The City Literary Institute

***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 the 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 1996, some 329 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 329 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-96

	Inspection grades				
Activity	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	59%	29%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	14%	50%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	12%	54%	30%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 21/97

THE CITY LITERARY INSTITUTE
GREATER LONDON REGION
Inspected June-November 1996

Summary

The City Literary Institute is a specialist designated institution situated in Central London. It enjoys a national and international reputation as a provider of adult education. The majority of its courses are part time and non-accredited. Most teaching is effective and some of it is outstanding. Many students achieve well. The institute offers an exceptionally diverse range of courses.   The foreign language provision is particularly impressive. The principalship provides strong leadership and clear direction. Strategic planning processes are becoming more thorough and effective. Recruitment and guidance procedures enable students to make informed choices about their studies. High-quality support is given to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly deaf adults. Staff are committed to the mission and work of the institute. Most full-time staff are well qualified; many part-time teachers bring high levels of specialist subject expertise. The institute should: improve the quality of some teaching and develop systems for assessing and recording students' achievements; improve completion rates on some courses; collect and analyse data on students' achievements and destinations; set priorities for curriculum developments; develop an effective framework of provision for students with learning difficulties; further develop its management structures; review arrangements for tutorials and learning support; upgrade some specialist equipment and accommodation; and develop a quality assurance system which includes systematic course reviews.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	4
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Visual arts	2	Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2
Music	2		
Drama	2		
Foreign languages	1		
Humanities	3		

INTRODUCTION

1   The City Literary Institute was inspected during the period June to November 1996. Ten inspectors spent a total of 48 days at the institute. The team observed 131 classes and inspected students' work and examined a wide range of documentation. Meetings were held with governors, staff, students and representatives from local universities, a further education college, an adult education college, three local authorities, the City and Inner London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People, the Royal Opera House and the Tate Gallery.

THE INSTITUTE AND ITS AIMS

2   The City Literary Institute, known as The City Lit, was founded in 1919 as part of London County Council's post-war reconstruction plan. It was one of five experimental institutions charged with creating a demand for, and providing, education for adults. The City Literary Institute grew rapidly. By 1928 it was enrolling over 5,000 students. In 1929, it moved to its current main building in Central London, just off Drury Lane. The institute became well known for its innovative provision. For example, classes were taught in air raid shelters and tube stations during the Second World War, and in the 1960s the institute developed the first access to higher education course. The institute has a national and international reputation as a provider of adult education.

3   After the demise of the Inner London Education Authority in 1990, The City Literary Institute was established as a free-standing charitable company limited by guarantee. Following the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*, the institute became a specialist designated institution within the further education sector. The institute's programme includes some accredited provision identified under schedule 2 of the Act, though the majority of courses (92 per cent), is non-schedule 2 and non-accredited.

4   In 1995-96 the institute provided 2,287 courses, nearly all part time. Courses range from introductory to postgraduate levels. Some full-time courses, such as the access to higher education courses and the foundation in art course, prepare students who do not have the normal qualifications for entering higher education. Courses offered at the institute are mainly in the fields of visual arts, music, drama, languages, and humanities. There is also a substantial provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The institute provides some teacher education and management training for other organisations and for its own staff.

5   In 1995-96 there were 30,423 enrolments at the institute representing 19,493 students. Student numbers by age and by level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. Two-thirds of the students are female and over 70 per cent are 25 years of age or over.

6   There are 140 full-time equivalent staff who are full time or hold fractional full-time posts, and 74 full-time equivalent staff who are part time. Most courses are taught by part-time teachers, some 800 of whom were employed in 1995-96. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

7   The City Literary Institute operates from four Central London sites: two sites just off Drury Lane in the borough of Camden and two sites near Fleet Street in the City of London. The sites are easy to reach for those who work in Central London but live out of the city. Almost half the institute's students live in inner London and a third in the outer London boroughs. Some students travel considerable distances to study at the institute. Several other providers of further and adult education are situated within two or three miles of the institute. These include the Working Mens' College, The Mary Ward Centre, Birkbeck College, City and Islington College, Kingsway College and a number of voluntary organisations.

8   The City Literary Institute's mission is to 'be the major provider of accessible learning opportunities for adults who live or work in the heart of London and beyond, and who want to fulfil their potential in the expressive arts, languages and humanities and to continue the commitment to professional development and training, as well as provision for students with disabilities'. The City Literary Institute aims in all that it does 'to be proud of the distinctive style and ethos of adult education'.

9   The institute's average level of funding for 1995-96 was £8.80 per unit for its schedule 2 provision, compared with the median of £20.96 per unit for London-based sector colleges and £14.64 for specialist designated institutions. Funding for non-schedule 2 provision is expressed in weighted full-time equivalents. The City Literary Institute derives most of its income from Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) recurrent funding and from tuition fees. The institute's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10   The City Literary Institute offers an exceptionally diverse range of courses within the five main curriculum areas set out in its mission; expressive arts, languages, humanities, professional development and training, and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of languages taught is particularly impressive. There is an extensive range of courses for deaf adults, including lip-reading, sign language, speech and hearing therapy and the institute provides learning and communication support for deaf students studying at over 30 colleges and universities across London. A good range of computing courses is offered within humanities, including courses in using the Internet and multi-media courses. Some of the provision is distinctive and unusual. There are blues band workshops, courses in picture framing and gilding, Cornish, and great stage fights. There is also an interdisciplinary

course in renaissance studies which involves studying the literature, history, art, music and politics of the period. The City Literary Institute is regarded as a national centre of excellence for some of its provision, for example, its provision for deaf adults and for people who stammer. Most subject areas recruit well. Some courses are very popular and have waiting lists.

11   There are some gaps in provision. For example, photography is not included in the art provision and basic education, including English for speakers of other languages, is not well developed. There is no overall co-ordination of the provision of learning opportunities for adults with learning difficulties. Most students with learning difficulties study on separate specialist courses and few join other courses at the institute.

12   Staff generally plan courses carefully and in most subject areas there are clear progression routes for students. In music and languages, for example, there are five different levels of study. Occasionally, students, and even staff themselves are uncertain about the levels of particular courses. In a number of the curriculum areas, there are few accredited courses and some students expressed a desire for more formal recognition of their achievements. The institute should review its policies on accreditation. Clear priorities for the maintenance and development of curriculum areas have not been set. The reason for offering much of the provision is that it is what has been offered in previous years.

13   The institute offers a combination of short and long courses with opportunities for students to start their studies at different points throughout the year. Courses are provided during the day and evening and there are well-developed weekend courses. Each year there are summer programmes, which include a residential course outside London. In some subject areas, courses proceed at different rates to meet students' learning needs; for example, the 'French at a slow pace' course and the 'fast-track intensive desktop publishing' course. Open learning and distance learning are underdeveloped.

14   The institute's mission includes a commitment to 'removing barriers to participation, particularly for those people who traditionally have not had access to educational opportunities, as well as those with disabilities'. The institute is partly successful in achieving this. However, it has no recruitment targets related to the kinds of students it enrols and it does not systematically collect and analyse data on students' educational backgrounds. The proportion of students who identified themselves as from minority ethnic communities is below the proportion of the population of students who belong to these communities. In 1995-96, some 9 per cent of students were from ethnic minority backgrounds compared with 15 per cent for the London area, cited in the 1991 census. The proportion of students with disabilities who study at the institute is similar to that for the population as a whole. An increasing number of students are in receipt of benefits; some 33 per cent of students in 1994-95, rising to 37 per cent in 1995-96. The institute's students include adults of all ages.

15   A number of courses have been developed to meet the needs of adults from groups who have not usually had access to post-16 educational opportunities. These include courses in parent education, held in local schools, and courses in computing, food hygiene and first aid, specifically for unemployed adults. The institute also provides a few courses for people who are homeless. Some courses have been designed to meet the needs of employers, such as tailor-made language courses for staff at the Royal Opera House and professional training courses for teachers.

16   Marketing strategies are underdeveloped. The institute generally does not give enough attention to identifying the needs and interests of prospective students. Little use is made of labour market intelligence and the views of other agencies and there is little market research. Ideas for new courses come mostly from staff and existing students. In recognition of the need for more comprehensive and co-ordinated marketing activities, the institute has set up a marketing unit which will be fully operational from January 1997. A detailed marketing plan has been drawn up and some aspects of it have already been implemented.

17   The institute promotes its courses mainly through prospectuses, produced twice a year. Some 80,000 a year are mailed to homes and distributed widely across London, using tube stations, libraries and other agencies. Prospectuses contain comprehensive lists of courses. However, the information is not attractively presented: there are, for example, no visual images. The institute also produces a series of course leaflets and posters.   Advertisements are placed in some national and local newspapers, and in the London *Floodlight* magazine and the effectiveness of these is subsequently analysed. There is more scope for publicity focused on groups which have not normally participated in education post-16. Many students come to The City Literary Institute because they have heard about courses from friends or acquaintances and because of the institute's high reputation as an adult education provider. In a few specialist areas, there are well-developed publicity strategies, including, for example, word of mouth networks in local communities aimed at attracting people to parent education courses and the close links with agencies working with people who stammer, which are used to publicise the institute's speech therapy provision and related courses.

18   Close relationships with various agencies have improved the curriculum which the institute offers. Links with the Tate Gallery have led to jointly-run programmes focusing on the work of artists such as Cezanne. The institute's centre for deaf people has extensive links with the deaf community, with further and higher education institutions and relevant accrediting bodies. Drama staff have good links with theatres and people within the acting profession. There are national and international links with adult education organisations and the institute regularly hosts international education visits and participates in exchanges. For example, Danish and Swedish adult educators visit the institute as part of a work shadowing programme and the institute runs a few courses for students

abroad, such as 'learning Spanish in Spain'. At senior management level, however, relationships with some important local agencies are underdeveloped. Links with the local TECs, some local education authorities (LEAs) and other further and adult education providers are currently being established.

19   The institute has a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities. There is close attention to equal opportunities in the design and teaching of some courses; for example, in music where teachers give careful thought to world perspectives. When managers observe teachers, they comment on aspects of equal opportunities. The institute's equal opportunities policy has recently been revised. It is fairly comprehensive but lacks a sufficient focus on students' achievements. A detailed disability statement has also been produced recently which draws on a number of the institute's other documents relating to students with disabilities. There are no formal arrangements for systematically monitoring and evaluating the institute's policy and practice on equal opportunities. Managers are well informed on government policy and trends in further and adult education.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

20   Recently, there have been significant changes to the way in which the institute is managed. Procedures and structures are being developed to improve corporate planning and to generate a range of statistical data to inform management decisions. The new arrangements are not yet fully operational but they are beginning to have a positive impact on the way the institute works and its effectiveness.

21   The governing body is committed to the institute's mission and its adult education ethos. The governing body has 21 members. Three are nominated by the corporation of London and two by adult education organisations. The principal, two members of staff and one student representative are members and up to four co-options are allowed. At the time of the inspection, there were three vacancies. Six governors have a background in business, two have legal, financial or personnel management experience and two have expertise in education for deaf people. Although the members collectively bring to the institution a wide range of skills, some of the governors have little knowledge of education.

22   Meetings of the full governing body and its committees and working groups are held regularly and are well attended. Governors have set some standards for their own performance. They have conducted a review of their committee structure and a thorough self-assessment. They have discussed and agreed the institute's strategic planning documents. Clear minutes are kept of meetings, although there is little indication of the discussions leading to governors' decisions. Inadequate attention is given to curriculum matters and students' achievements. Governors are not greatly involved in the life of the institute and they have little contact with students. Action is being taken to address these issues.

23   The principalship provides clear direction and strong leadership. The restructuring of management carried out in September 1996 has reduced the number of managers reporting to members of the directorate and brought curriculum managers into the directorate. The new arrangements represent a significant shift from departments and units which have a separate identity to a more unified structure. However, aspects of the new arrangements have yet to be clarified fully. Some staff are unclear about some features of the new structure; for example, the role of programme managers, who include managers of large departments as well as relatively small units, how they operate and how they fit into the new structure. There is more work to be done before part-time staff fully understand the reasons for the restructuring and the other changes in the institute's operations, and before they are engaged in the new procedures. The effectiveness of curriculum management varies. There are some examples of good practice, but in other areas procedures are not effective and planning is weak.

24   Seven staff teams have recently been established to consider key policy areas and to develop policy and practice. These 'theme teams' have replaced a range of former committees and working groups. Some staff are unclear about the purpose and function of the teams. It is too early to judge their effectiveness, although the lack of involvement of part-time staff and the unrepresentative membership of some teams have emerged as issues to be addressed. The institute has a pattern of minuted meetings at all levels but there is not yet a clear framework for meetings and reporting which reflects the recent restructuring and which ensures that managers and full-time teachers have effective contact with part-time staff.

25   There have been a number of recent initiatives aimed at improving communications between staff at the institute. A staff newsletter has been introduced, which is sent to full-time and part-time staff, and open staff meetings, held every three weeks, are proving to be a useful forum for discussing new developments.

26   This year, the institute has made considerable progress in strategic planning. Between May and August, an extensive process involving senior and middle managers and governors led to the production of a strategic plan which has clear strategic and tactical objectives. This was then translated into an institutional action plan and programme area action plans. The various plans include measurable targets and the staff responsible for implementing particular aspects of the plans are identified. Managers understand the process and recognise the benefits. Governors appreciate that they are now better able to monitor implementation of strategic decisions. There is a clear commitment to monitor the implementation of action plans as part of an annual cycle, although a timetable has yet to be determined for this process.

27   A range of policies has been developed over recent years. These are now being produced in a common format. Health and safety is monitored by a committee which meets twice a term. Programme managers are responsible for conducting termly health and safety checks in their areas and central records are kept of all their reports. Arrangements for the review and monitoring of other policies vary. In some instances, they are unclear.

28   The quality of information generated by the management information system is improving. A useful range of statistical information is now provided for senior managers, including timely financial statements, enrolment data and summary information on teaching hours and student hours. Some management information is used for planning and review purposes. However, data on students' achievements are not collected centrally. Information on students' achievements and destinations is available by programme area for students on some accredited courses but it is not systematically analysed. Little work has been done to identify the patterns of progression and the destinations of students. The computerised information system consists of several connected, but not yet integrated, databases. The recent networking of the system to managers on the three main sites has significantly improved their access to information, although some staff experience difficulties in using the system. The institute has drawn up plans to integrate existing systems and to improve the speed and quality of reporting.

29   Progress has been made in determining the unit costs of provision and introducing measures to ensure the effective use of resources. However, this process is at an early stage of development and budgets are still determined largely on a historical basis. Figures have been calculated for the partial costs of each programme area and these are used to inform the budgeting process. Each cost centre is given an income target for its contribution to the institute's central budget. This is calculated from the fee income and expenditure for each programme area. Managers generally understand how this works. Unit costing is retrospective and procedures for forecasting costs to inform planning have not yet been devised. Measures to improve efficiency include an exercise to set minimum class sizes. The directorate now regularly receives lists of all courses with fewer than 12 students. Policy guidelines on class sizes have been drawn up and tighter monitoring established.

30   Enrolment targets are set for the institution but not for individual programme areas. The institute achieved its target in 1995-96, and is on course to achieve its target for 1996-97. The institute's figures show that course completion rates vary significantly and are low on some courses. The average course completion rate in 1995-96 was 69 per cent. The institute is concerned to improve overall retention levels. Attendance rates are monitored and evaluated.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

31   Students find The City Literary Institute a stimulating and friendly place to study. They enjoy working in an adult education environment and value the support offered by staff. The institute provides an increasing range of systematic guidance and support services.

32   The institute has established flexible and efficient enrolment procedures. Students can enrol by telephone, fax, post or in person throughout the year. Additional enrolment services are set up during late summer and early autumn for the large number of courses starting in the autumn term. The enrolment telephone hotline has proved useful as a first point of contact for inquiries. It dealt with over 6,000 inquiries in the late summer and early autumn 1996. A separate information helpline provided over 6,500 inquirers with detailed information and advice on courses between July and November 1996. There is scope for increasing the hours these lines are open; for example, to include the evenings. Enrolment inquiries are dealt with by staff across the institute. The enrolment system is not monitored sufficiently closely; for example, procedures vary from site to site. Some courses have waiting lists and these are managed fairly and efficiently.

33   Students are able to make informed choices about their studies. In addition to the prospectus and course information sheets, there are comprehensive course guides and students can avail themselves of a range of guidance services.

34   Many students benefit from receiving guidance, the quality of which is generally high. The learning advice and support unit provides advice on a 'drop-in' or appointments basis. The unit also provides guidance, when requested, on university applications, career opportunities, and financial matters and grants. Some 2,854 students used the central guidance service in 1995-96. The institute has a system of marking courses with a star in the prospectus if students are required to have a guidance interview and assessment before they enrol on the course. Guidance and assessments carried out during admissions interviews for these 'starred' courses are thorough; amongst other things, they ensure that students enrol for courses at the right level. Specialist staff offer guidance for each programme area throughout the year and these advice sessions are generally well used. For example, between July and November 1996, over 1,600 students benefited from interviews with music staff. Students can also sample classes using a free visitor's pass before enrolling on a course. 'Taster' courses are offered in some areas to help students make decisions. Arrangements for students to transfer to other courses, if this is appropriate, are effective.

35   Some aspects of guidance for students who are already on courses require further development. For example, careers guidance and careers education for students who are unemployed, are not sufficiently comprehensive. There is little monitoring of the quality of the guidance

offered to students generally. Although the need is small, the arrangements for accrediting students' prior learning are also underdeveloped.

36   A formal programme of induction to courses was provided for all students for the first time this year. The programme was well organised and effective and most induction sessions were of high quality. Students found that the information they were given about their courses and studying at the institute was helpful and clear. Students were advised of their rights and responsibilities. Many, but not all, students received a comprehensive students' handbook during induction. Preparatory training of staff and a checklist of the matters teachers were expected to cover during induction were beneficial and helped to ensure consistent practice.

37   Arrangements for identifying, and responding to, students requiring additional learning support are not systematic. Generally, students themselves ask for support directly. Systems for following up students who have identified a need for learning support in their learning agreement are not fully effective. In some course areas, teachers help to identify students' learning support needs and many give valuable informal support to students. About 90 students a day benefit from the support services offered by the recently-expanded learning centre. The centre provides help with writing essays, preparing curricula vitae, support in coping with dyslexia and help in specific areas of knowledge. It also offers several short courses in study skills. Students benefit from using computers in the centre to practise wordprocessing and other skills. However, there are few resources specifically designed for students to work on their own. There is scope for improved co-ordination of the library and learning centre services. Despite the efforts made to publicise support services, some students, particularly those who are on non-accredited courses, are not aware of the learning centre.

38   Specific learning support provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective. Support arrangements for students who are deaf are of particularly high quality. All deaf students have an individual interview and assessment to guide decisions about the most appropriate course and forms of support. The support available includes tuition from specialist teachers of the deaf and assistance from note takers and communicators. Some of the institute's administrative and catering staff have learned sign language in order to communicate more effectively with deaf students. A recent survey across the institute has identified over 1,300 students with a disability, many of whom need additional support. Staff are exploring how best to provide services which meet these needs. Detailed advice for staff on how to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is given in the staff handbook.

39   Arrangements for tutorial support are fully effective only on a few courses. On some accredited courses, tutorials are planned and integrated with subject teaching; on other courses, tutorials are unplanned or available only informally. The quality of tutorial support on non-accredited

courses is inconsistent; on some courses there is no support. Further work is needed to clarify the functions of tutorial support and to identify ways of providing the support appropriate to students on different kinds of courses. On a few courses students develop a record of their achievements but most are not offered this opportunity.

40   Confidential counselling is available to all students, provided by professionally trained staff. In addition, there is a specialist counsellor for deaf students whose services are highly valued. Counselling has effectively helped students experiencing personal difficulties and has been an important factor in enabling some students to complete their courses. The institute runs a creche which has places for up to eight children each session. Parents appreciate this facility. There is a waiting list for places at a number of times in the week. Currently, there is no students' association but a group of students who are 'friends of the institute' help promote the work of the institute. They also raise money for the student hardship fund. In 1995-96, 136 students received support from the fund. One student is elected to the governing body and three are elected to the academic board. Few students participate in the elections.

41   Attendance at classes is monitored. Teachers generally send a standard postcard to students who have missed sessions for two consecutive weeks. Some do not see the purpose of following up absences of students on non-accredited courses.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

42   Of the classes inspected, 66 per cent had strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. Five per cent of classes had weaknesses which outweighed the strengths. In the classes inspected, the average attendance was 77 per cent. The average number of students in each class was 12. The inspection grades awarded to the classes inspected are shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
Non-schedule 2 courses	28	37	26	7	0	98
Schedule 2 courses	8	14	11	0	0	33
Total	**36**	**51**	**37**	**7**	**0**	**131**

43   Most of the teaching is effective and some is outstanding. Some teachers are distinguished in their specialisms. Many are skilled in using a variety of methods of working. Classes are generally well planned and have clear aims which teachers explain to their students. Most teachers have established good working relationships with their students. They know them well as individuals and provide them with a high level of care and attention. Most learning activities are planned at appropriate levels

and take account of differing needs and abilities. Most teachers make regular checks on students' understanding.

44 Some teaching is of poorer quality. A few teachers fail to plan their classes. Some do not define their learning objectives and in a few classes the learning objectives were clear but not achieved. Teachers do not always cater sufficiently for students with differing levels of knowledge and ability. In a few classes, teachers failed to sustain students' interest. Some teachers make little use of audio and visual aids to help develop students' understanding. Many of the schemes of work fail to describe the methods for assessing students' learning, and in some cases, teachers' written comments on students' work were inadequate as a means of helping them to improve the quality of their work.

45 Practical and theoretical work in visual arts is generally well linked. In the more effective classes, students were encouraged to develop their creative and technical skills and to research topics thoroughly in their assignments. Teachers have high expectations of their students. They made sure that students understood the historical and social contexts of their subjects and were able to apply sophisticated concepts and techniques. Teachers inform students of their progress on an informal basis through studio discussion and group critiques and, more formally, through individual assessments. Students record their progress in sketch-books, portfolios, notebooks and files. They have little access to computer-aided design, film and video and this restricts the breadth of their learning. In some theoretical classes, students were not encouraged to take notes and some of the printed learning materials provided were of poor quality. Teachers' knowledge and expertise is not always effectively transmitted to the students. Some teachers do not encourage students to undertake sufficient research and, in consequence, students develop their work from a weak conceptual base.

46 Many music teachers are professional musicians whose highly-developed skills are reflected in their teaching. They use an effective range of methods of working which include rhythmic and vocal skills exercises. In the better classes, teachers employ a variety of challenging activities, not only to develop students' specialist skills but also to improve their general musicianship. There is an emphasis, in many classes, on solo performance. A suitable emphasis is also given to practice and homework. Some singing courses are offered for students who consider themselves to be 'tone deaf'; these offer a supportive environment, and activities which build confidence based on a repertoire of choral songs. In a few practical classes, more effective management of activities would have allowed students more time for playing. Students, generally, would benefit from more encouragement to be self-critical about their playing.

47 In drama, there is a strong professional ethos and effective skill-based teaching on most courses. The quality of some teaching is impressive. In one class, a teacher of alternative comedy worked from a detailed scheme which included visits to comedy venues, and students

kept their own notebooks with records of activities and their achievements. In some classes, there are opportunities for students to work in groups and to make their own creative contributions. Teachers give attention to individual students' progress and involve students in practical activities and discussions. Some teachers make rigorous analyses of students' performances which enable the students to understand their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Appropriate attention is paid to safety in stage-fighting classes. In some classes, a focus on individual students' performances leads to little practical involvement for the majority of students. In others, students are treated as an undifferentiated group and their differing learning needs are not met. Some teachers give students encouragement and praise but provide little of the constructive criticism necessary to enable them to develop their skills further.

48   In foreign language classes, the language being studied is the main means of classroom communication. The combination of skilful teachers, most of them native speakers, and well-motivated adults, creates a good climate for successful learning. Teachers manage varied classroom activities well. Lively activities in pairs and small groups encourage all students to contribute. Teachers regularly set homework for students, on both the accredited and non-accredited courses, and this is marked in the language being studied. Teachers make good use of classroom resources such as overhead projectors, books and pictures. Students' progress is reviewed informally. There are no systematic arrangements for reviewing or recording students' progress. In a few classes, the pace of work is too slow, there is inadequate consolidation of what has been learned, and too few opportunities for individual students to speak.

49   In humanities, the standards of teaching vary significantly. In some classes, teaching is effective and learning activities are designed to cater appropriately for students of differing abilities. Teachers give clear presentations and check students' understanding. Students receive useful printed learning materials. There are examples of teachers effectively negotiating with students the methods of working and the focus to be given to course content. In the weaker classes, teaching methods are inappropriate, the work is not organised effectively to meet students' differing needs and abilities, or class time is poorly managed. The content and pace of some lectures is unsuitable for the students. Some teachers fail to use students' own knowledge and understanding or to encourage them to develop the skills of critical analysis. On non-accredited courses, teachers generally do not monitor or assess students' progress.

50   Teachers have high expectations of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and most classes are suitably challenging. Staff are skilled in particular specialisms such as speech therapy and lip reading and most use a wide range of teaching methods designed to meet students' needs. There are opportunities for students to build on their strengths. Teachers break down tasks into manageable steps and carefully check students' understanding. However, some teachers focus too much on

class teaching and completion of tasks and there is not enough analysis of the learning achieved. Some make students too dependent, particularly where class objectives are not linked to students' adult lives.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

51 Students enjoy their studies and most are highly motivated. Many students learn effectively, achieve well, and make good progress. The institute has explored different ways of assessing students' learning outcomes on non-accredited courses. A pilot initiative is currently being undertaken by 20 teachers on 202 courses. At the present time, most courses have no procedures for assessing students' achievements. Some teachers are not clear about what the intended outcomes should be and students find it hard to assess their own progress. There are few opportunities for students to develop key skills.

52 Students on courses in the visual arts achieve high standards. For example, some of their work in embroidered textiles demonstrates impressive standards of creativity and technical achievement. On non-accredited courses, a newly-established system for recording each student's progress is beginning to help teachers and students measure progress. The performance of the small numbers of students who take examinations is good. In 1994-95 and in 1995-96, all students passed the ceramics diploma and the foundation studies certificate. A high proportion of students progress to higher education from both of these courses.

53 Music students are developing specialist and general musicianship skills to a good standard. They practise newly-acquired skills in classes and in their own time. Students develop good performance skills. Some perform in public; for example, giving piano recitals and participating in international jazz events. Students recognise and value their own achievements. The proportion of students achieving credits on the three-year musicianship diploma increased from 47 per cent in 1994-95 to 67 per cent in 1995-96. However, the overall retention rate for music courses in 1995-96 was only 57 per cent. A significant number of students continue their studies at the institute by progressing to a course at the next level.

54 Most drama students gain a wide range of skills and good knowledge of the subject. They work well in groups and most develop impressive performance skills. In recent years, an increasing proportion of candidates, 67 per cent of candidates in 1994-95 rising to 81 per cent in 1995-96, has achieved certificates in stage combat. On a few courses, the work is insufficiently challenging and students fail to make the progress commensurate with their ability. Generally, students do not have adequate opportunity to develop relevant key skills; for example, study skills and information technology skills.

55 Foreign language students show good understanding and command of the language they are studying. They express themselves with

confidence and enthusiasm: asking questions, generating language, initiating dialogue with each other, and expressing complex ideas. Students' written work is of an exceptionally high standard. Much of it shows maturity and depth of knowledge. Eighty-eight per cent of the 25 students who took the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) in languages in 1995-96 gained grades A to C. This is well above the national average although not all students took the examination. On other examinations in languages there was an average pass rate of 98 per cent in 1995-96. Retention rates for language courses are low; 61 per cent of students completed their course in 1995-96. A substantial proportion of students who complete their courses progress to more advanced language courses. Some students who started as complete beginners have progressed to the most advanced level.

56   On non-accredited courses in humanities, some students learn effectively and a few make outstanding progress. For example, on creative writing courses a few students develop their writing skills from beginners' level to publication standard and several have had their work published. Some students are not achieving what might be expected of them. Retention rates are low on a few courses. In 1995-96, for example, only 56 per cent of the students following communication skills and study skills courses completed their studies. There are some good examination results on accredited courses in humanities. For example, on access to higher education courses 84 per cent of candidates gained the certificate in 1994-95 and 88 per cent in 1995-96. Almost all students who complete an access course go on to higher education.

57   Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond well to the challenges which are set and they are proud of their achievements. Some students gain qualifications. In 1995-96, there was a 100 per cent pass rate on the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) wordpower and numberpower courses and 90 per cent of candidates passed the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) certificates in communicative use of English. Many students make significant progress in using British Sign Language. Several students with learning difficulties have developed skills in art and have exhibited and sold their work. There is insufficient evidence of achievement and progression for some students with learning difficulties, several of whom have attended the same courses for a number of years.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58   The institute has made progress in developing procedures to assure quality, but acknowledges that quality assurance arrangements are in the early stages of development. The management of quality assurance is seen as a corporate responsibility; there is no single post-holder in the directorate with responsibility for ensuring that new procedures are effectively implemented. A policy on quality has been introduced, but has not yet been formally approved by governors. The institute strategic plan has several objectives for 1996-97 which focus on quality assurance. There

is generally a low awareness amongst part-time teachers of existing quality assurance arrangements or the need to make further improvements.

59   There is no overall quality assurance framework which brings together the various procedures that are being developed and there is no quality manual or handbook. Links are not made between quality assurance procedures and the internal audit process which is thorough. Opportunities are missed to cross-reference separate quality documents. For example, the standards identified for teaching and the promotion of learning are not related to the check-list used for observing classroom teachers. The standards in the charter are not linked to any performance indicators identified in other documents.

60   Course review procedures are not being implemented on some courses and they have only recently been introduced on many other courses. Where they exist, they are often not effective. The reviews, which include evaluations by students and teachers, place insufficient emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and students' achievements. Teachers are not systematic in completing their evaluations. All courses have a form describing the outline of the course and learning outcomes but, on most courses, there are no procedures for measuring whether these intended outcomes are achieved. Course teams and individual teachers have not yet agreed success criteria for their courses. There is some good practice in course review; for example, on some well-established accredited courses. However, good practice is not yet shared across the institute.

61   Much work has gone into developing a set of standards and targets for the institute's activities, which are grouped under the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. They are set out in a document which has been approved by the directorate but which has not yet been implemented or widely disseminated. Another document summarising key performance indicators for the institute has recently been produced by the directorate. It lists 21 key indicators with targets for 1996-97 alongside actual achievements for 1995-96. No procedures have yet been introduced to monitor performance against these targets.

62   A postal survey is conducted to find out students' views on courses and the most recent survey indicates a high degree of satisfaction. However, the sample of 1,000 students was small and generated only 428 responses, representing less than 2 per cent of all students. The results of this survey are not effectively reported to teachers or students.

63   Students may comment about any aspect of their experience at the institute using a form which is widely distributed across the institution. Forms are sent to the principal who responds to the students concerned. An official complaints procedure is in place, with the deputy principal as the named complaints officer. Complaints are responded to promptly. A log is kept of all complaints, although there is no annual summary of the kinds of complaint which were made or the actions which were taken.

64   The institute charter was first introduced in 1994 and revised recently, following consultation with students. It provides a clear description of what students can expect but does not contain measurable service targets. The charter is available in the library, reception areas and general offices and it is also published in the student handbook. The charter is not distributed to many students and it is generally not well known to students.

65   The current constitution of the academic board was agreed by governors in 1990. The board is given specific responsibility for 'control of all schemes of teaching' and 'the quality of courses'. However, it has not been effective in discharging these responsibilities. The institute has no procedure for approving courses and the board has not yet approved the introduction of most new courses. The board does not systematically receive reports of annual course reviews, where these have been carried out, and has not routinely discussed academic standards or made judgements about the quality of teaching or students' achievements. It does not require reports of performance from the programme areas. The role of the academic board is currently being reviewed.

66   Reporting of performance at institute level is incomplete and unsystematic. Much relevant information is collected at programme level but this is not aggregated and summarised at institute level. There is no annual review cycle linked to the production of a report on the institute's performance.   The current annual report is the first to report on performance, but there is, as yet, little comparative data which can be used to measure performance.

67   There is a useful system for observing teachers in the classroom. All newly-appointed teachers are observed by their manager within the first few weeks of teaching and the intention is that all teachers are observed every two years. Teachers are provided with oral and written feedback on their performance. Generally, teachers find the observations helpful and some improvements in teaching have been made as a result. Many managers undertake informal monitoring of the quality of teaching and have a good knowledge of the strengths of their teachers. Some managers encourage teachers but provide little constructive criticism.

68   The institute has a well-established system for appraisal of staff. All full-time teachers and support staff are appraised over an annual cycle. The appraisal policy and procedures provide an effective framework for monitoring individuals' performance and agreeing appropriate targets. A successful programme of training for appraisers and appraisees is in place. Most part-time teachers are not appraised. Members of the directorate are appraised annually by the principal and the intention is for the principal to be appraised by the chair of governors.

69   The institute has a staff-development policy but there is no overall plan for staff development which sets out the institute's staff-development activities and budget allocations. There is an annual review of staff

development, covering the number and types of activity undertaken during the previous year. However, there is no evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme and development activities are not directly linked to the institute's strategic objectives. Staff have an entitlement to enrol on an institute course at a discretionary rate of 15 per cent of the standard fee, and many take advantage of this. New staff receive an induction. The institute's training unit produces an annual programme of activities but the take up of places on the programme in 1995-96 was low. The budget for staff development has been reduced this year and is about 0.6 per cent of the staffing budget and 0.5 per cent of total expenditure. Some staff-development activities using existing staff time are not costed or counted in these budgets. There are some examples of good practice in staff development, for example in languages and visual arts, where planned events have been well attended and valued by staff.

70   The institute has produced a self-assessment report which follows the framework described in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement.* The report is an honest description of current strengths and weaknesses and includes clear judgements. It reflects a careful consideration of the issues and the directorate's sound awareness of the institute's current position and the need to make further improvements, particularly with regard to cross-institute and strategic issues. Many of the judgements in the report were confirmed during the inspection.

RESOURCES

Staffing

71   Most full-time staff are committed to their work with students and are well qualified. Eighty-five per cent of full-time teachers are graduates or have an equivalent professional qualification and 87 per cent hold a teaching qualification. Many of the 800 or so part-time teachers, who have experience as scholars, artists and performers, make a strong contribution to the work of the institute. However, only 55 per cent of part-time teachers have a teaching qualification. Twenty-nine teachers have training and development lead body awards. Staff working with deaf students are particularly well qualified. One-third of these staff are deaf themselves and provide positive role models for students. Library staff and staff from the counselling and advice and guidance services, who provide direct support to students, are generally well qualified. There are adequate numbers of administrative and technical support staff and they make an important contribution to the work of the institute. Four out of seven members of the directorate are women.

72   The high proportion of part-time to full-time teachers arises more from historic reasons than from a considered strategy for deploying staff. Many full-time teachers have substantial administrative and management responsibilities and some support large numbers of part-time teachers. There are inconsistencies in the volume of work and levels of responsibility

some staff have; variations are particularly marked for programme managers. Part-time teachers play an increasingly important role in planning and evaluating courses and in staff development. In a few subject areas, part-time teachers are not adequately supported. The institute recognises the need to develop further the management skills of staff. It has recently established management training, offering national vocational qualifications (NVQs) for middle and senior managers.

Equipment/learning resources

73   There is no policy for the replacement of equipment or procedures for replacing equipment on a rolling programme. Purchases are made as the need arises and the budget for these is small. Much of the institute's equipment is old. A few items of equipment break down frequently, adversely affecting students' and teachers' work. However, arrangements for maintaining equipment are generally thorough and efficient. Some teachers rely on self-help and fund-raising initiatives to provide essential equipment and resources for their teaching.

74   General equipment for teaching, including whiteboards, overhead projectors, televisions and video recorders, is available in classrooms. In some subject areas however, the poor quality or lack of specialist equipment and resources impedes students' learning. In professional drama courses, sound, lighting and television equipment is inadequate. In music, the electronic music synthesis equipment is not up to date and there are no recording facilities of a professional standard. In art, there is too little equipment for computer-aided design. In languages, there are few facilities for listening and viewing which students can use at their own convenience. There is a bank of specialist equipment for deaf people, although some is coming towards the end of its useful life and needs replacing.

75   Computers are generally underused for teaching purposes. An early draft of an information technology policy has recently been written but has not yet been approved. The institute has 54 computers for teaching purposes, most of which are in the two computer classrooms and the learning centre at the Stukeley Street site. The computer classrooms have 26 computers, 17 of which have compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases. There are 12 computers in the learning centre, including two with CD-ROMs and access to the Internet. Most computers are modern and have industrial standard software. A few computers used for teaching require upgrading and there is a shortage of printers. In subject areas other than computing, teachers rarely use computers to help students learn.

76   The main library has a collection of about 28,000 volumes. In addition, there are small libraries at two other sites, one with 9,000 and one with 1,000 volumes. Some books are old but generally books and resources match the courses taught. The libraries are well used by students. The number of study spaces is adequate for the largely

part-time student body. There is some useful liaison between the library and teaching staff on priorities for new purchases. Liaison is more systematic with teachers running accredited courses. The library stock is not sufficiently up to date in some areas; for example, in music where there is a good stock of books on classical music but a poor collection of jazz publications. There are few computerised learning resources in the libraries. The privately run bookshop, which has a stock of books relevant to the courses offered at the institute, is appreciated by students.

Accommodation

77   The institute's main sites have the advantages, as well as some of the disadvantages, of a Central London location. They are on main transport routes in busy areas which are generally perceived by students to be safe at night. However, the buildings are sited on narrow backstreets or courtyards and are not easily visible from the main roads. Some passers-by are unaware of their existence. The buildings were all constructed before the Second World War and were designed for different kinds of education. The institute strives with much success to make best use of old, and in parts inappropriate, accommodation. Some toilet facilities, metal windows, heating systems and the lift are inadequate and need improving. There is poor access to buildings for people with restricted mobility.

78   The interiors of buildings are in reasonable decorative order, despite a history of lack of investment. The standard of most teaching rooms is adequate. A few teaching rooms provide a pleasant learning environment. Teaching rooms lack visual display. The standard of maintenance and cleaning across the sites is adequate. The main reception areas at three of the buildings are small but welcoming. Two sites have cafeterias which provide a good range of refreshments and are also used by students as social areas.

79   Room use is not matched effectively to curriculum planning. The tradition of a curriculum area having sole use of parts of buildings has restricted learning opportunities for students. It has led to certain subject areas, which have long waiting lists for courses, having no spare classrooms, whilst other subject areas maintain a territorial hold on space that they do not fully occupy. Certain teaching activities are inappropriately sited. For example, some classes are interrupted by noise from adjacent rooms, some incompatible practical teaching activities are located next to each other, and some classrooms are too small for the classes using them. The theatre is not of a suitable professional standard for the level of work being taught. A survey of space utilisation at the three larger sites shows the institute is at full capacity on two sites in the evenings and at one site on Saturdays. There is too little flexibility for programming rooms at these sites during peak times. For example, it is difficult to find an alternative classroom on the ground floor if the class contains students with restricted mobility or to provide a room for meetings of staff, students or governors.

The institute is developing new strategies for the use of space. The recently drawn up accommodation strategy relates well to the mission.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

80   The strengths of The City Literary Institute are:

*   effective, and in a number of cases, outstanding teaching

*   the good levels of achievements of many students

*   the impressive foreign language provision

*   an exceptionally diverse range of courses

*   strong leadership and direction from the principalship

*   strategic planning processes which are becoming more thorough and effective

*   recruitment procedures and guidance which enable students to make informed choices about their studies

*   high-quality support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly for deaf adults

*   committed and well-qualified full-time staff and part-time teachers who bring high levels of professional expertise.

81   If it is to continue to develop the quality of its provision, the institute should:

*   improve the quality of some teaching

*   develop systems for assessing and recording students' achievements

*   improve completion rates on some courses

*   systematically collect and analyse data on students' achievements and destinations

*   set priorities for curriculum developments and establish an effective framework of provision for students with learning difficulties

*   further develop its management structures

*   review and develop arrangements for tutorials and learning support

*   update and improve specialist equipment and accommodation

*   develop a comprehensive quality assurance system which includes systematic course reviews using agreed criteria for success.

FIGURES

Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the institute to the inspection team.
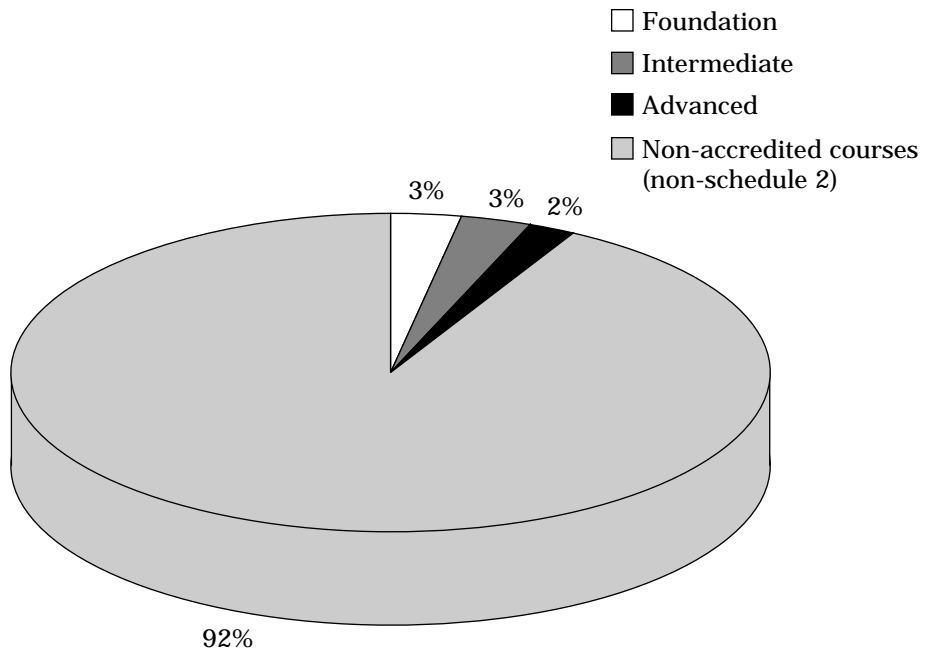
Figure 1

The City Literary Institute: percentage student numbers by age (as at July 1996)
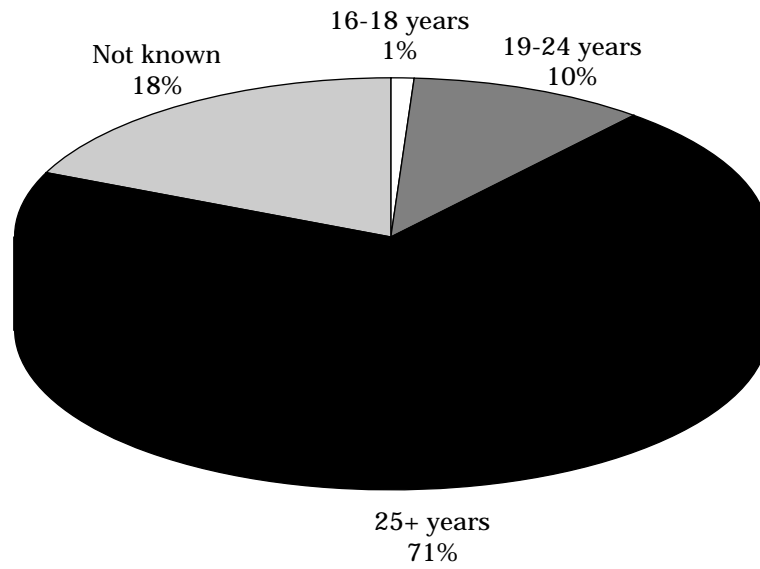
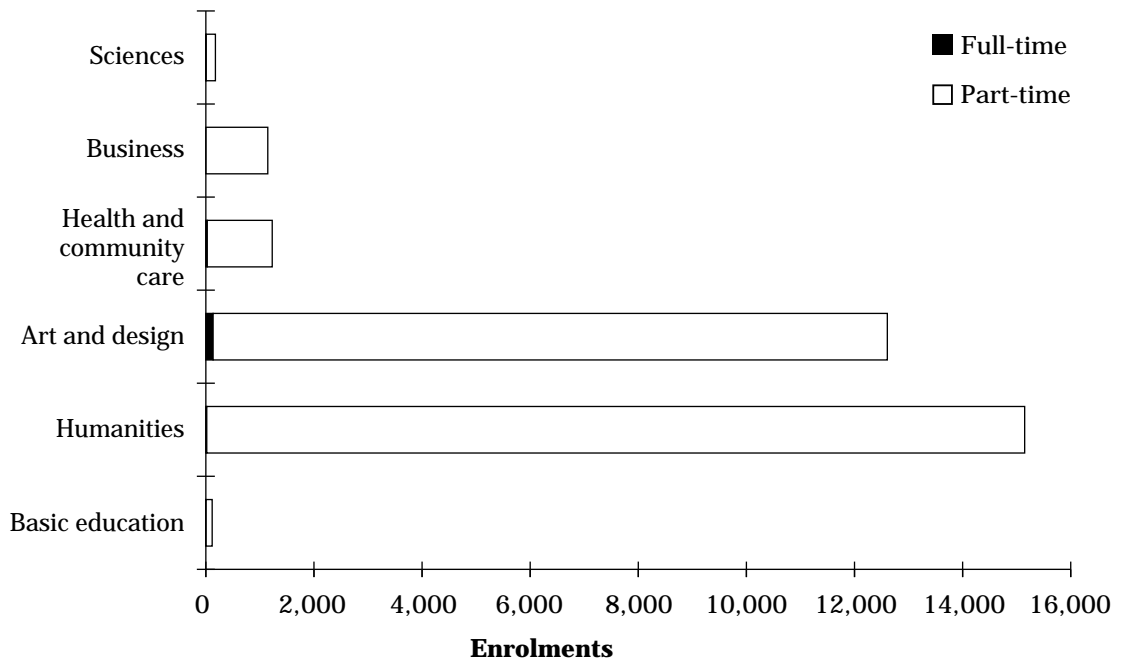Student numbers: 19,493

Figure 2

The City Literary Institute: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at July 1996)

Student numbers: 19,493

Figure 3

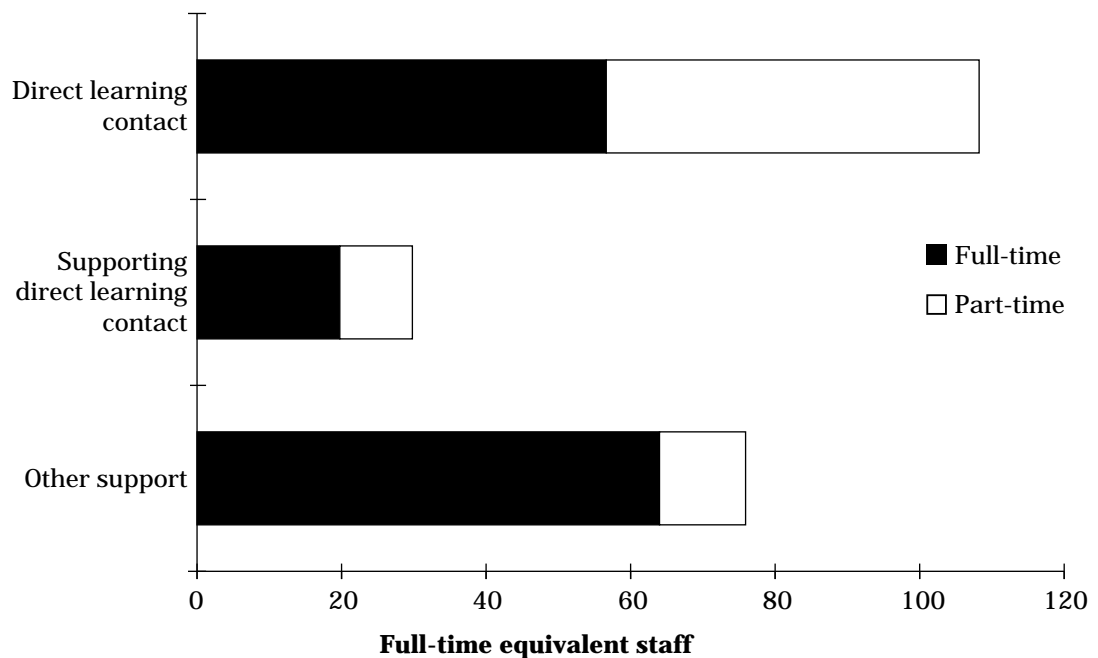**The City Literary Institute: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1996)**

Enrolments: 30,423

Note: *the college was not able to supply figures for student numbers.*
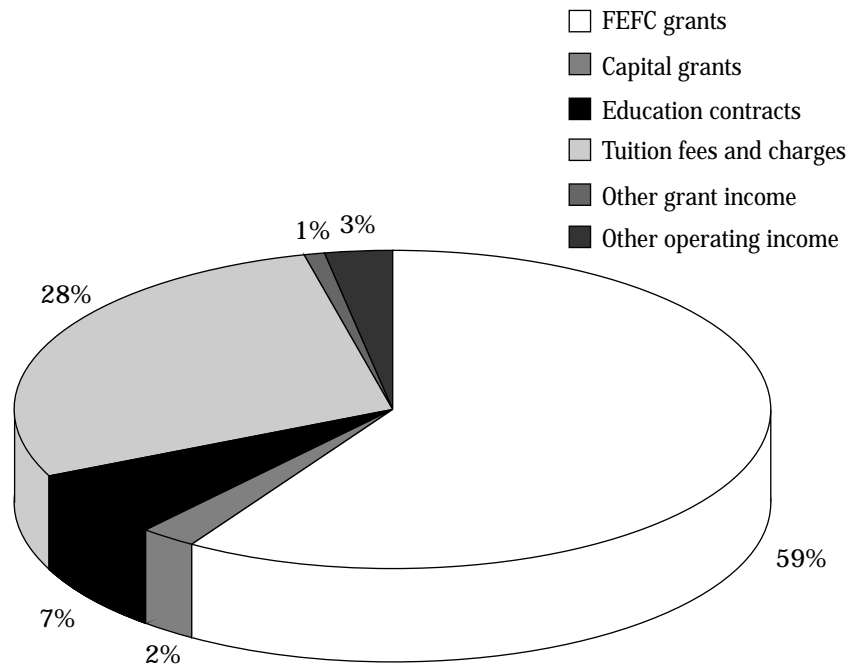
Figure 4

The City Literary Institute: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)
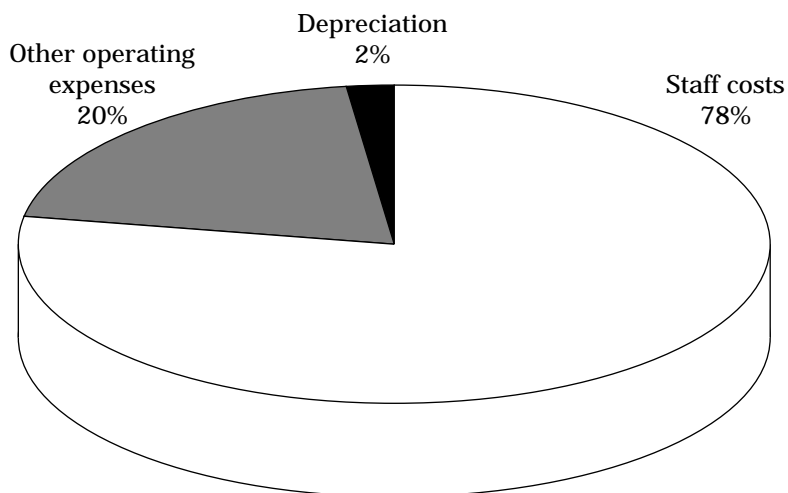

Full-time equivalent staff: 214

Figure 5

The City Literary Institute: income (for 12 months to July 1996)

Legend:
- ☐ FEFC grants
- ◩ Capital grants
- ■ Education contracts
- ☐ Tuition fees and charges
- ◩ Other grant income
- ◼ Other operating income

1% 3%

28%

59%

7%

2%

Income: £7,342,000

Figure 6

The City Literary Institute: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

Depreciation
2%

Other operating
expenses
20%

Staff costs
78%

Expenditure: £6,867,000

26