiary colleges and the University of Derby. The college is an associate college of the University of Derby.

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6 The aim of the college is to increase access to education and training across the land and environmental sector and offer young people and adults wider vocational opportunities. The college's objectives are to develop and promote programmes focusing on the countryside as a whole but with improved environmental management as a key feature. To this end the college is seeking to establish itself as a centre of excellence in the region for integrated land management.

#### **RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION**

7 The college has extended the range of its provision in recent years. Although the college's main vocational areas still include agriculture, horticulture, floristry and animal care, the major growth areas have been in countryside care and integrated land management. The college holds a centre of excellence award for floristry training. The college has become involved in a variety of environmental and training initiatives as a result of its interest in wider aspects of the countryside. Education and training provision has become more flexible as a greater variety of attendance patterns have become available. These changes have been accompanied by increases since 1992-93 in the number of full-time and part-time students of 61 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively.

8 The reduction in discretionary awards is significantly affecting the ability of students to study at the college and, in particular, to take up residential places. The college has responded flexibly and imaginatively to mitigate the worst effects of this, notably by introducing modular courses. In 1995-96 such provision brought the recruitment of some 100 part-time students, equivalent to 30 full-time equivalents. Residential accommodation has been altered to make its use cheaper and more flexible for students. The college has worked with the county transport provision to ensure that there is a network of transport services available throughout the county. A negative consequence of this has been excessively long days for students who live at considerable distances from the college. The out-centres provide easier access for students from remote areas but low recruitment makes their continued viability questionable.

9 The Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma in land-based industry course now has eight options covering agriculture, countryside care, horticulture, floristry, environmental conservation, animal care, horse studies and mechanisation. There are opportunities to transfer between these options for students who are uncertain of the career they wish to follow. There are BTEC national diploma courses in agriculture, countryside care, horticulture, floristry, environmental conservation and animal care, and City and Guilds of London Institute (C & G) national certificates in agriculture, horticulture, countryside related studies and floristry. A range of day and evening provision is offered within horticulture and small animal care that includes the Royal Horticulture Society general certificate modules and pet care courses.

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10 All the full-time vocational courses are offered in modular form. This has encouraged mature students, those in employment and the unemployed to undertake courses part time. Modules are designed to enable groups of students from different courses to be taught together wherever feasible. Some of the national diploma in horticulture modules are courses in their own right and have recruited strongly. The growth in recruitment has been achieved despite the relatively low numbers of full-time students on some national diploma courses. Numbers are especially low on some of the specialist options. The college has offered a range of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) up to level 3. These are available part time and on block release. The Council for Occupational Standards and Qualifications in Environmental Conservation at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4 have been offered since 1994.

11 There is an emphasis in agriculture on environmentally sensitive farming methods. The farm has successfully undertaken a Linking Environment and Farming environmental audit. A portfolio of courses with an environmental bias includes higher national diplomas in integrated land management and organic farming. An environmental management centre is planned to enhance the college's ability to provide professional updating and advanced courses for students from the industry. These plans are supported by industry and by the University of Derby.

12 There are recognised progression routes from C&G national certificate to BTEC national diploma courses. An increasing number of students are taking advantage of this route. Progression routes from higher national diploma courses at Broomfield College to bridging courses at Sheffield Hallam and Derby Universities have been negotiated. These enable students to convert their diploma qualifications to a degree.

13 The college uses a variety of methods to publicise its work. These include advertisements, attendance at all school careers conventions and at a variety of appropriate countryside events. Three open evenings are held during the year and there is a popular annual open day in June. There is a small link course programme and some visits to the college are organised for children from local schools. There are strong links between the horticulture department and local schools for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

14 Agriculture, horticulture and floristry students benefit from study tours and exchanges which are organised annually in different European countries. Countries visited include the Czech Republic, Holland, France and Germany. Curriculum links are confined to higher national diploma courses. The higher national diploma organic farming programme includes an option for a period of study of farming methods in another European country.

15 The need to provide work placements and arrange industrial visits for all full-time students bring teaching staff in direct contact with industry. The information gathered has been used to make changes to the range of



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courses on offer. The college has industrial consultative panels but attendance at these fluctuates considerably.

16 The college has not expanded the provision of full-cost courses or consultancy work because it has no historical experience in these areas. The college is a registered Agricultural Training Board training provider. However, no Agricultural Training Board courses are offered and there is little interest in the provision of these. Although the college's self-assessment report identifies this as a weakness, no plan has been developed to address this.

17 Three regional training and enterprise councils (TECs) work with the college. The majority of the work is in conjunction with the Southern Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise although some assessor training is carried out for the North Derbyshire TEC.

18 The college is involved in a range of activities that provide links with local communities. Residential conference and catering facilities are offered by the college which hosts events for a wide range of organisations and private individuals. There is a Broomfield horticultural society which meets monthly. The animal care students participate in the Derby National Pet Week. Students and staff designed and built a Georgian garden at the Pickford House Museum in Derby. Floristry students provide floral displays for local events. The public footpaths across the estate form part of the Seven Counties Walk and funds from industry have helped to fund a circular walk through the estate. There are close and productive contacts between estates staff and the county council, the National Trust, Derbyshire Naturalists Trust and Wildlife Trust, and some of the great estates in the county such as Chatsworth House and Kedleston Hall.

19 Information on the age, gender and ethnic origin of students who enrol is recorded primarily to satisfy the needs of funding bodies and is not used to set targets for increasing, for example, the number of students from minority ethnic communities. Despite gender targets being set there are large imbalances in the numbers of male and female students on courses in animal care, floristry and agriculture. There are no marketing initiatives to address these issues and the promotional material reinforces this stereotyping. Although there are large minority ethnic communities in Derby there are few students from these communities at the college. Careers events at an Asian community centre have been abandoned because they proved ineffective at increasing participation. A review of college policies and literature is planned this year to ensure equal opportunities issues are properly covered.

## **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

20 At the time of the inspection there were 18 governors appointed and two vacancies. A search committee was formed in 1995 to deal with proposals for new membership of the governing body. One business member vacancy has existed since incorporation. The governing body

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has industrial, financial and legal expertise and maintains links with other educational and community interests. The experience of business members reflects the college's general curriculum profile. All members are committed to the college and most are members of a subgroup of the governing body. The governing body has yet to set targets for monitoring its own performance or to identify key indicators for use in monitoring the performance of the college. A code of conduct incorporating a register of interests has been drafted and is scheduled for approval at the next meeting of the governing body.

21 Governing body meetings take place in a businesslike manner. They are helped in this by the subgroups which carry out their delegated responsibilities, report progress and make recommendations to the board. There are six subgroups concerned with; finance, personnel, audit, premises, remuneration, and appointments of senior staff. There are clear terms of reference for these groups and governors appointed to them have the expertise to make a positive contribution. In the case of the audit subgroup, the experience of members is strengthened by a co-opted member with substantial financial expertise. Some governors are members of one or more of the consultative committees on farming, horticulture and countryside. Governing body minutes are an effective record of meetings but lack sufficient detail for interested staff to follow the decisions that have been taken. Governor training is well attended and all new governors now have a comprehensive induction.

22 The strategic plan is approved by the governors. Currently there is little interaction between governors and senior managers in strategic planning. The strategic planning process involves consultation with college teams and staff. The 1994-97 plan incorporates the college mission, principal objectives and targets and an operating statement. The statement sets out responsibilities for initiating and approving the work to be carried out and the resource implications. However, the resource implications lack associated estimates of costs. Some target dates have not been achieved and deadlines are not always set clearly. The plan identifies increasing enrolment targets linked to curriculum developments. The original growth targets in the strategic plan were very ambitious and have been revised downwards. The overall targets for 1994-95 were not met for full-time students but were exceeded for part-time students. The detailed curriculum strategic plans lack associated costings. The college calculates average costs but not individual unit costs. This limits its ability to review the viability of its provision on an individual course and module basis.

23 The mission of the college includes a commitment to improving the quality of resources to create learning opportunities. The strategic objectives include a commitment to the stewardship of resources. The farm is treated as a separate enterprise and commercially realistic targets are set for its operation. However, the development of the educational

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activity of the farm, which can have significant cost implications, does not figure in the strategic plan. There is no longer-term strategic planning for equipment or a costed rolling replacement programme. Large items of equipment are replaced piecemeal. Criteria for identifying priorities and for the allocation of resources are not always clear. Aspects of the accommodation strategy are being redrafted to take account of curriculum changes. A number, but not all, of the strategic planning issues have been identified in the self-assessment report for priority action in 1995-96.

24 The college has a comprehensive quality policy manual that lists college policy objectives, those who are responsible for policy implementation and monitoring, and where any associated procedures and publications are held. The equal opportunities policy is incorporated into this manual. A human resources manual provides similar information. Health and safety are heavily emphasised; procedures and practices are reviewed regularly and advice taken from the Health and Safety Executive as necessary. The college has an environmental policy statement that was drawn up in 1992. A 'greening the college' team with a voluntary membership which includes the resource managers has been operating since 1991. This team is heavily involved in waste management and recycling materials. Considerable work has already taken place in developing an environmental policy manual. Regular environmental audits are carried out to monitor targets set for the farm.

25 The senior management team comprises the principal, director of curriculum, director of resources, director of quality and chief administrative officer. Weekly meetings of this group are chaired by the principal. The minutes are made available to staff. The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team are clearly set out in their job descriptions. Informal management links are strong and there is good interaction between middle managers across the college. However, delegation of authority and accountability is inconsistent and not always fully understood.

26 Each of the directors is also a sector manager with responsibility for curriculum teams in agriculture and countryside, horticulture and floristry, and business development. Programme co-ordinators are responsible to their respective sector managers for a number of courses that are managed by course leaders. All teams have regular meetings and there are minutes that clearly identify actions and responsibilities.

27 The college average level of funding for 1995-96 is £26.85 per unit. The median for colleges of agriculture and horticulture is £23.15. Detailed budgets are prepared and monthly management accounts are produced. The college is currently able to balance its budget but needs to review its longer-term forecasting. Resources for equipment and consumable items are tightly controlled. The resource managers have responsibility for producing the bids for specific curriculum or other areas of the college such as the farms, but their bids are not always based on a thorough

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consideration of priorities. The total annual bid is significantly above the funds available. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

28 The college has recognised the need to update its computerised information systems. The development of an information systems strategy is in the operating plan. A first draft has been partially completed but it lacks an audit of information needs. The target date set for the completion of the information systems strategy has not been met. At present, a number of separate manual and computer systems are in place to meet internal management information needs and external demands for information. Data have to be entered more than once in order to utilise the different systems and to provide the required information. The financial systems are used effectively and reports are generated in formats that are increasingly helpful for those taking management decisions.

### **STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

29 Course information leaflets give clear, relevant details about each course but lack information on fees charged. The administrative procedures associated with applications and admissions are handled centrally by support staff. Appropriate quality standards for response times are set, monitored and achieved. Interviews are effectively handled by teaching staff. All prospective full-time and the majority of prospective part-time students are interviewed. Parents of younger students are invited to attend part of the initial interview procedure and many take up this offer. A helpful prompt sheet is used by interviewers. This could usefully incorporate reference to course costs. Where appropriate, course entry criteria are specified and these are adhered to in the majority of cases.

30 New students are provided with detailed written information contained in attractively designed handbooks. Course handbooks cover content, reading lists, teaching and learning methodologies, assessment procedures and schedules. All courses have induction programmes with those for full-time courses lasting at least a week. These are generally effective but would be further improved if there were more opportunities for students to be active participants rather than passive recipients of information. The college is developing procedures to accredit students' prior learning. A very small number of students have received accreditation so far, notably in horticulture.

31 The college has introduced screening for literacy and numeracy competence across all full-time courses. This has been accompanied by the establishment of a full-time learning support co-ordinator. The screening process is identifying substantial numbers of students who may need additional support in literacy and numeracy. The learning support co-ordinator joins certain timetabled classes where there is a substantial number of students needing help. Other students join sessions in the learning support centre or are given individual help. There are

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considerable delays before some students are referred for further diagnostic testing and support. The demand for help is also exceeding the supply of support specialists. A programme of staff development is currently under way to increase the number of staff who are able to help in this area of work.

32 Support for students across the college is inconsistent. All full-time and part-time students at the college are given a personal tutor. All full-time students are allocated half an hour tutorial time each week. In practice, provision varies with some students receiving no tutorial time while others receive significantly more than the allocated time. Some students can go for long periods without tutorial support. Some tutorials are well planned with a mix of individual sessions to support students' progress and whole-group activities. Others lack structure and provide little of value to the students. During the course of the inspection the college published a tutorial policy. This will provide a basis on which the best practice in the college can be applied more consistently. There is currently no programme of staff training to support the policy. The college is in the process of establishing part-time provision for counselling. There is a tradition of supporting students who are deaf or hearing impaired. This is provided with the assistance of Derbyshire County Council's support service for hearing impaired students. There are no childcare facilities.

33 An annual consultation day attracts the relatives of two-thirds of students to discuss progress. There is, however, no general system across the college of providing written reports to students. Attendance is closely monitored and levels of absenteeism are low. There is no college policy for records of achievement or effective practice in their use. The lack of an effective computerised system limits the tracking of progress of individual students studying for NVQs.

34 One day each week is designated as a students' personal study day. The effectiveness with which students use these days varies considerably. Students need more help in developing the necessary study skills. Additional appropriate self-study materials are required. More rapid progress is needed if the self-study arrangement is to be effective in making up for the cut in taught hours. Students' use of personal study days needs to be carefully monitored.

35 The college has 100 residential places but one hostel is being converted to other uses because of lack of demand. Accommodation is at least of adequate quality and in many cases of a good standard. The wardens provide a good standard of care. A student services building has been refurbished to provide social and catering facilities for students. The main cafeteria has been developed to provide a more flexible and attractive service. Leisure and sporting facilities are limited but are augmented by the college's practice of providing a bus service out of the college one evening a week and access to the University of Derby's leisure facilities. The library has no general or fiction section for residential students to use.

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A service is provided by the county library mobile service which visits the college during a lunch hour every fortnight.

36 There are good links with the Derbyshire Careers Services. The college is committed by the agreement with the careers service to produce a careers education and guidance policy. This needs to be linked to a staff-development programme to build on the staff's existing good practice in careers guidance and their links with industry.

### **TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING**

37 Fifty-two teaching sessions were inspected. Of these 58 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. Fifteen per cent had more weaknesses than strengths. The average level of attendance for the classes inspected was high at over 90 per cent. The grades awarded to the teaching and learning sessions inspected are given below.

#### **Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study**

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
NVQ		2	2	4	0	0	8
Other vocational		5	16	10	3	0	34
Other		3	2	0	5	0	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>

38 Schemes of work and lesson planning are variable across the college. There are no college guidelines to improve consistency. The appropriate use of information technology is not identified in schemes of work as an integrated element of the curriculum. In agriculture there is too much reliance on informal liaison between staff rather than detailed schemes of work to achieve curriculum coherence. In some classes there is a lack of clarity about objectives and sessions lack structure. Schemes of work for horticulture courses are often little more than syllabus headings.

39 On agriculture and countryside courses teachers use realistic examples to illustrate the work. A variety of teaching and learning methods is used. Some effective use is made of questions to students to involve them in the work. The introduction to activities in many classes does not clearly identify the way in which students are expected to proceed and time is wasted while they wait for assistance. In a significant minority of practical sessions there is over-reliance on verbal briefings. Teachers are not clear about their expectations for students' note taking. There is considerable use of whole group teaching but too little account is taken of meeting individual needs where the range of students' experience and ability is wide. Effective use is made of assignments to provide students with opportunities to develop their knowledge. In the best managed assignments students are encouraged and guided to apply their knowledge. This aspect is underdeveloped in many diploma level assignments. Most of the assignments provide a realistic context for the work and contain

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appropriate objectives although some lack a clear description of the work to be completed. The range of assessments is well matched to course aims. In some instances the written comments provided by teachers on students' work are insufficiently detailed to enable them to improve.

40 Lessons in small animal care are focused, well planned and clearly linked to the syllabus. There are some good examples of teachers integrating their own work experience and using relevant articles from journals and press cuttings to stimulate class discussions. In some sessions the teaching is not flexible enough to meet individual learning requirements. Site visits are integrated into courses and are well planned. There is a regular programme of assessment using a variety of strategies.

41 The better horticulture sessions are stimulating and provide opportunities for students to participate. Teachers regularly check that learning is taking place. In contrast, some sessions have no clear learning objective. In others, the pace of work is too slow to maintain the interest of students, and learning is not checked by staff. Students are not involved in question and answer work. There are missed opportunities to use teaching aids to vary the pace and add interest. Assignments are well constructed and challenge students to think about what they are doing. However, the assessment of these assignments lacks sufficient emphasis on students producing evaluative comment. Learning tasks are differentiated to accommodate the range of experience of students who have undertaken previous study of different national diploma modules. The knowledge and experience of part-time mature students is not always used productively by teaching staff. Floristry lessons include aspects of business management and office administration which help to prepare students for the world of work. Many lessons use group work but there is growing use of individual student learning. In some group sessions, students spend too much time copying material from the overhead projector. The floristry shop is used to complement course work.

42 The college farms and estate, including the woodlands and conservation area, are used for practical sessions, assignments and work experience. A notable feature of most classes is the frequent and effective reference to the commercial and practical relevance of the work and particularly to the college farms and estate. There are reasonably effective arrangements for making data about the farms and estates available to students. Local farms are also used to supplement the college's provision. Countryside students visit other areas to experience habitats not available on the college farms and estate. A significant element on all full-time courses is practical work experience. This ranges from short periods of planned placement for animal care students to regular work on the college farms and estate and a year of work for others. Work experience is well organised by the college and valued by both students and prospective employers. Students are required to complete a work diary during their placements. These often lack critical evaluation and commonly contain anecdotal information of no technical significance. The benefits of a work diary for learning are not properly addressed.

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43 There is an appropriate emphasis on all courses on safe working practices. In practical sessions, students are given clear instruction in techniques, with health and safety considerations effectively emphasised. Students are closely supervised when carrying out their practical work.

44 The development of core skills in communication, numeracy and information technology across courses varies. In BTEC courses there is appropriate planning for the development of core skills but in some other courses development opportunities are not specifically identified. Opportunities for students to gain information technology skills are restricted for some students in all curriculum areas. In some agriculture and countryside courses information technology skills are developed too late for students to realise the potential benefits which they offer to their studies. More use could be made of worksheets and other documentary material in teaching in order to encourage students to work independently and prepare them for effective use of personal study days. The quality of presentation of some of the learning resource materials needs improvement. Group work is satisfactorily addressed in all courses, but analytical skills development requires greater emphasis in a number of curriculum areas. In some group work there is a tendency to allow the more experienced students to take charge to the detriment of those who have less experience and confidence.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

45 Most students are well motivated and display appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. The students on agricultural and countryside courses are appreciative of staff expertise and experience in developing their practical skills to an appropriate standard. Students on the small animal care courses clearly demonstrate their ability to apply their skills and knowledge across different species and care situations. Horticulture course students are keen to apply their knowledge to the tasks set.

46 The standards achieved in assignments are generally consistent with the level of the courses. There are instances where the standards expected are not clear and this limits students' achievements. While most students produce assignments which are well researched, there is a need in some to improve the introduction, draw more meaningful conclusions and list the references used. Agricultural students often made considerable efforts to present their work at a high standard and some made effective use of photographs, charts and diagrams. In horticulture assignments, students do not always provide sufficient analytical and evaluative comment. All students are careful in carrying out practical work and pay due regard to health and safety in all courses.

47 Overall completion rates for full-time students for 1993-94 were 89 per cent and for 1994-95, 87 per cent. Over the last three years to 1993-94 the national certificate in agriculture pass rate has averaged



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97 per cent and the first diploma averaged 93 per cent with corresponding retention rates of 89 per cent and 88 per cent. The 1994-95 pass rates were 91 and 92 per cent. Most agriculture related NVQs have achieved completion rates within the normal accepted completion time of better than 75 per cent, with many over 85 per cent. Achievement in the small animal care courses is generally good. The national diploma in animal care achieved 100 per cent passes with its first cohort of students although the retention rate was only 75 per cent. The part-time kennel craft course consistently achieves 100 per cent passes with very high retention rates. The veterinary nurses course is less successful with only a 60 per cent pass rate in 1994-95. Results are more variable in horticulture. In 1993-94, the horticulture NVQ level 1, in horticulture phase 3, flower arranging parts 1 and 2 achieved 100 per cent pass rates but there were low pass and completion rates in some of the part-time courses. In NVQ level 2 in floristry the pass rate was 54 per cent, in horticulture phase 2 it was 52 per cent and in green keeping it was 38 per cent. There was only a 50 per cent retention rate on the national diploma in floristry.

48 The destinations of 90 per cent of full-time students are known. A high percentage are entering employment or continuing their studies but few students go on to higher education. Known destinations of students who completed their studies in 1994 are shown below.

<b>Destinations</b>	<b>Percentage of full-time students</b>	<b>Percentage of part-time students</b>
Higher education	5	1
Further education	33	16
Employment	52	68
Other	10	15

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

49 A student charter is issued to all students at the college. This clearly outlines the college commitment to students, describes the complaints procedure and indicates where further information can be obtained. The charter has been presented to the governing body. The college has not considered a broader charter for other groups of people such as the community, industry and the public.

50 A self-assessment report was prepared by the college in July 1995. An early draft was submitted to a working group which included students, staff and governors. The format follows the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. Each section outlines priorities for action in 1995-96. The action points for the coming year will be used as a basis for future strategic planning and self-assessment. The issues identified in the report are similar to those highlighted by inspectors but there are key weaknesses which are not identified or not given sufficient emphasis.

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51 There is a strong commitment to quality assurance. In November 1993, Broomfield College was the first land-based college to gain the Investor in People standard. There are well-documented policies and procedures in most areas of the college's work. There has been a continuous development of practices since the introduction of the quality policy in 1993. The latest addition to procedures is the draft quality policy manual that forms a document control system for all quality records. The director of quality is responsible for establishing and maintaining the system and there is a college quality group. The academic board has a role in quality assurance. It receives papers summarising course team action plans, the staff-development evaluation report and reviews the internal validation of new courses.

52 Course review and evaluation are well established and there are clear guidelines on procedures. An annual review meeting is held each July with a student and employer representative present. The impact of employer representation has been limited in many areas because of poor attendance. Each course team is required to produce an annual action plan with targets based upon their course review. Action plans vary in quality. Some have clear, quantifiable targets and indicate responsibility and timescales while others are very general. Course teams meet twice a term and a standing agenda item is the review of its action plan. A summary of team reviews is prepared by the director of curriculum for senior managers and the academic board, and through the academic board to governors.

53 The issues to be reviewed by the college quality group range across all aspects of college operations and facilities. Recently the team reviewed the induction system for new staff and last year reviewed the format of teaching plans issued to students. There is currently no review of teaching and learning in the classroom. This group have discussed monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this has become a priority since the specialist curriculum inspections. There has not been a quality review of the tutorial system.

54 Administrative staff also meet formally as a team to review work and develop targets and measure performance against them. Other teams of support staff meet more informally. For example, premises and catering teams feed back quality issues through their line manager who is a member of the quality group.

55 The views of students are gathered informally but effectively through tutors and fed into team meetings. Students' views are also gathered more formally from student course representatives, a series of student questionnaires, the official complaints procedure and representation on the academic board and the governing body. Student representatives attend course review meetings at the end of a course. However, they are given little advice on procedures and they consequently feel inhibited in course team and board meetings. A high proportion of the issues raised

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by students are dealt with satisfactorily and there is prompt feedback on the outcomes. A summary of the results of student questionnaires is prepared by the director of curriculum and is used during the annual reviews. There is no formal questionnaire to elicit employers' views. However, these views are gathered through consultative committees, representation on course reviews and employers' reports on work experience.

56 In addition to the targets set during the annual review, teams are encouraged to use the performance indicators described in the Council Circular 94/31, *Measuring Achievement*. However, teams are at different stages of development in the use of performance indicators. The reliability of statistical information to support quantitative indicators is variable. There is difficulty in collating accurate information because of the lack of consistent collection procedures.

57 Appropriate arrangements are being introduced for internal verification. Policy and procedures for internal verification across the college were written in May 1995. The paperwork for the system was piloted during the summer term 1995 and is being extended to all courses.

58 Policy and procedures for staff development are well established and understood by staff. Priorities are set and the staff-development programme is closely matched to the strategic needs of the college and individual action plans. All staff-development activities are evaluated. The staff-training and development committee, which is a subcommittee of the academic board, identifies staff-development needs, prepares a plan and monitors its implementation. Membership of this committee is drawn from across the college. The day-to-day management and evaluation of staff development is the responsibility of the director of quality. In the 1994-95 academic year, 77 per cent of staff participated in training, including all full-time teaching staff. The expenditure in 1994-95 was 1 per cent of staffing costs. An induction programme is in place for all new members of staff and governors. This is based upon a standard check list and uses a mentor system. A management charter initiative/NVQ level 5 management programme for middle managers has been instituted as a result of appraisal and individual action plans. The development of information technology skills and assessor and verifier awards have been identified as a priority.

59 All staff are involved in an annual appraisal development review meeting with their line manager or other appropriate reviewer. This process contributes towards the identification of staff-development needs and performance review. The scheme does not currently include the observation of teaching and learning. Further appraisal training is planned to ensure that all staff fully understand the current system and feel confident in its use. The scheme examines how effectively an individual is contributing towards a team's targets as identified in the annual review. The detailed analysis of broad staff-development needs is almost complete

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but since not all reviews were completed in time for the November academic board meeting the information has not been available for planning at the beginning of the academic year.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

60 The college employs 100 full-time equivalent staff. There are 38 full-time teaching staff and 12 part-time staff. Fifteen staff are employed in the farms and gardens. More than 80 per cent of the teaching staff have relevant industrial experience. Many staff have current links with industry and continue updating their experience. Others take specific staff-development opportunities to extend their practical experience and part-time expertise is brought in where necessary. Only about 15 per cent of the teaching staff have any significant experience of consultancy work. Over 80 per cent maintain membership of relevant professional bodies.

61 About half of the teaching staff have degrees or equivalent qualifications. A few do not possess qualifications above intermediate level. There are sufficient teachers with relevant expertise to teach the courses on offer. The college does not keep up-to-date information on the qualifications and experience of non-teaching support staff. The college does not set targets for increasing the skill levels of its employees in line with the national targets for education and training. Amongst the support staff there are five technician instructors, one instructor and six technicians, all of whom provide valuable additional support. Farm staff hold, or are working towards, Training and Development Lead Body qualifications. They make a useful contribution when supervising the students' farm duties. Almost half the teachers and instructors hold Training and Development Lead Body qualifications. Sixty per cent of teaching staff have teaching qualifications at diploma or equivalent level. In-service training to address teaching techniques would be advantageous for some staff.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

62 There are sufficient machines and equipment to meet the basic requirements of the agriculture courses, although seasonal demands can lead to temporary shortages. Students do not have access to the latest technology in the agricultural and horticultural industries. However, the staff are innovative in addressing these deficiencies by borrowing equipment and by taking advantage of commercial demonstrations to update their knowledge of modern equipment. Science equipment needs improvement. Specialist equipment for veterinary nurses training is limited. Improvement of laboratory equipment has been identified as a priority by the college and resources have been allocated to it.

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63 The college has a good plant collection which is well documented, labelled and maintained. The grounds contain a variety of well-maintained plants, including one of the national rose collections. The landscaped gardens and grounds are being restored by the staff and students to the original design. Stocks of flowers used in floristry are of high quality and provided in sufficient quantity. A range of animals is available within the college for small animal care students to observe and handle. Limited numbers of animals mean that it is difficult for students to obtain sufficient handling experience without causing undue stress to the animals. The college has an arrangement with a herdsman to allow students to work with his goats as an additional learning resource.

64 The library provides a good service for the students. The library budget is low at £5,800 for 1995-96. This limited sum has been used effectively. For most subjects there is a good range and quantity of books, journals, commercial extracts and professional publications. Some agriculture books are, however, dated. The range and quantity of countryside books has been significantly extended recently to meet curriculum demands. There are some appropriate videos in the library to support animal care courses. The library subscribes to an updating service which details new publications or relevant articles. There are insufficient private study spaces.

65 There are two rooms equipped with 10 free standing and 12 networked personal computers, respectively. One room is open to the students at any time; the second room can be used by individual students when it is not timetabled. The library and computer rooms are in the same building and have the same opening hours which extend into the evening. The college has developed its information technology equipment from what was a very low base four years ago. Nevertheless, considerable progress needs to be made if the college's declared objective of equipping students for industry is to be met. One indicator of the shortfall in resources is the ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers which is currently about 20:1. In order to improve the quantity of hardware on a very limited budget the college is upgrading hardware as circumstances permit. There has been little impact of microprocessor technology on other areas of the curriculum such as computerised environmental control and monitoring systems.

### **Accommodation**

66 The key proposals in the accommodation strategy are to maintain the quality of all accommodation by careful and timely maintenance, to make some areas more fit for purpose, to meet the growth in the demand for teaching and learning space, and to provide a number of new buildings. The growth predicted for 1996 will be difficult to accommodate adequately without additional provision. It is also part of the strategy to encourage more student-centred work. A feasibility study for the conversion of some of the residential accommodation on the main campus to a learning centre

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has been completed. This development is crucial if the college is to meet the demands made on its accommodation by its current number of students and future growth.

67 There are adequate workshop spaces normally but seasonal demands cause peak loading at some times. Noise interference can be a problem when several groups are using the area together. More space could be made available if storage requirements were reviewed. A conversion to create an estates workshop is currently taking place. Laboratory space is limited. Improvements await the outcome of proposals to adapt the underused residential accommodation. There are no equine facilities at the college for the first diploma course. A sensible arrangement has been made with a commercial riding centre which allows the students to be taught the practical aspects of the programme and gain work experience in the commercial environment.

68 There is a discrete animal care unit containing classrooms and a range of animal houses. It is some distance from the main college and resource centre and wheelchair access is limited. Improvements are being made to paths to improve access. The animal care accommodation is rapidly being outgrown. Apart from the large animal house there is little space for group practical activities. Within the classroom block there is a central practical area with a deep large sink for dog bathing and a second smaller sink. There is a ramp into this building. The cattery is a collaborative project with the Cat Protection League. It is used to house cats while they recover and prior to homes being found for them.

69 Suitable accommodation for horticulture courses is provided in temporary classrooms. The floristry shop, adjacent to one of the classrooms, greatly extends the work experience gained during the course. Rooms are kept clean and tidy. There are some floral displays of students' work which provide a context for lessons or inspiration for students.

70 The college operates two out-centres. One is at Buxton where there is a classroom, workshop and a nearby allotment for horticultural work. Local farms provide farm work experience. The other is at Holmewood, near Chesterfield, where there is a classroom and a workshop. The viability of these out-centres is under review. Although facilities are adequate for their major purpose in providing NVQ training in agriculture, the overheads are high for the number of students attending.

71 The whole estate reflects the range of farming patterns and the diverse land use in the county. The college is actively involved in almost all of the available countryside management schemes. The estate has joined the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and has met its targets for hedgerow planting and maintenance. This provides an excellent resource for students to obtain these skills and experience. North Lees Farm is an important facility for the college providing, as it does, an environment which is different from most farms in the county. Within the farm is a site of special scientific interest as well as a designated environmentally

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sensitive area. These special areas impose restrictions on farming activities but complement the environmental philosophy of the college. However, the potential of the upland farm is not fully exploited and the lack of accommodation at the farm further limits its use. Throughout the estate recreational and environmental aspects are obvious areas for further development and the college is aware of this.

72 The estates liaison group, which has representatives of all of the resources centres which have demands on the estate, advises the consultative committees of the corporation. This helps to resolve competing demands for use of the estate. Space utilisation is carefully monitored in November and January each year and in November 1995 was 58.7 per cent. The college has implemented a 10-year planned maintenance programme from 1994-95 supported by a reasonable financial allocation and the savings from energy conservation measures.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

73 The strengths of the college are:

- close links with local land-based industry
- diversification of courses and modular provision
- effective use of the estate as a teaching resource
- strong industrial and commercial experience amongst teaching staff
- the long-term planning for buildings maintenance
- well-established procedures for quality assurance.

74 The college should address the following issues:

- the effectiveness of its longer-term planning
- the provision of management information
- inconsistency in the programme of student support
- inconsistency in the quality of teaching
- the need to implement the plan to convert residential to teaching accommodation as soon as possible
- improvements in equipment and learning resources.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

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  - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)

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  - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)

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  - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

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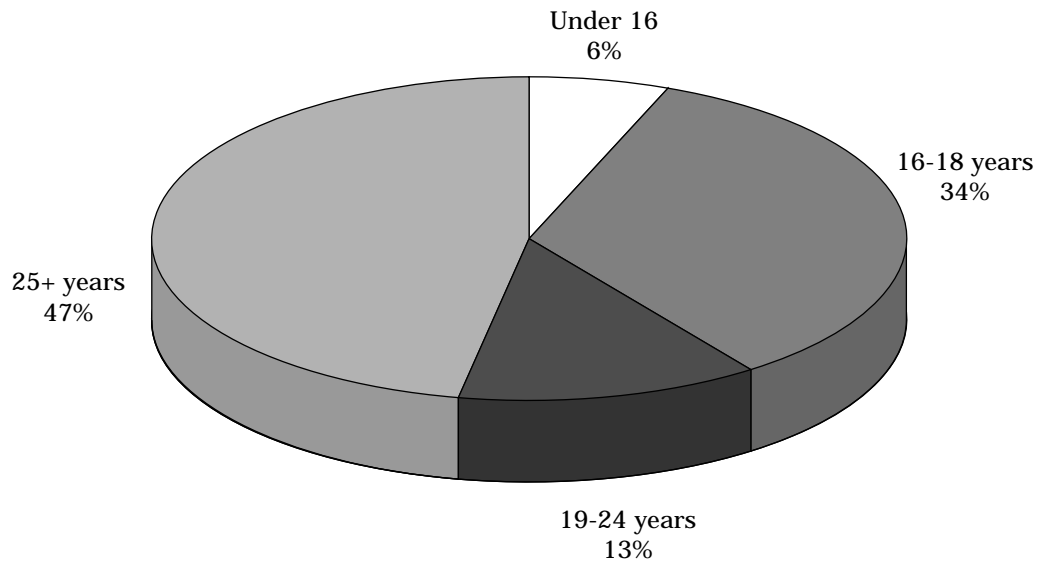


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**Figure 1**

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**Broomfield College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)**



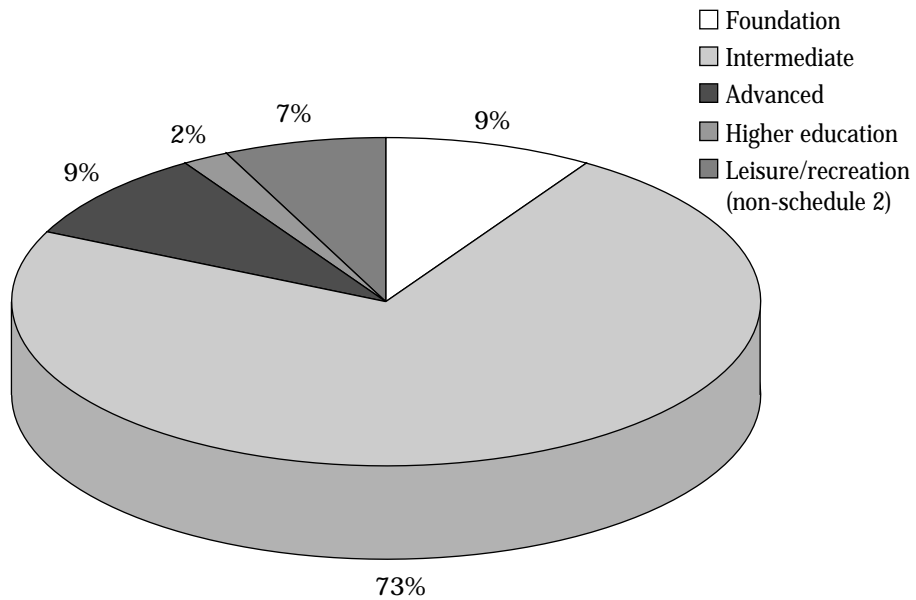
Enrolments: 2,033

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**Figure 2**

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**Broomfield College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)**



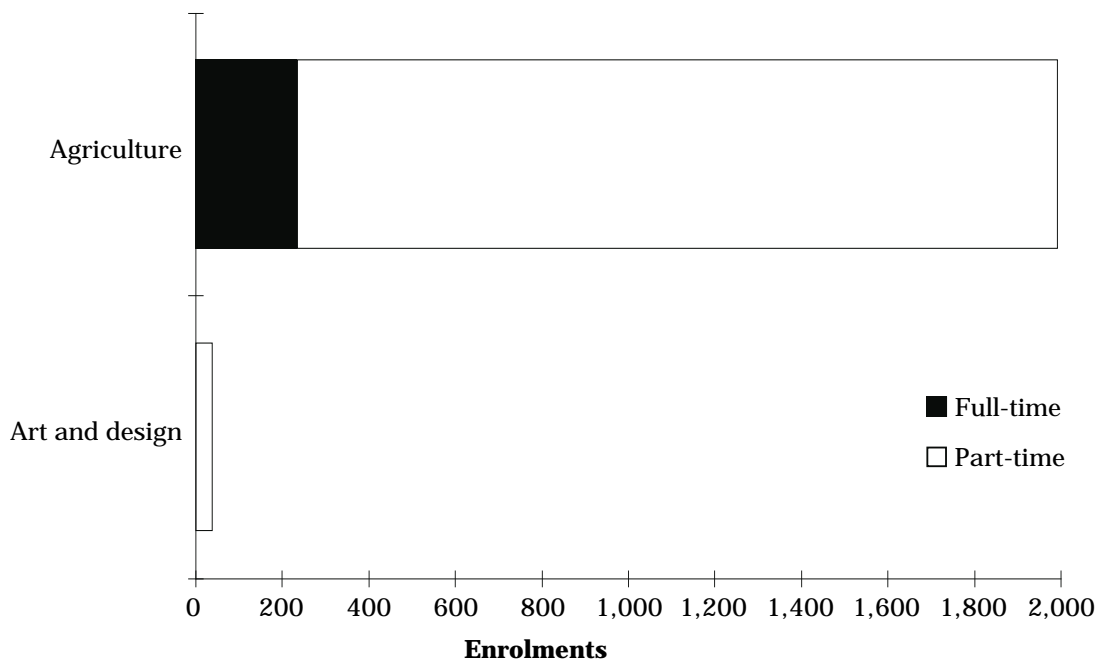
Enrolments: 2,033

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**Figure 3**

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**Broomfield College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)**

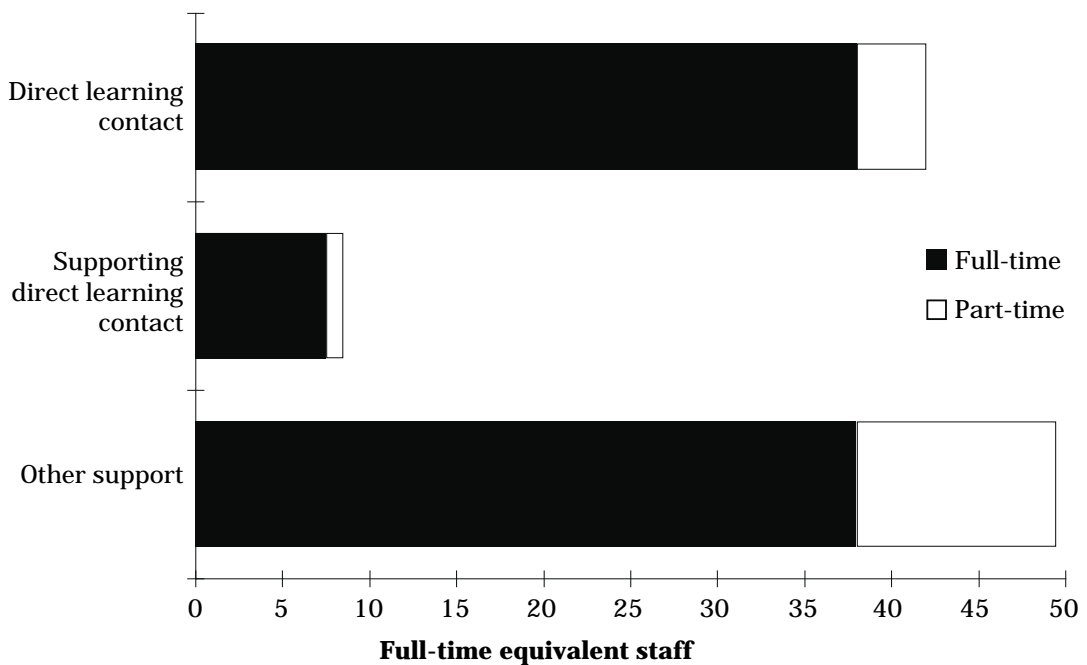


Enrolments: 2,033

**Figure 4**

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**Broomfield College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)**



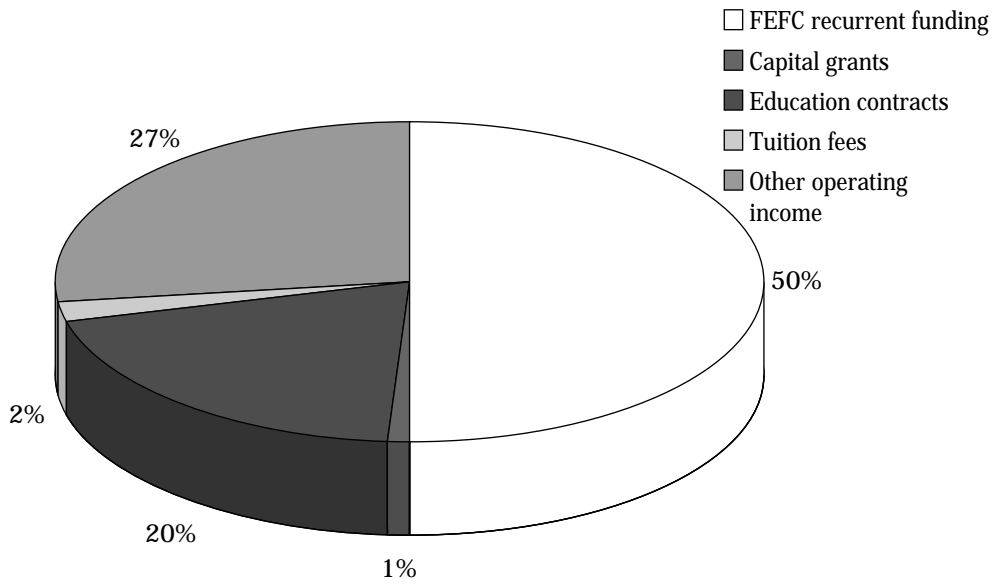
Full-time equivalent staff: 100

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**Figure 5**

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**Broomfield College: income (for 12 months to July 1995)**



Income: £3,037,000

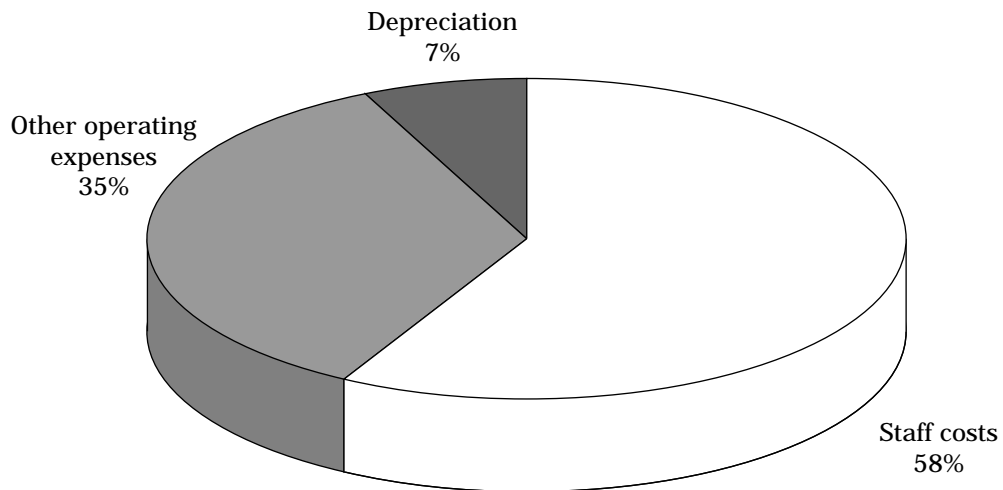
*Note: this chart excludes £14,000 other grant income.*

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**Figure 6**

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**Broomfield College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)**



Expenditure: £3,013,000

*Note: this chart excludes £1,000 interest payable.*

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