

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Canterbury College

February 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION 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.

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.*

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100*

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 16/95

CANTERBURY COLLEGE

SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected September – November 1994

Summary

Canterbury College, Kent is a significant provider of further education in Canterbury and the surrounding districts, offering a wide range of courses to school leavers and adults. The college also has responsibility for the provision of educational services to the 11 Kent prisons. There are good links with local employers, with schools, with higher education and with mainland European colleges and training agencies. The college markets its courses effectively. It is a well-managed and well-governed college with an effective quality assurance system at the heart of its operations. College objectives are clear and staff have a common sense of purpose. A high level of care is given to students and they contribute positively to the life of the college. The college provides good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is good teaching in most subjects and students enjoy their studies. This is reflected in the high course-completion rates, generally good examination results, and high rates of progress to employment or higher education. The college should extend further the good practice developed within the tutorial system; increase its capacity to deliver courses flexibly; and continue to pursue its accommodation strategy.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Computing	2	Health and community care	2
Construction	2	Art and design	2
Engineering: mechanical and production	2	English and modern foreign languages	2
Business	2	Courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Hotel and catering	3		
Tourism, leisure and sport	2		

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	2
Responsiveness and range of provision	9
Governance and management	23
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	33
Teaching and the promotion of learning	43
Students' achievements	54
Quality assurance	72
Resources	83
Conclusions and issues	97
Figures	

INTRODUCTION

1 Canterbury College, Kent, was inspected during the autumn term of the academic year 1994-95. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected in the week beginning 5 September 1994. During the week beginning 10 October 1994, two full-time and seven registered part-time inspectors spent a total of 29 days on specialist subject inspections. Further specialist subject inspection took place during the weeks beginning 7 and 14 November 1994 when a registered part-time inspector and a full-time inspector spent a total of six days in the college. The subjects inspected were computing, construction, mechanical and production engineering, business studies, hotel and catering, tourism, leisure and sport, health and community care, art and design, English, modern foreign languages, and courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Areas of work offered by the college, but not included in the inspection sample, were: science, access courses, media studies, theatre studies, humanities, social sciences, motor vehicle studies and electrical and electronic engineering. Inspectors visited 151 classes, involving 2,531 students and inspected a broad range of work. The inspectors also had access to extensive documentation relating to the college and its courses. In the week beginning 21 November 1994, three full-time inspectors and four registered part-time inspectors spent a total of 28 days inspecting aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection there were meetings with members of the corporation, representatives of local industry and commerce, students, former students of the college, parents, college managers and staff.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 The college is situated on a single site close to the centre of the historic city of Canterbury. It is some 60 miles south east of London and 18 miles from the channel ports of Dover and Folkestone. There are good road links and the two main line rail services and the central bus station are within easy walking distance.

3 It offers a wide range of further education, and some higher education, and provides educational services to the Kent prisons. The majority of students attend intermediate or advanced level courses. The college manages an executive job club for the Department of Employment and provides a base for Kent careers and guidance staff. It attracts a substantial amount of non-FEFC funding and has extensive links with continental Europe and Russia.

4 There are approximately 6,000 students enrolled at the college, amounting to some 3,600 full-time equivalents. Just over 3,000 attend full time. The college achieved its planned increase in enrolment in 1993-94 and is likely to meet its target of a 15 per cent increase in student enrolment for 1994-95. Fifty-seven per cent of students, excluding the prison population, are aged 16-19, 12 per cent are 20-25 and 31 per cent are over 25. Forty-three per cent of school leavers following full-time courses

at the college come from Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay, 19 per cent from Sittingbourne, Sheppey and Swale, 12 per cent from South Kent and 26 per cent from Thanet and other parts of Kent. Overseas students are recruited from a wide range of countries, especially countries in the Middle and Far East. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3.

5 The college employs 515 staff for its further and higher education work. Of these, approximately 272 full-time equivalents are teachers and 63 full-time equivalents are support staff, including learning support officers. The college also employs 82 full-time equivalent staff in the prison educational service. A profile of staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4.

6 In the past, Canterbury has enjoyed almost full employment. However, following contractions in the financial services sector and in manufacturing, the unemployment rate has stabilised at around 8.9 per cent in Canterbury and 13 per cent in other areas of East Kent, and has risen to 16 per cent in Thanet and Swale.

7 The college works in a competitive environment. It is one of three further education colleges in East Kent. Thanet and South Kent colleges are within a 20-mile radius. Canterbury and the surrounding area have a diverse range of selective grammar schools, high schools and non-selective high schools which all offer sixth form provision. To meet this competition, the college works through partnership arrangements with adult education and collaborative agreements with schools. The college also has franchise agreements with five universities and provides over 500 places on higher education courses.

8 The college in its mission statement says that it is dedicated to providing an efficient service to all the community, meeting individual student needs through high-quality teaching and support, offering flexible and responsive education and training, a climate of mutual respect and a friendly yet purposeful atmosphere, so that it can fulfil its role at local, national and international levels.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9 The college aims to improve access to its courses, to remove barriers and to encourage greater participation. The college's plans for courses and services, including key targets, are clearly stated for all programme areas and for curriculum development generally. Staff have a good understanding of national strategies to increase participation and to achieve education and training targets.

10 There are 260 courses covering most subject areas. Students of all abilities are catered for and provision extends from General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and foundation level work to higher education programmes offered through franchise arrangements. Vocational courses

at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels 1-3, General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), foundation to advanced levels, and an appropriate range of GCSE and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses make up the bulk of the college's work. A growing number of courses are offered at NVQ level 4. For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities there is a wide range of both separate specialist courses and supported provision in mainstream courses. The college is responsible for education in 11 Kent prisons, under a contract recently awarded by the Home Office.

11 In most curriculum areas there is an appropriate range of courses to meet local and regional needs. There are gaps in provision in catering, which has no full NVQ level 3 and few part-time courses; leisure and tourism offers a small range of part-time courses; and there are few evening courses in construction.

12 The college has strong links with higher education institutions. There are five higher national diploma programmes operating through franchise arrangements with the universities of Thames Valley and Greenwich, Southampton Institute of Higher Education and Canterbury Christchurch College. A diploma in management studies is offered by agreement with Canterbury Christchurch College, and a science compact has been made with the University of Kent. There are also access courses in three subject areas for mature students wishing to enter higher education. The college is seeking to expand its access programme and to offer it on a modular basis to improve the range of courses and institutions which students may seek to enter. Good working relations with the neighbouring Kent Institute of Art and Design have a positive impact on the college's work in art and design.

13 There are links with many continental European colleges and training agencies. At the time of the inspection, there were 31 projects with 19 partners, embracing 650 students and 85 college staff. Growth in this area has been rapid.

14 Liaison with schools is well planned and successful. It is led by the college's curriculum and staff-development manager, and a wide range of staff have contacts with schools. Excellent links were established through the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, and many of these have been maintained, in spite of growing competition for students between the college and some local schools. A substantial link course programme has developed into franchise arrangements, and collaboration will now be sought through partnership agreements, whereby pupils of compact schools will be given priority for places at the college. The scheme is in the pilot stage, with one compact signed. The college has an active special school link programme, involving eight schools and 87 students.

15 The extent of the college's involvement with the industrial and commercial community is impressive. The employment liaison team is responsible for keeping in touch with employers, and specifically for the

Kent Training and Enterprise Council's (TEC) training credits scheme and the large student work experience programme. Working closely with the local TEC, the college is an assessment centre for NVQs, operates the 'Learning for Work' programme, and has engaged in a significant amount of TEC-funded activity on quality, basic skills and return-to-study skills. Enrolment targets have been agreed by the local TEC for entry to employment courses. An executive job club has successfully operated for four years under a contract with the Department of Employment.

16 The college has given active support to the Canterbury Education Business Partnership, and works closely with that for Swale. Although the college lies outside the area of the East Kent Initiative, under which the government provides additional funding for economic regeneration, it has been active in assisting the development of local enterprise initiatives. Most programme areas have good links with employers, but the provision of short courses designed specifically for the needs of industry and commerce is patchy. In engineering there are good 'in company' courses, but in leisure and tourism and construction the range is limited. It is an aim of the college to develop such courses, but the efforts of programme teams are not as well co-ordinated as they might be.

17 The college has an effective marketing and publicity unit. Market research and analysis is aided by regular contact with the 70 employers on the 10 programme area development groups. They, and the programme area action plans, are important means for ensuring that local training and education needs are met. The training needs analysis in the strategic plan is very detailed, and provides good evidence of the research undertaken. The views of students and employers are sought in the planning and review of programmes, and through annual surveys. 'Focus groups' have been used to gain the views of women on engineering courses. The enquiries received for courses which do not recruit sufficiently to run are analysed in order to inform future planning.

18 There is a detailed and well-conceived marketing plan. Key market segments are identified and action points, with targets for a three-year period, have been set. Appropriate marketing is used. College staff are keen to be involved, and there is relevant staff development for this.

19 The college produces good-quality publicity and promotional material. A variety of course guides is published, together with part-time and community course broadsheets for house-to-house distribution. Promotional activities include prize giving events, open days for school leavers and parents, and a careers advisers' conference and an adult learners' week for employers and adults. College staff attend a number of school careers evenings and will be running local roadshows for recruitment in 1994-95.

20 The college actively seeks to promote courses in the community. The various projects with the local TEC, such as the return to learn centre and the associated contract to offer guidance to other centres, have given

prominence to adult studies. Non-vocational adult education provision is being extended in the current session, and there are early plans to offer outreach programmes in the suburbs of Canterbury.

21 More flexible arrangements to enable students to study at times and places most convenient to themselves are encouraged, but the college is not yet achieving its full potential in this area. A flexible learning policy has recently been agreed by the academic board. The college is a member of the national resource-based learning consortium. It has been modularising the curriculum and now operates a new learning resources centre. There are opportunities for flexible study in catering, in health care, and in part-time courses in early years education. There are also some examples of good home-based tuition.

22 The college has a well-considered equal opportunities policy, which incorporates clear standards and targets, and appropriate mechanisms for co-ordination and monitoring. The policy is managed by the director of planning and development, working with an equal opportunities monitoring group.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

23 The college has an effective and committed corporation board. There are 12 members. Six are from business, one is a retired university vice-chancellor, one is the local TEC nominee, and one is co-opted. There is also one member of the teaching staff, one member of the support staff and the principal. Members bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the corporation. They have a clear vision of the role of the college in the local community. They are aware of government and FEFC policies for the further education sector. They participate in the Kent Education Forum to monitor, with other providers of further and higher education, the adequacy of provision in the area in order to contribute effectively to the national and local targets.

24 The board has established an appropriate committee structure to fulfil its statutory obligations. There is a well-planned calendar of corporation and committee meetings. Committees are supported by detailed documentation. Agendas distinguish between items for information and for decision. The college publishes an annual report which includes its plans for the coming year. A scheduled position report is submitted to the corporation board detailing progress. Board members' record of attendance at meetings, college events and functions is excellent.

25 An effective partnership between the corporation board and the principal, which correctly observes the distinction between governance and management, provides a base for the sound management of the college. The board is supportive of the principal, but also rigorous in setting and monitoring targets for the senior management team. The team comprises the principal, the director of planning and development and two academic directors. It works collaboratively and effectively.

26 A new management structure, introduced in 1992, has now matured. It has established clear lines of decision-making, communication and accountability for financial and quality assurance matters. There are detailed job descriptions for all posts. The two academic directors lead teams of programme managers, each of whom is responsible for a particular curriculum area. There is effective communication and monitoring of the curriculum. Programme managers have fully-delegated budgets. They are expected to be effective in offering a changing curriculum to meet the needs of the local community. The basis on which programme area budgets are calculated is widely understood. In 1994-95, the college's average level of funding per unit is £16.12. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17. The college's estimated income and expenditure are shown in figures 5 and 6, respectively.

27 Management committees have clearly-defined terms of reference, and their function in decision-making is understood by staff. Committee reports and papers are of a high standard. Issues for decision are thoroughly discussed and may be referred to the executive if further deliberation or additional information is required. Meetings are conducted efficiently, and all participants have opportunities to contribute.

28 There is an effective strategic planning cycle which includes quality review, action and business planning. The cycle involves staff at all levels. At every stage of the cycle, full account is taken of financial, staffing and accommodation implications. Plans identify appropriate targets, for example, for student recruitment and retention. Unit costs are calculated, and compared year on year, to show whether efficiency has improved. Programme area plans and development plans for other areas such as student services, learning resources and corporate services are provisionally approved by the directorate. All are incorporated into a draft strategic plan by the director of planning and development.

29 Governors are involved in planning and are consulted at appropriate stages on strategy and direction. Most recently, they have been advised of options for the direction of the college. Decisions are related systematically to the mission statement.

30 All key policies are in place, having undergone careful drafting and review. They have been approved by the principal and, as appropriate, by the corporation. Responsibility for their implementation is clearly allocated to individual staff, or steering groups reporting to the director of planning and development. Action plans have been produced and monitoring of the effectiveness of policies is continuous. In particular, the implementation and monitoring of the college equal opportunities policy is thorough.

31 Staff confidence and morale are high. Staff state that internal communication is good. There are management briefings, staff bulletins, papers on curriculum issues, staff conferences and professional updating

days. Minutes of all college management meetings, and corporation and committee minutes of unrestricted business, are published in all staff rooms and in the learning resources centre. Staff were fully involved in the review of the college's mission statement and express their commitment to it.

32 The college has an efficient management information system, using the further education management information system and Oracle software packages, complemented by in-house systems which are used to produce punctual and comprehensive reports. Users have been consulted on the format, and financial management reports have been simplified. The college's management information system section provides training for staff in the interpretation of reports and maintains a help line. The system should be further strengthened when it is networked to key users. The recording of enrolments has been improved by implementing rigorous procedures for verifying statistics. The system provides detailed information for course and area reviews.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

33 Student services are organised centrally. They embrace reception, advice, admissions, guidance and support. The college has published policies which cover most aspects of recruitment and support. The policy on student guidance has recently been approved by the academic board. The college has produced a charter which outlines its commitment to providing an efficient service. Students are aware of the document and teachers are working towards fulfilling its aims.

34 There is a large student services staff reporting to the student services manager. Staff are clear about their roles and are highly committed. Those responsible for the management of student services are working to college guidelines. There is a full-time welfare officer who provides advice on accommodation, money matters and the broader aspects of counselling.

35 The prospectus is well designed and informative. Course requirements are set out in individual leaflets. Full-time applications for places at the college are acknowledged within two working days. All applicants for full-time courses have an interview, which usually results in a conditional offer. Alternative offers are made to safeguard against students failing to achieve the necessary entry qualifications for their preferred course. Guidance interviews are arranged for students who are undecided about their choice of course. A training programme to improve the quality of interviewing has been undertaken by 96 teachers. Admission procedures are effectively organised. Students report that they were given sound advice about the programmes on offer and that staff were welcoming and helpful. In addition to the advice available from college staff, students also have careers guidance from three specialist careers officers working for the college. In spite of the care taken during the admission of students, some were placed on inappropriate courses, in particular, on GCSE programmes.

36 In an effort to broaden its entry, the college offers procedures for the accreditation of students' prior learning. Such accreditation is integral to NVQ and GNVQ schemes. The college has an extensive staff-development programme to assist staff to operate accreditation of prior learning.

37 Most students report that enrolment arrangements are satisfactory. Enrolment documentation is unambiguous. Enrolment forms act as learning agreements for part-time students. Learning agreements for full-time students are completed at the end of induction. Transfer between programmes is possible during the first half-term of most courses, and is arranged in consultation with personal tutors and subject teachers. Parents are involved in decisions where appropriate.

38 Induction programmes are well planned and effectively delivered. Students are informed of the full range of support services available to them. They follow a centrally-designed framework, varied to suit the requirements of each programme area. For example, in nursery nursing courses, the essential skills of classroom organisation and display are covered. Most courses have a comprehensive induction pack. At induction all students undertake Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit diagnostic tests to identify the need for additional support in literacy and numeracy.

39 This year, these tests revealed that 530 full-time students needed learning support. Thirty-eight per cent required help with literacy and 40 per cent with numeracy. The college is addressing the problem by focusing attention on two programme areas, which involve about 15 per cent of these students. They are now receiving systematic support from the college's 'across-college education base'. The service has yet to be extended fully to other students. The 'across-college education base' provides support to students from other programme areas on a drop-in basis. It has a good range of open learning material, some of which has been developed within the college. Specialist teachers spend time there to give students help in their vocational areas. Whilst the resources are good, the base room is small and opening hours are restricted. The base has recently been relocated to a more convenient place in the college to encourage students to use it more. A numeracy workshop offering a full range of skills above the basic level is being developed.

40 All full-time and most part-time students have timetabled tutorials and, in most programme areas, they are effective. Typically, tutorials are used for planning students' learning, and reviewing and recording progress. In some programme areas, the number of students allocated to personal tutors is high. For example, in construction and general education the number of students in some tutor groups exceeds 20. This makes it difficult for students to be guaranteed adequate support and for tutors to cope with the workload. The college has designed its own record of achievement folder, and gives staff comprehensive guidelines on its use.

41 The college has a reputation for good provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students are systematically

assessed and directed to the supported learning unit. For example, six students with hearing impairment are assisted by a teacher of the deaf, for 39 hours a week. Participation of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been encouraged by this level of care. A video made by a student with a severe visual impairment highlights the support he received.

42 There is an active students' union. The college has assisted it by appointing an activity leader, who helps with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Students have access to the college sports hall. There are some competitive fixtures with schools and colleges, and many cultural events and visits. There is a programme of health education including drug education, smoking education, sexual health, HIV/AIDS and alcohol abuse. It has been agreed to hold two meetings each term between the governors and the students' union to improve the flow of information.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

43 The strengths of the teaching and learning clearly outweighed the weaknesses in 56 per cent of the sessions inspected. Weaknesses outweighed strengths in 9 per cent of sessions.

The following table summarises the grades given to the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		3	7	4	0	0	14
GCSE		0	3	1	0	0	4
GNVQ		3	17	8	2	0	30
NVQ		3	4	12	2	0	21
Other (vocational)		11	29	25	4	1	70
Other SLDD		3	2	3	3	1	12
Total		23	62	53	11	2	151

44 Effective teaching and learning was observed in most subject areas. Staff are generally committed to maintaining a high standard of classroom practice and new curriculum developments are complemented by differing and appropriate teaching styles. Staff are knowledgeable about their subjects, and relationships between staff and students are generally good.

45 Most courses were well planned and effectively managed. In health and community care, catering, leisure and tourism, and art and design, there was effective collaboration with professional bodies to ensure that courses are coherent and relevant. In business studies, planning teams, which included part-time staff, were not given enough time to meet. In English and modern languages, individual lessons were well planned, but schemes of work were uneven in quality and the level of detail they

provided. In construction, most classes were well planned, but in a small number of sessions the aims and objectives of the work were not made clear to students.

46 Most programmes have informative course handbooks which introduce students to the college and to their programmes of study. Many of the handbooks, particularly those for art and design, computing, and engineering, include effective study skills guides. Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) higher national certificate engineering students are issued with a useful library research guide. Construction students make good use of study packs and task briefing sheets.

47 Excellent teaching was observed in some health and community care classes: for example, in one class there was thorough discussion of complex legal issues which helped students to a sophisticated understanding of key concepts. In other classes, the work sometimes lacked pace, and teachers relied too heavily on delivering informal lectures, interspersed with occasional questions to students. In art and design, the studio work was organised so that staff could respond effectively to individual students' needs, and learning was reinforced in group seminars and through practical demonstrations. Practical sessions which operate in realistic simulated work environments are particularly effective in construction, catering and engineering. The requirements of the NVQ in engineering have prompted staff to develop imaginative practical work, which provides a strong contrast to other work in engineering where students are generally over directed by their teachers. In some computing and construction classes, students were well motivated, in spite of the length of the sessions and lack of variety in learning methods. Most classes in leisure and tourism are effective, but in a few sessions there was a lack of planning which allowed the pace of the work to drift. Most modern language classes are conducted entirely in the foreign language which students are studying. A particularly high degree of oral competence was observed in a class leading to the diploma of the Institute of Linguists, in which students were able to make amusing and relevant comments to each other and to the tutor in the language being learned. In catering, the lively and challenging practical sessions provided a contrast with the theory classes which were generally uninspiring.

48 Diagnostic tests carried out in September 1994 identified a significant need for support in literacy and numeracy. In many programme areas, students with learning difficulties were well supported in class and in sessions in the 'across-college education' base. In business studies sessions, a good level of support was observed for students with visual impairment and hearing impairment, both by the provision of appropriate equipment and by the use of classroom helpers.

49 There was also effective planning of work for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the separate specialist courses. However, at class level there is little negotiation between tutor and student to ensure

that tasks are related to achievable targets. For example, in one health awareness class, a group of students, some of whom had difficulty in repeating or writing the alphabet, were being shown how to sign the alphabet for people with a hearing impairment. In some of these classes, teachers missed suitable opportunities to recognise and praise achievements. Those students with learning difficulties who were integrated into mainstream classes received a good level of support from teachers and were happy with their studies. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities currently use a newly-designed portfolio for drawing up and recording their action plans for learning. It is not suitable for their particular needs.

50 Classroom tasks and assignments were generally appropriate to course requirements. Teachers have high expectations of student performance, and these are generally reflected in the standard of work. Most assignments have well-formulated assessment criteria, and work is marked and returned promptly with detailed comments. In English, lecturers have a well-documented marking scheme, which includes team review of assessment.

51 Many assignments are imaginative and motivate students well. For example, for a computing assignment, groups of students were given roles as four cells of a subversive organisation to stop tourism, and were gathering real data in order to produce advertising to discourage tourism in the Canterbury area. An assignment in GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism, focused on the future of the industry and encouraged students to identify their own potential roles. In art and design, there was skilful use of professional portfolios to demonstrate good practice. In some NVQ catering classes, students were able immediately to record their achievements on a computer in the practical work areas.

52 The development of core skills is becoming established, and the college has recently installed an extensive learning resources centre, in which individual and group study spaces are available. Students have access to computers which enable them to produce well-presented, wordprocessed assignments. Workshop sessions are available to build up skills in information technology. In most areas, students are taught appropriate study skills. For example, in business, these are developed both integrally with the course work and by formal lectures, packages and drop-in workshops.

53 Student attendance and work completed are recorded on registers, which also contain a summary of the scheme of work. In cases of unexplained absence or unsatisfactory work, action is taken by personal tutors and referred, where necessary, to programme managers.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

54 Many students talk about their work with confidence and express appreciation of the ability of their tutors. Where there is dissatisfaction, it

is usually associated with lack of challenge in classes, unimaginative assignments, unnecessary separation of theory and practical work, or lack of student involvement in planning their courses. In general, students are making progress which is appropriate to the stages of their courses.

55 In some subject areas, students experience group work only occasionally. Where it takes place regularly, for example, in information technology and computing, good work often results. In business studies, one well-integrated and challenging assignment involved students working in groups, simulating departments of a leisure pool complex and developing their skills through management of the organisation.

56 Practical work is generally carried out competently, with close regard for health and safety. Some areas of work give insufficient attention to it. For example, in art and design, whilst general guidance is given on safe practice, students lack more specific instruction.

57 Eighty-seven per cent of students at Canterbury College in the final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education's 1994 performance tables were successful. This compares with a range of 59 to 90 per cent across the other five general further education colleges in Kent, and with a national average for all institutions of just over 81 per cent. It places the college within the middle third of all colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

58 There were particularly high pass rates in 1993-94 in business and finance (97 per cent), management and professional studies (93 per cent) and computing and information technology (92 per cent). Students sitting for the RSA examinations in office and secretarial subjects, achieved results well above the national average.

59 Pass rates on programmes in continuing education fell from 82 per cent in 1993 to 58 per cent in 1994.

60 In catering, most results are better than, or equal to national averages. In 1993-94 there was an overall pass rate of 93 per cent. There are however, some high non-completion rates in the full-time general catering course, where an original enrolment of 57 fell to 35. Such poor retention substantially lowers real success rates. In the BTEC national diploma course, student numbers fell from 20 to 13.

61 In health and community care, the level of achievement is good on most courses. It is marred by high non-completion rates on the BTEC national diploma in social care and the intermediate level GNVQ in health and social care. Eighty-nine per cent of students completing the BTEC national diploma in nursery nursing gained a full award. Part-time courses in health subjects generally have very good success rates. For example, all students entered for the Dental Surgery Assistants Certificate passed, and 95 per cent of those entered in the BTEC national certificate in health studies gained an award. Of approximately 400 students undertaking first-aid qualifications, all were successful.

62 In art and design, achievements are generally good. All students who have completed advanced level courses over the past three years have gained places in further education or employment. Ninety-five per cent of students passed the BTEC first diploma in art and design in 1994, and over 60 per cent of the grades were at merit or distinction level.

63 Achievements in the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) sports foundation course were well above the national average, all students passing part one and 88 per cent passing part two. In addition to the primary qualification, all sports courses provide the opportunity for individual coaching and first aid/life saving certificates. Many students achieve these awards.

64 Over 90 per cent of students on the BTEC national diploma in travel and tourism achieved the full qualification. Travel and tourism courses in the college have a high completion rate.

65 Results in construction and engineering were generally satisfactory. The first diploma in construction had small numbers, but all students achieved their qualification. In engineering, 83 per cent of students gained their qualifications.

66 Students aged 16-18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1993-94 scored, on average 3.7 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 tables published by the Department for Education.

67 In 1993, 69 per cent of all students entered for GCE A level examinations achieved grades A-E. In 1994 this figure rose to 75 per cent. In 1993, the average pass rate for further education colleges, other than sixth form colleges, was 66 per cent.

68 In 1993, six of the 22 subjects offered at GCE A level had results better than the national averages, including history of art (100 per cent), pure mathematics (100 per cent), French (92 per cent), English language and literature (89 per cent), pure mathematics with statistics (71 per cent) and human biology (67 per cent). In humanities and social studies, examination passes are generally above the national averages, and in GCE A level English literature and English language, there have been substantial numbers of A-C grades. Statistics and economics, both with low enrolments, had less satisfactory results at 40 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively. In 1994, 12 of the 25 subjects offered had results better than the national average. In applied mathematics, pure mathematics, statistics and media studies, there was a 100 per cent pass rate, and in history of art, psychology, English language and literature and chemistry, pass rates were well in excess of 80 per cent. Law, social and economic history and business studies had poorer results at 40, 42 and 48 per cent, respectively.

69 In 1993, 37 per cent of all students entered for GCSE examinations achieved grades A-C. In 1994, there was a drop to 35 per cent. These

results are below the national average of about 50 per cent for schools and colleges. In 1993, four subjects out of 19, had pass rates better than the national average for the 16-18 age range. These were French, German, geography, and European studies. There were poor results in biology (17 per cent), law (14 per cent), physics (21 per cent) and history (24 per cent). In 1994, out of 20 subjects taken, eight subjects had results better than the national average, including English language, drama, accounting, French and business studies. In particular, Spanish (82 per cent), German (70 per cent) and physics (65 per cent) showed major improvements from the previous year. There were poor results in biology (6 per cent), chemistry (11 per cent), sociology (20 per cent), human biology (25 per cent) and mathematics (28 per cent).

70 Students' individual achievements in construction and engineering are celebrated by the award of the construction crafts, building and civil engineering prizes, which are now in their forty-ninth year. This year, 26 students received awards for a wide range of achievements from examination success, to demonstrations of personal qualities and practical skills. In catering, individual successes include a student who has won his employers' Chef of the Year title. One of the GCE A level history of art students scored one of the top five marks, out of the 1,318 nationally who sat the examination in the summer of 1994.

71 The college uses effectively data on the progress of students and the destinations they achieve. Outcomes are compared over rolling three year periods. Ten of the 17 programme areas have completion rates in excess of 85 per cent. The lowest completion rate is in the area of arts and humanities with 76 per cent, and the highest in science and mathematics with 93 per cent. In 1993-94, entry into higher education rose by 7 per cent over the previous year, from 247 to 265. The record of progress to higher education is particularly strong in management and professional studies, continuing education, mechanical and production engineering, health and community care, and arts and humanities. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, and many gain entry to further education courses in motor vehicle studies, catering, and electrical and electronic engineering. In early childhood education, office studies, construction, travel and tourism and leisure, students have a good record of success in entering relevant employment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

72 The college's charter has been distributed to all staff and students. It was reviewed in draft by a working party, by staff, by the academic board and by students before approval by the corporation. It gives a clear statement of the college's obligations to its customers.

73 The college is committed to a system of total quality management. It has successfully implemented a cycle of strategic planning, operational target setting and quality performance review, all of which then inform its

actions. There is a continuous process of monitoring performance against criteria. The strategic plan describes operational targets for the college as a whole, and each programme area has its own plan and targets. Individual staff contributions towards targets are monitored through self-evaluation and appraisal. Courses and programme areas are monitored through annual and major triennial reviews. There are also cross-college theme reviews. Review bodies include staff, students and employers. The full-time performance review manager organises and monitors data, and provides information to course teams for their reviews. The processes are systematic, and the college has developed sound routines to obtain and validate data.

74 Programme areas have responsibility for monitoring and enhancing the quality of their courses and services. Their achievements are set out in the annual review, which covers statistical data and exploration of trends for every programme over a five-year period, including enrolment statistics, early-leaver details, examination results, and numbers entering further and higher education or employment. It also includes commentaries from programme teams, employers and external verifiers, and an analysis of responses to the pre-course, on-course and post-course student questionnaires. This large amount of information is pithily presented.

75 On the basis of the annual review, an action plan is agreed and monitored by the appropriate programme manager and academic director. For example, on one course, the action plan involved changes to the tutorial system and induction procedures. The induction process was amended to provide more information on assessment and timetabling, and a new course handbook was produced. As a consequence, downward trends in recruitment and retention were reversed.

76 The triennial review uses the same documentation as the annual process. A review panel, chaired by the principal or the director of planning and development, and including students and employers, critically appraises each course. The documentation outlines the roles of members and stresses the participation of all. The process includes classroom observation of all teachers. The contribution of employers, drawn from the programme development groups, has proved to be valuable.

77 The cross-college theme reviews examine trends and performance in areas such as quality assurance and resources. The learning resource centre review involved external specialists from the Further Education Unit, and the director of a local company, as well as the college's performance review manager. An extensive range of initiatives was agreed, with the aim of increasing student participation. As a result, many more students are using the centre.

78 The academic board reviews the annual report, and gives careful consideration to the statistical data. The college already uses the performance indicators detailed in Council Circular, *Measuring Achievement*, and these are used in the annual review. The college is in

the final stages of an application for the Investors in People award. There has recently been a trial assessment by the local TEC, which has led to some minor changes. The college expects that full Investors in People status will be achieved in 1995.

79 For the inspection, the college produced a good self-assessment report. It includes a detailed list of the documents used. The conclusions reached are fair and objective. The report accurately lists the college's strengths and areas for development. At the time of the inspection, the college was already taking action in many of the areas marked for development.

80 There is an effective staff-appraisal system which has been operating for three years. The system was reviewed by a group of staff in 1993, and it is now more streamlined with simpler paperwork and clearer guidelines. It is closely linked to staff development. Staff are appraised annually and the process can affect salary. Criteria for judging success are clearly laid out in the appraisal documentation, and the system encourages openness. Staff speak frankly and confidently of their own development needs.

81 The college has a clear policy for staff development. It has a high priority, with 2 per cent of the college budget devoted to it. A third of this budget is devolved to the programme areas, allowing course teams to focus on specific needs. Staff are aware of the opportunities available to them, and are helped by an excellent staff-development manual. There is an effective procedure to evaluate staff-development programmes and ensure the efficient use of funds. This process has involved individual teachers' reports on the training they have received, the views of external consultants, and cross-college reviews. The staff-development annual report is comprehensive, and it is debated thoroughly in the staff-development committee. The staff-development process is itself to be reviewed later this year.

82 There is a very helpful induction programme for new staff. The first stage covers general issues such as pay, the college structure, appeals, discipline and health and safety. This is followed by a review stage, co-ordinated by the line manager. A check list is provided to ensure that all relevant information is given. Any development needs are identified and action is taken.

RESOURCES

Staffing

83 Staff throughout the organisation are well informed, enthusiastic and highly motivated. They have a high regard for the college's mission. They speak freely of their support for the college's managers and governors.

84 Recruitment, selection, appraisal, staff development and other personnel procedures are in place and are properly documented. Staff handbooks are comprehensive. Equal opportunity issues are considered in advertising, and interviewing for new staff.

85 Personnel planning is well developed: job functions and the skills required are evaluated. Most staff are appropriately qualified. Eighty-four per cent of the teachers and learning support officers hold a teaching qualification. All teaching staff are required to achieve a minimum teaching qualification. Thirty-five per cent of staff are qualified to Training and Development Lead Body assessor standard, and a large number of the remainder are undergoing training. Six per cent are qualified as internal verifiers to date.

86 The student to staff ratio measured by the Department for Education annual monitoring survey for 1993-94 is 19.6:1 and has increased by 40 per cent in the last three years. Forty-one per cent of the teaching is provided by part-time staff. They provide flexibility, and bring additional skills to the curriculum. The relatively-high level of part-time posts in some programme areas, leads to difficulties in course administration. The college monitors staff indicators carefully, including rates of sickness, turnover, gender, and representation from ethnic minorities.

87 The college has diversified its teaching force by appointing learning support officers to assist in some vocational areas. They often have recent industrial experience and possess substantial skills which complement the contribution of teachers.

Equipment/learning resources

88 Equipment and materials budgets are delegated to programme areas and support managers. They have developed the skills necessary to maintain control and use the money effectively. Budget levels are adequate. Cost centres carry forward surpluses and deficits. Capital purchases are subject to bidding, and staff consider the process to be equitable. Future purchases are prioritised on a college basis.

89 Most curriculum areas are well equipped. In catering, some major equipment is old and obsolete. The college has recently invested in a learning resource centre which serves most of the programme areas effectively. Its stock includes 5,000 reference books, 150 journal subscriptions, independent-study texts, 22,000 books for loan, 365 video tapes, four compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database workstations and one compact disk interactive (CDI) workstation. Fifty-six modern computers, and photocopying and binding facilities are available. The centre includes silent-study and informal reading areas, as well as committee, interview and video rooms. There are some deficiencies in the resources available for English and foreign languages, and there is a lack of design reference material. The centre would meet the needs of students more effectively if the catalogue and loan systems were computerised.

90 The college has an equipment development and replacement strategy which assists in setting priorities. An example of its use is the increase in personal computers of the latest standard; from 115 to 253 machines in a single year. Most of the older equipment has been written off, and as a consequence, the ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers has

risen only slightly. It is satisfactory, nevertheless, at approximately 10:1. Administrative computing is to be developed further this year through the introduction into curriculum areas of networked machines, which will provide access to the central management information system.

Accommodation

91 The college occupies a pleasant, single site of approximately four hectares. The approach to the college is attractive, and the main entrance and reception area are well positioned. The campus has little green space, and most open areas are used as car parks. Given its urban location, there are few opportunities for additional building. The site is well signposted.

92 The majority of the accommodation was built in the early 1960s and has been extended at various times to provide a total floor area of 19,800 square metres. The most recent extension is the new Carey building, which provides a learning resource centre at the heart of the college, where once there was a courtyard. The college has made good use of an adjacent former dairy, which has become the centre for construction crafts. There are two building projects underway to provide an extension to the existing motor vehicle workshops, and new reception and changing rooms for the sports hall.

93 A comprehensive and well-documented accommodation strategy has been prepared. It gives due prominence to the need to achieve an environment of quality, to reflect high aspirations in teaching and learning. The college estimates room use in the teaching blocks to be 70 per cent. Room usage estimates are currently based on timetables and enrolments and the college should develop a more rigorous basis for calculation. The space available is generally adequate for the number of students. However, accommodation for sports studies and for courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is often crowded.

94 The college has a maintenance schedule which has brought substantial improvements to much of the accommodation. Attention has been paid to improving conditions for students who use wheelchairs, and 80 per cent of the accommodation is now accessible. This is a substantial achievement, given the nature of the buildings.

95 Among the areas requiring attention is the student refectory, which is overcrowded at peak periods. Plans are in hand to relocate the catering restaurant and hairdressing salon, which are both poorly placed for service to the public. The science laboratories need refurbishment, and the language laboratory has unsuitable accommodation. The facilities for painting and decorating are poor, and are inadequate to support NVQ at levels 2 and 3. The accommodation strategy addresses all these problems. Some parts of the site are untidy. Lockers located in narrow corridors restrict access. Some construction workshops are untidy.

96 A day nursery provided in conjunction with the Midland Bank is a good amenity. The college has a travel agency, which is used as part of

the tourism courses as well as for selling tickets and holidays. The new motor vehicle centre and sports hall are nearing completion.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

97 Canterbury College has made significant progress towards achieving its mission. The particular strengths of the college are:

- the clarity of the mission statement and its objectives
- responsiveness to all sectors of the community
- effective governance and management
- the value placed on students' achievement
- the common sense of purpose and direction among staff
- the effective quality assurance system
- the excellence of publicity and marketing
- good internal communication
- effective implementation of a sound equal opportunities policy
- good, productive working relationships with students
- the high level of care and support offered to students.

98 If it is to continue to improve its quality of provision and its standards of achievement the college should:

- extend good practice within the tutorial programme
- continue to implement the improvements identified in the accommodation strategy
- establish more flexible modes of attendance and structures for courses.

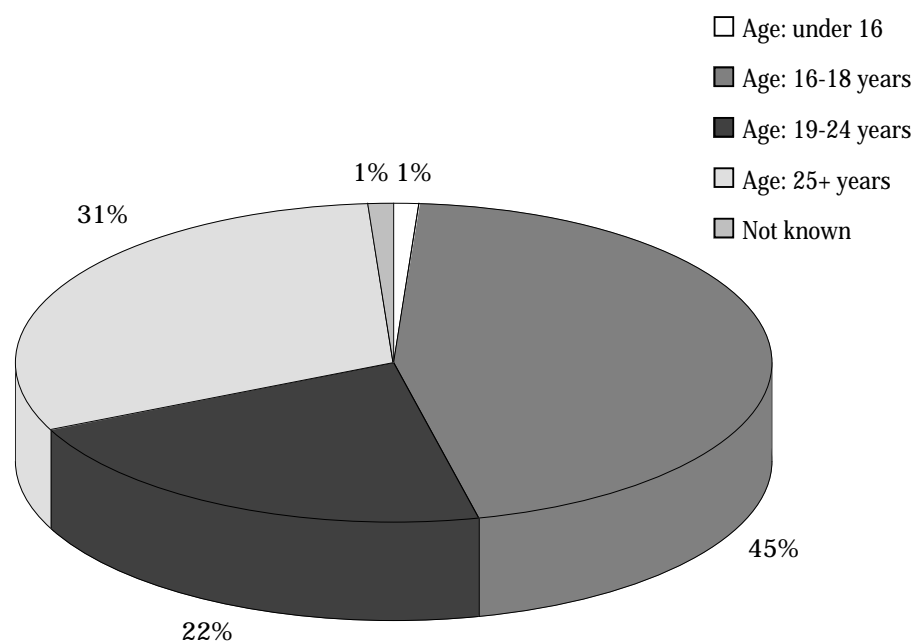
FIGURES

1	Percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)
2	Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)
3	Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1994)
4	Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1994)
5	Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)
6	Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

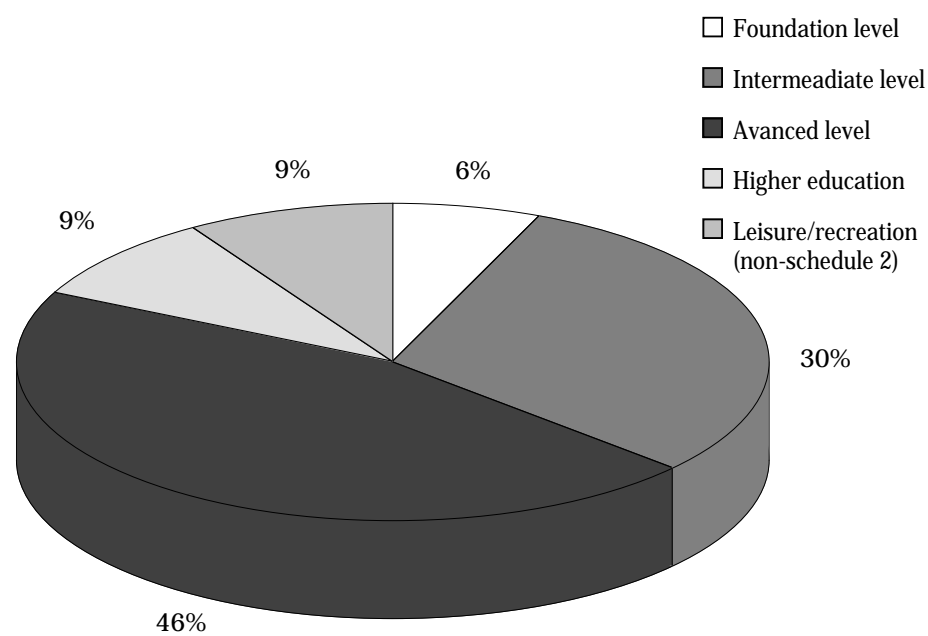
Canterbury College: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 5,769

Figure 2

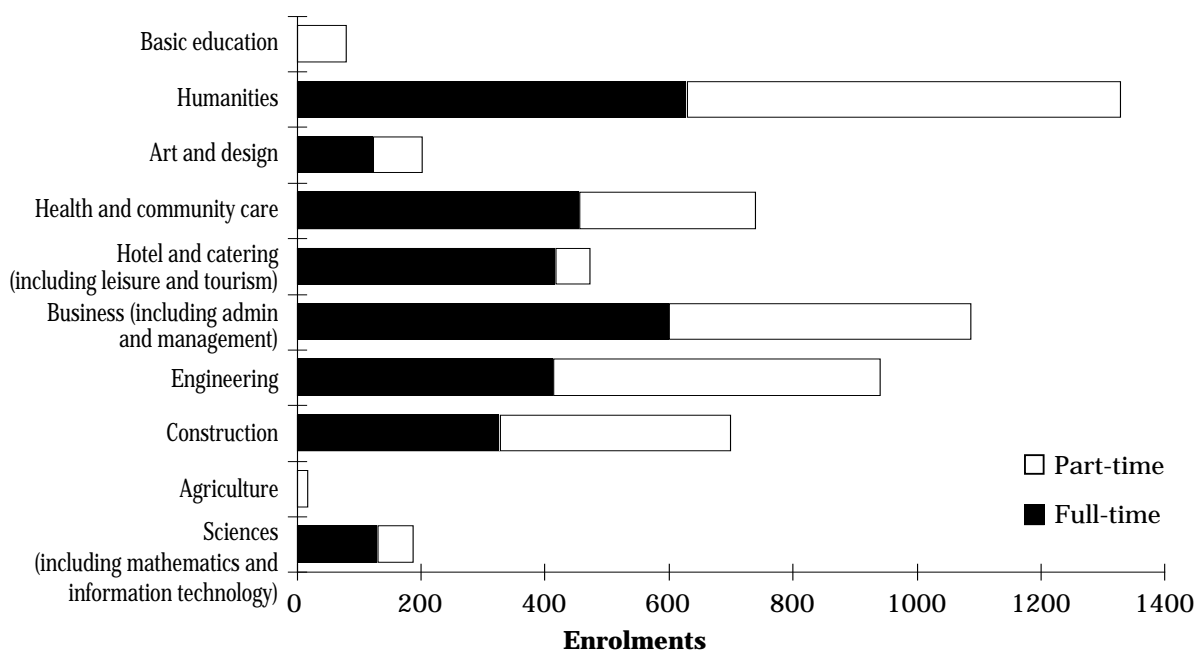
Canterbury College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 5,769

Figure 3

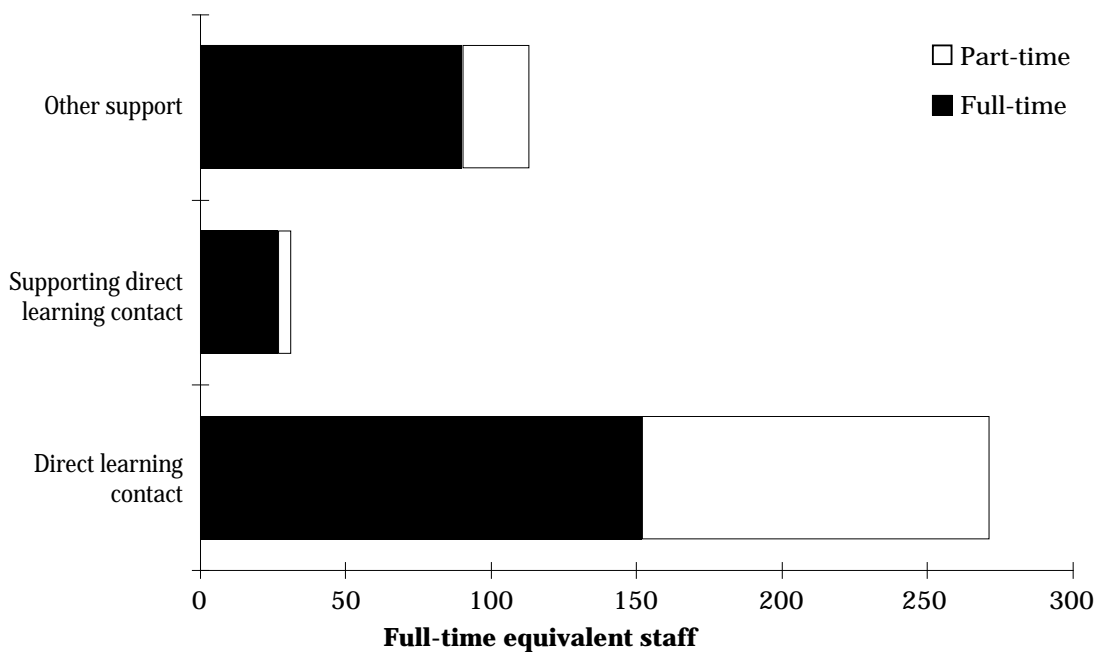
Canterbury College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1994)



Enrolments: 5,769

Figure 4

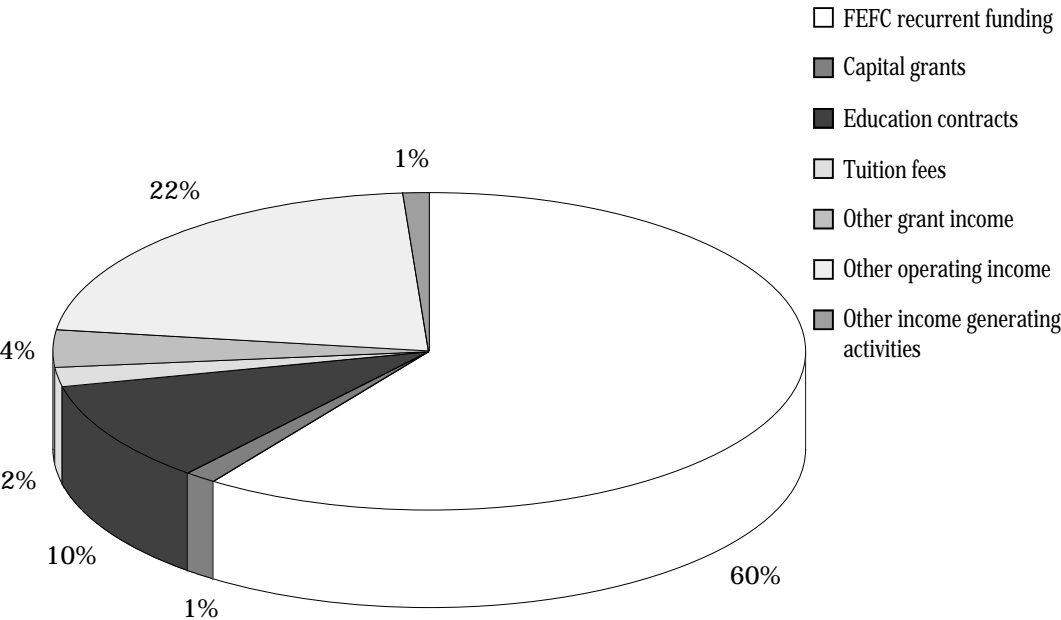
Canterbury College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1994)



Full-time equivalent staff: 416

Figure 5

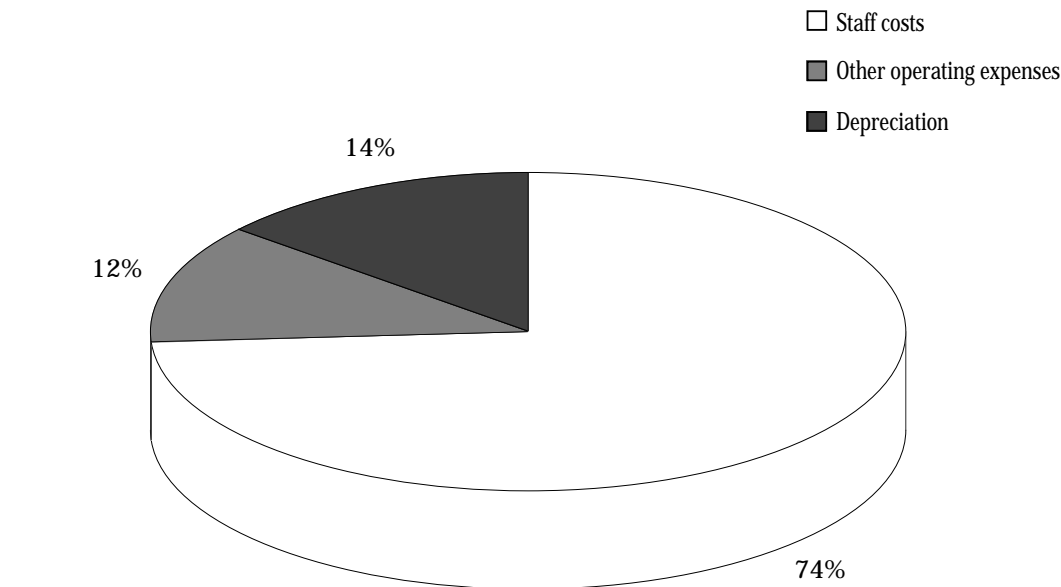
Canterbury College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated income: £11,327,000

Figure 6

Canterbury College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated expenditure: £11,011,000

