

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Crawley College

April 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 56/95

CRAWLEY COLLEGE SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected September 1994 – February 1995

Summary

Crawley College offers a broad range of courses which meet local needs. It has well-developed links with industry and with the Sussex Training and Enterprise Council. The college uses systematic market research in planning new provision. There is an effective governing body and senior management team. There is an effective student guidance and support service although its co-ordination and monitoring need to be strengthened. Teaching is generally sound and there is a strong commitment to the support of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most students are over 19 years of age and their examination results on vocational courses are generally good. Results for the small proportion of 16-18 year olds are below average at GCE A level and on the final year of vocational courses. Teaching staff are well qualified and there is a systematic approach to staff development. Most courses are adequately equipped and the provision for information technology is good. The college should develop an effective management information system and clearer objectives for managers in its strategic planning. The quality assurance system lacks targets and performance indicators against which progress can be gauged. There are poor levels of student retention, achievement and progression in some study areas. The limited range of foundation level programmes should be extended if the college mission to offer open access is to be realised.

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	3
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	2
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Sciences	3	Hair and beauty	2
Computing	2	Health and care	3
Construction	2	Art and design and performing arts	3
Engineering	2	Access and teacher education	2
Business and management	3	Humanities and social science	3
Catering	2	Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and adult basic education	2
Leisure and tourism	3		

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INTRODUCTION

1 Crawley College was inspected in three stages. Enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the start of the autumn term 1994. The specialist visits took place over two weeks in November 1994 and the cross-college visit in January 1995. Fourteen inspectors were involved for a total of 79 inspector days. Inspectors visited 185 classes and examined a representative sample of students' work. Meetings were held with members of the corporation, the senior management team, teachers, support staff, students past and present, parents, local employers, careers officers and staff of local schools. Discussions also took place with a representative of the local training and enterprise council (TEC). Inspectors examined college policy statements, minutes of committees, working papers and documents relating to college organisation. An inspector attended a meeting of an employers' quality assurance forum.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Crawley College was built as part of the new town development in the late 1950s. It is easily accessible from London, Gatwick Airport and other regional centres. The main site, which is approximately 3.5 hectares, is close to the town centre and provides a wide range of learning facilities and a conference centre. The college has two other sites in Crawley at West Green and Three Bridges, and there are adult education facilities in East Grinstead. A new centre at Arun House in Horsham provides business and management studies, art and design, leisure and tourism, caring and general education programmes.

3 The college employs a total of 349 full-time equivalent staff of whom 193 are lecturers and 156 are support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 1. There are approximately 11,000 students. The proportion of adult students has increased gradually to 77 per cent of all students. This year the college has achieved a 6.2 per cent growth. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 2 and 3. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 4. Approximately 46 per cent of students are from Crawley borough. Others come mainly from East Grinstead, Horsham, Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and South London. There is significant competition for students from local schools and sixth form colleges. The college's six areas of study, each providing a broad range of courses, are: business and management; technology; design and construction; care, health and science; general and continuing education, and service industries.

4 Crawley has traditionally enjoyed high levels of employment. Unemployment is now 4.7 per cent. There are relatively few large employers in the area. The local economy is dominated by the service sector. Fifteen per cent of the work force are employed in manufacturing. The staying-on rate for education and training after the age of 16 is one of the highest in the country, at 86 per cent. Minority ethnic groups form

8 per cent of the population of Crawley, more than double the average rate in the south east, and 12 per cent of the college's students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

5 The mission of Crawley College is to be the leading provider of high-quality education and training in the region.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

6 The college is responding well to the national targets for education and training. A central marketing unit has been established and recruitment targets are set for each area of study. There was a 12 per cent growth in student numbers between September 1993 and September 1994 and, although targets have not yet been reached this year, the number of students and the range of courses are still increasing. There were 1,515 different courses in 1994. There are 1,550 this session, with the largest increases in National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes. Many courses offer a choice between full-time and part-time study and courses range from foundation level to degree level. The college is the only college in the sector to offer an undergraduate course in occupational therapy. Technology forms the core of the provision with more recent growth in services to people. The college has a limited range of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses. The absence of some foundation level GNVQs restricts the options available to some applicants who join the college as a result of its open-access policy.

7 In response to enquiries about craft courses, a pilot programme was introduced which has led to a full-time NVQ in construction. There has been a growth of over 20 per cent in the number of students following hair and beauty, leisure and tourism, and catering courses. A new commercial travel shop is opening in spring 1995 which will provide work experience for the new NVQ programmes. The new food court provides a working environment for catering students. The college offers access courses for women returners, and intensive courses such as the 12-week certificate in personnel practice. This year the college has already registered 800 students on recently designed jobseeker programmes specifically provided for local adult unemployed.

8 Although some links have been maintained, the college's relationships with local schools have become strained since incorporation. The manager of student services chairs the schools and community liaison committee. This year, the number of school visits has increased, but link courses with schools have declined since GNVQ was introduced. Despite increasing competition, there was a gradual increase in enrolments from local schools in the three years to 1994. Applications for 1994-95 fell from 1,525 to 1,476 but this may be the consequence of a fall in the number of students in their final year of compulsory schooling. Individual members of the college still have good connections with schools. The college has provided

Training and Development Lead Body assessor training for local schools and is now moving on to train verifiers. The college has supported the reintroduction of food studies in the national curriculum by providing cookery classes for 7-12 year olds. The hair and beauty department has worked with a nearby school to help them produce a fashion show. The college and three local schools are part of the Crawley Compact Initiative, sponsored by Sussex TEC. Regular contact is maintained with the local education authority (LEA).

9 The college has close connections with the University of Sussex, the University of Brighton and the Chichester Institute of Higher Education for which it runs franchised technology, management and teacher education courses. The college also maintains links with other further education colleges in a Sussex consortium.

10 The college is well regarded by the TEC. It is the local TEC's largest training provider in north Sussex and has met the requirements of the Sussex TEC quality management system. Crawley College has responded readily to suggestions for new courses and it was the college which initiated the Sussex Quality Network, supported by the TEC.

11 The college had industrial advisory boards in many areas but found them to be less effective than had been hoped. Only two remain. Teaching staff now work directly with companies. The policy is proving effective in a number of programme areas. In hospitality and catering, for example, each course team includes an industrial representative. Student chefs working with chef tutors, and trainee receptionists with restaurant managers, help staff to ensure that courses are relevant and up to date. The college has worked hard to build up courses for companies. A new services to business manager now works with 50 local firms and has begun to secure training contacts. For example, a two-week welding course for the Royal Mail has been successful and it is anticipated that this will be regularly repeated. The college responds effectively to its clients' wishes, for example in changing the shorthand content of journalism courses. College services are considered by its customers to be appropriate and competitively priced.

12 Links with the local community are cemented by offering visits to the college for local groups such as pensioners and neighbourhood clubs. Workshops in English for speakers of other languages are conducted in community centres and private homes. An adult further education teacher-training programme is provided on Saturdays.

13 In addition to the publicity generated by its prospectus, advertisements and mailshots, the college promotes its programmes through drop-in centres in the shopping malls of the main towns in the area. These centres deal with enquiries, provide advice and collect information for student services and college careers advisers. The centres are established at key times of the year, such as before the open evenings in October, the adult learners week in May and in the summer, just prior

to the main enrolment period. The college would benefit from more systematic monitoring of the results which it achieves by its various forms of advertising.

14 The college uses market analysis to assist in the design of services. It collects data on the distribution of unemployment, the professional backgrounds, gender, ethnicity and age profile of clients by geographical area. Gaps in its course provision can be identified, and it was the information provided by this research which led to the opening of Arun House in Horsham. A potential market of 1,000 students was forecast in that area with the prospect of about 480 attending in the first year. In the event, numbers exceeded 500 by mid-October of the first term.

15 The college has a clearly-stated equal opportunities policy for staff and students. It forms part of the induction of staff and students and is included in the college charter. Guidelines on practice are published in the staff handbook.

16 There are some 250 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college provides tailor-made courses for those with severe learning difficulties and general assistance for those with moderate needs. Wherever possible, these students are taken on to mainstream courses. The college also offers special education for students who can neither speak nor hear. One student without hearing recently completed the national diploma in building studies and is now studying for a degree at university. The college should provide information on progression from special schools earlier in the year, so that students and their parents can be advised of all the opportunities which exist. This is especially necessary for those leaving school in the spring term.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

17 The governing body has 13 members, of whom the director is the only representative of the college staff. There are nine independent members drawn from major local companies, including a representative of the TEC. The corporation board decided to restrict its size, to strengthen its cohesion and to ensure that every member served on at least one subcommittee. It was felt that this would encourage involvement by putting members' skills to relevant use. The background of governors is carefully considered, so that the college can benefit from a broad range of expertise.

18 The governing body has established a clear distinction between its own role and that of managers. There are four subcommittees: finance and general purposes, facilities, audit, and remuneration. In addition, there is a working party reviewing health and safety. The board resolved that the previous mission statement was too general and has now adopted a more precise alternative. It has exerted pressure to ensure that the college can genuinely claim to offer open access to all applicants for study. Whilst the first strategic plan was drawn up with little participation by governors, they are taking a much more active part in subsequent

revisions. Governors support the director and his senior management but are active and constructive critics in the development of all policies. They request market intelligence and all other pertinent data before taking decisions.

19 The existing strategic plan fails to provide staff with a sufficiently concise framework within which to develop initiatives in their programme areas. Curriculum and service managers are asked to draw up annual business plans to fulfil the college's strategic objectives. These vary in the extent to which they reflect the college's mission. The college would benefit both from a more precise strategic plan and from annual operating plans which identify tasks and responsibilities at levels below the executive.

20 Since incorporation, the main task for governors and senior managers has been to recover from inherited financial difficulties. Decisions which addressed both this priority and the changing employment pattern in Crawley resulted in the loss of 39 staff in 1992. Further changes to staffing have been made subsequently. Governors and senior managers have established good financial systems and effective staffing policies. Efficiency has been increased and costs reduced over three years while enrolments have grown by 32 per cent. The improvements in budgeting and financial control have released funds for the refurbishment of the buildings and new resources to support the curriculum. Governors receive periodic presentations from curriculum managers to give them detailed information on each subject area. They also receive monthly reports from the director. What remains to be done is to devise measures, as precise as those applied to financial matters, by which the corporation might judge the academic quality of the college.

21 Crawley College is led by the director and three assistant directors responsible for corporate development, operations, and finance, respectively. The directorate is joined by the marketing and human resource managers and the college secretary to form the executive board which meets weekly. There is also a wider management board, meeting fortnightly, which comprises the executive, the six managers of study who are responsible for the curriculum and service managers. Within the college, there is a strong emphasis on team working, for which senior managers have set the example.

22 The clerk to the governors is the college secretary. The college management committees are also serviced by the college secretary who organises agendas, calls meetings and produces minutes. This post is modelled on that of a company secretary, able to advise on constitutional and statutory matters and to ensure that proper records are kept for audit. The corporation finds this service invaluable. The college secretary also has charge of internal audit.

23 Management functions, lines of authority and responsibility and job descriptions are all clear and generally understood. Resources are

effectively deployed to support the curriculum. Annual bids are made to the executive board which allocates funds and budget holders find the process fair. The information provided to them on committed expenditure by the finance office is timely, accurate and easy to understand.

24 Communications in the college were inadequate, and steps have been taken recently to improve them. There is a regular news publication for staff and a formally-prescribed team briefing process has been introduced, to ensure that information from senior managers is effectively disseminated. It remains to be seen whether the new procedures will be equally effective in meeting the criticism that information is slow to pass up through the organisation.

25 The constitution of the academic board has recently been revised to focus attention on academic matters rather than operational issues relating to premises and services. The board has a membership of 30, including elected members from the curriculum areas and two students. In order to deal fully with academic quality the board has two subcommittees which are responsible for course validation and course review. The board of studies for each programme area reports to the academic board.

26 The college has effective systems for producing data on finance, staffing and student enrolments. In other important areas, including student retention, examination results and destinations, there is no central source of information. Such data can be obtained only from study areas, if at all. The college therefore has limited management information for assessing educational quality and efficiency.

27 The college's income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6. Its average level of funding for 1994-95 is £17.44 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17 and the overall median for the sector is £19.01.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

28 The commitment and enthusiasm of staff contribute strongly to the effectiveness of student guidance and support. Several sections of the college including student services, learning services and the six study areas play a role in providing guidance and support. Procedures are new and are not yet adequately co-ordinated. There are separate policy statements for particular services, such as careers guidance, but there is no clear overall policy on student support. Governors and managers have committed themselves to open access, and the services which are required to support it, but there is little in the strategic plan to help organise or prioritise these services.

29 Enquiries from potential students are handled sensitively and efficiently. The student services and admissions offices are beginning to produce analyses of enquiry and admissions patterns that are useful to senior managers and to staff in the study areas. The admissions office

processes applications through a central computerised system and arranges interviews of full-time students by the programme teams. The system for part-time students is less well developed although all applicants are promptly offered a guidance interview, on request, at any time of the year.

30 At the beginning of the autumn term, the registry organises enrolment. Students may enrol in the evenings and at weekends in addition to normal working hours. Procedures are efficient and include advice on financial matters. Student services staff give further guidance where students are still unsure about their choice of course. Nevertheless, there are still too many students who enrol on the wrong course and either transfer immediately to other courses or withdraw from the college. Further work is required to improve the guidance given at pre-entry and enrolment stages.

31 The college received assistance from the TEC in developing accreditation of prior learning. Opportunities for this are offered in a number of areas including hairdressing, hotel and catering, secretarial studies, construction and management. Accreditation of prior learning is largely associated with the development of NVQs and its broader applications have not been pursued.

32 The college has produced a guide to learner support which identifies the roles of the student services and learning services units. Co-ordination between these units is effective. However, they lack the authority to ensure that support is satisfactory in other parts of the college, particularly in the study areas. Two senior managers oversee separate aspects of guidance and support but they do not co-ordinate their efforts sufficiently to secure an efficient service. Basic data on the provision of guidance and support are collected although little analysis is attempted. The learning-support unit assists students throughout the college. The needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified prior to entry or soon afterwards. Assessment is carried out thoroughly and appropriate individual programmes are drawn up. Other students' learning-support needs are not usually discovered unless students mention them on their application forms, or tutors pick them up later. Few study areas conduct screening at entry and help can be too late to be effective. Numeracy support in construction and in hair and beauty is inadequate, while in leisure and tourism, help with literacy is provided on an improvised basis by a learning support officer. Three students in business studies identified at the start of the academic year as needing help with both literacy and numeracy were not receiving it 10 weeks later. The college should pursue its plan to introduce literacy and numeracy screening for all full-time students as part of induction.

33 The nature and quality of induction programmes vary between study areas and between the courses within them. All full-time students receive a welcome from the director or an assistant director and the manager of

student services outlines what assistance is available. This introduction is sometimes supplemented by student services staff contributing to group tutorials. All study areas provide information on the structure of their courses but some give a much clearer picture of what is expected from students than others.

34 The willingness of individual tutors to respond to students' needs was praised by both students and their parents. The learning-services unit has produced a framework for tutorial work which covers assessment, recording achievement, action planning and progress review. This is aimed at full-time students. The needs of part-time students still require further consideration. The organisation and content of tutorials vary considerably between and within study areas. In some study areas, individual and group tutorials are timetabled regularly and content is agreed by course teams to ensure that practice is consistent. At the other extreme, no time is allocated and tutors have to make arrangements as best they may.

35 The college has recently appointed a full-time counsellor. Students' needs are often identified by a student support officer arising from discussions on accommodation, money worries or general welfare. These advisory services are well used and are a valuable contribution to students' ability to make best use of their time at college. A careers guidance officer is another recent appointment and there are strong links with the county careers service. Work is progressing rapidly to establish effective practice and to build up resources. The student-services unit organises meetings on general careers opportunities, higher education and health-related matters. There is no means to ensure that students who require guidance on these issues receive it.

36 The student association has been revitalised. Its council meets regularly and is taking an increasing role in representing members' interests. A student activities officer manages the association, as there are no students willing to take on executive responsibilities. This arrangement appears to be working well. A good range of leisure and sporting activities is now offered. Most courses have elected representatives to express students' views. Students complete questionnaires on various aspects of college life as part of the quality assurance process but are frustrated by not being told of the results of these.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

37 In 54 per cent of the teaching sessions observed, the strengths outweighed the weaknesses and in 5 per cent the weaknesses outweighed the strengths. This profile is in line with the norm established for colleges so far inspected. 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		1	2	5	0	0	8
GCSE		1	5	6	1	0	13
GNVQ		0	19	22	4	0	45
NVQ		5	25	18	0	0	48
Other		10	31	25	5	0	71
Total		17	82	76	10	0	185

38 Most courses are well organised. There are effective schemes of work and lesson plans, particularly where the course is subject to scrutiny by awarding bodies. In some programmes for students with learning difficulties, which are not externally accredited, there are no schemes of work. Many GCE A level schemes are simply a list of topics; there is little reference to teaching methods or resource requirements. In many instances, course plans are discussed with students at induction. In computing, planning files contain detailed schemes of work for each unit, and there is a course calendar scheduling review meetings, the dates for setting and completing assignments, work experience and other events. Where units of work are shared, computing staff complete a log book to record the work they have covered and to pass on notes about the course, the students and the status of facilities. In leisure and tourism, planning documents are discussed with GNVQ advanced level students but not with intermediate level students. In business studies, the timetables for full-time and part-time students studying the same units do not follow the same patterns, so that some students have to leave part way through their classes to keep other commitments.

39 In the better classes, teachers described the learning objectives at the beginning of each session. A variety of teaching methods and activities were used to maintain interest and develop understanding among students of differing abilities. For example, in a literacy class for adults with a range of learning difficulties, the teacher built carefully on the knowledge developed in previous lessons, and the personal worksheets which were provided included examples drawn from each individual's known background and experience. The teacher offered encouragement and gave support with humour. Many classes struck a good balance between practical and theoretical work. In one session on the use of computer spreadsheets in accounting, the teacher gave a clear introduction to cash-flow projection using the whiteboard to explain key points, skilfully drawing students into discussion with questions. The class was given a well-produced handout which included a practical exercise. The teacher checked progress at each student's computer and gave assistance where necessary. In a human biology evening class, an explanation of the functioning of the kidney was vividly illustrated with models and overhead-

projection transparencies. Students were then given a handout showing the same complex feature on which they labelled and charted essential fluid pathways. Similar illustrations in textbooks were then discussed, teasing out different ways in which the same process can be represented and understood.

40 Poorer practice was found across the college. In a computing theory class, a tedious video was shown on a small screen with the teacher giving little guidance on its significance. In many engineering classes, students spent too much time copying notes from the chalkboard. In psychology and sociology, students spent the greater part of some lessons copying from overhead-projector slides, leaving too little time for the subsequent questions and discussion intended to develop their understanding of issues.

41 Practical classes in business studies, engineering, hair and beauty, health and social care, childcare and computing were relevant to conditions at work. The hairdressing salon had many clients, including young children. Students gave a good service and were friendly and communicative to their customers. Staff interventions were appropriate and demonstration of techniques was competent. Almost all the practical classes observed during the inspection were undertaken with due regard to health and safety, the only exception being an engineering workshop session in which boots and overalls were not worn. Standards of hygiene were high in catering and in beauty classes.

42 In most classes, there were good relations between students and staff. In engineering, students responded enthusiastically to teachers who knew their subject and who used well-chosen examples to make their teaching relevant. In one practical catering class, the lecturer responded to students' expression of interest in a topic by changing his lesson plan and preparing a dish recently featured in a television programme that many of them had seen. A group of students following the advanced GNVQ in health and social care was considering bereavement and loss. Their previous experience with the lecturer had created a sense of trust and they felt able to reveal to the group their personal experiences as they went through the stages of coming to terms with loss. Some GCE A level students showed little enthusiasm for their studies and students retaking their GCSE were too often bored by the work they were required to undertake.

43 Assignment briefs were generally well prepared and normally included assessment criteria. In engineering, the students' course handbooks gave details of the assessment plans for each module together with the criteria for success. Many courses produced a calendar of assignments. However, in construction and business studies students suffer from a bunching of the dates on which assignments fall due, despite the existence of a programme. Students taking the intermediate GNVQ in leisure and tourism were overwhelmed by their assignments and need more assistance in organising their work. Assignment work is marked to an appropriate standard but the quality of teachers' written comments to

students varies considerably. In the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in hair and beauty, such comments are thorough and helpful. On extended education courses, some teachers offered verbal advice only, and much of the work in course folders was incomplete and unmarked. Business studies staff are slow in returning marked assignments to students and there were cases of work being lost. In science and business studies, teachers paid careful attention to spelling and grammar. In some GCE A level subjects there were good standards of marking, influenced by the new quality targets adopted recently to improve the GCE programme.

44 Work experience, visits and guest speakers enhance the relevance of most vocational courses. All work experience placements are carefully monitored by staff. Placements form an important element of health and care courses. In addition to confirming students' intended career paths and helping them learn the realities of the job, placements sometimes lead to offers of employment. They benefit the personal and social development of students and are frequently quoted by students as being the best part of the course. Placements are available in a wide range of salons for both hair and beauty students and all second-year computing students have work experience placements with local companies. Travel and leisure students make frequent visits to a range of commercial outlets. Catering students are encouraged to develop their experience through weekend jobs. Students taking the national diploma in engineering undertake a compulsory two-week work placement in France. Work placement officers have been successful in finding experience for many students with learning difficulties in situations where they are able to work effectively without feeling patronised.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

45 Most students interviewed during the inspection were enjoying their studies and were able to talk knowledgeably about their work. They worked effectively in groups and were technically competent. Students' work is usually of a standard appropriate to their abilities and the requirements of their courses. Most students develop relevant skills in numeracy and literacy. In art and design, the standards of drawing are high. Information technology is used well in most areas, but too little in art and design and hairdressing.

46 The college's information on retention rates is incomplete. It was not possible to draw reliable conclusions for individual courses or programme areas. According to provisional statistics published by the Department for Education, 14 per cent of full-time students, enrolled in 1994 on courses lasting a full year, withdrew from the college. This is higher than the national average for general further education colleges of 10.5 per cent. However, there were fewer withdrawals from the college in 1994 than in 1993. On several part-time BTEC and City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) programmes in electrical, electronics and micro-processors

engineering, all the students who enrolled completed their studies. By contrast, 40 per cent of students enrolled on a two-year GCE A level course withdrew before the end of the programme. Retention rates should be considered alongside the proportion of students who entered examinations and passed them to give a realistic picture of the college's level of success.

47 In 1994, vocational examination results varied a good deal but were satisfactory overall. Pass rates in computer studies courses were generally high. All students passed the BTEC national certificate in computer studies, while pass rates were lower on the BTEC national diploma at 75 per cent. Students on the first certificate, first diploma and national diploma in information technology applications achieved pass rates ranging from 71 per cent to 100 per cent. Results in engineering were also good and are generally better than national averages. All students passed the BTEC national certificates in mechanical engineering and motor vehicle engineering management. On the national diploma programmes in engineering and in motor vehicle engineering, 74 per cent of the students passed. In electrical, electronics and micro-processor engineering pass rates were generally good; only two courses showed a pass rate of less than 70 per cent. In airworthiness engineering, pass rates were below average on some diploma courses, although there was a good 85 per cent pass rate on the national diploma course.

48 Examination results for construction courses were generally good. There were above average achievements in the BTEC first diploma, national diploma, national certificate and higher national certificate courses. In hotel and catering programmes achievements were also generally above average, with 100 per cent pass rates in several NVQ level 2 courses. The pass rate on the C&G general catering course, at 95 per cent, was significantly above the national average. Results on hairdressing and beauty courses varied but were generally good. There were 100 per cent success rates on six programmes including several NVQ level 2 courses. The pass rate was significantly lower on the national diploma in beauty at 50 per cent. Extended education students achieved good pass rates on nationally-accredited courses. All the adult returners who were examined for the food hygiene certificate, for example, were successful.

49 Results in business studies and management courses were generally good. The higher national certificate and national diploma pass rates have exceeded 90 per cent for the last three years. BTEC national diploma results in business and finance have stood at more than 85 per cent over the same period. The intermediate GNVQ, in its first year of operation, has had a high drop-out rate and a 37 per cent pass rate. In personnel practice and management studies, students normally achieve passes in excess of 70 per cent, while accountancy results have been slightly lower.

50 Examination results on health and social care programmes varied widely. All students passed the BTEC national certificate in social care and the youth training community courses. The pass rate on the nursery

nurse diploma course was low at 61 per cent, and only 19 per cent of students were successful on the intermediate GNVQ in health and care. Results on leisure and tourism courses differed markedly between intermediate and advanced GNVQs. At advanced level, early indicators showed that students were doing well, for example all students passed the Association of British Travel Agents advanced ticketing courses. On the intermediate GNVQ programme, only 48 per cent gained the full qualification. The pass rate of 27 per cent on the Certificate of Travel Agency Competence was the result of a hasty decision to enter poorly-prepared students.

51 Seventy-two per cent of the 199 students aged 16-18 in the final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education 1994 performance tables were successful. This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. However, this is not a satisfactory indication of the college's performance in vocational programmes because most of its students are 19 or over.

52 Examination results in GCSE and GCE A level courses, which represent a small part of the college's provision, varied widely. In 1993 there were 173 individual subject entries for GCSE. The average success rate for students achieving grades A-C was 42 per cent, which was above the national average of 39 per cent for general further education colleges. In 1994, 167 entries for GCSE achieved a much better average pass rate at grades A-C of 55 per cent. Good results were gained in English and sociology, while consistently poor results were achieved in mathematics, especially with younger students. Other subjects, such as chemistry and physics, have had varied results from year to year. Students aged 18 years and over achieved significantly better results than younger students and in some subjects, exceeded national averages. For example 89 per cent of older students taking mathematics achieved grades A-C.

53 In 1993, there were 292 individual subject entries for GCE A level examinations. Of these 60 per cent achieved pass grades A-E. This was below the national average for general further education colleges of 66 per cent. In 1994, of the 289 GCE A level entries, 54 per cent achieved pass grades A-E compared with a provisional average of 68 per cent for all general further education colleges. Pass rates were high in human biology, art and media studies which were all in excess of 96 per cent. Pass rates in accounting (72 per cent) and computing (70 per cent) exceeded national averages for those subjects in general further education colleges. Pass rates in sociology, economics, chemistry, psychology and history, ranging from 14 per cent to 38 per cent, were all significantly below national averages.

54 The 62 students at the college who were between 16-18 years old and who took two or more GCE A levels in 1994 scored, on average, 2.5 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the

bottom 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. As with vocational courses, this is not a satisfactory indication of the college's overall performance, because most of the college's GCE A level students are over 18 years of age.

55 The college's statistics on the destinations of full-time students in 1994 show that 31 per cent entered employment, 23 per cent progressed to further education courses and 14 per cent went on to higher education. Thirty-two per cent were unemployed or did not report their destinations to the college. Compared with data from 1993, the statistics for 1994 show an increase in the proportion of students obtaining employment from 27 to 31 per cent, an increase in entry to additional further education courses from 20 to 23 per cent and a marked reduction in higher education entry from 25 to 14 per cent. The proportion of those who were unemployed or whose destinations were unknown rose from 28 to 32 per cent. The high proportion of unknown destinations affects the conclusions which can be drawn from the data.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

56 All college staff are aware of the need to improve quality across the college. The commitment to better quality is central to the strategic plan and new procedures for quality assurance are being introduced. A policy document has been adopted, staff are aware of its intent and support it.

57 The quality assurance process is described in a handbook, which is distributed to all staff. It has three major strands which are: internal inspection, course review and staff training. New staff are introduced to quality assurance at their induction and its importance is emphasised, usually by the director. The approach chosen is total quality management and the college is seeking the Investors in People award to mark its commitment to assisting staff to give their best.

58 The new procedures for internal inspection were launched in the spring of 1994 when 24 staff undertook training to conduct an inspection of six areas of study, emphasising student achievement and teaching and the promotion of learning. As a result some important issues for the college have been identified. The ensuing action plans for each study area are far from uniform, varying in their attention to detail and in their rigour. Progress in fulfilling them is being monitored by boards of study. At the same time, in spring 1994, the college launched a system of course review and evaluation. An important contribution to this process are the student questionnaires distributed three times in the college year.

59 In September 1992, the college introduced a staff-appraisal system linked to the identification of personal training needs. All staff have been trained, as an appraiser or appraisee, and in both roles where appropriate. In December 1994, the senior management team completed its first annual appraisal and, as a result, realistic and well-defined targets have been set

for them. Management of appraisal has been uneven in the rest of the college. Consequently, many staff have not identified personal targets and a significant number of them say that they still feel unmanaged and unsure where the college is going. Upward appraisal of line managers by their staff is now at the pilot stage and this should help to ensure that such anxieties become known more quickly.

60 Staff development focuses on 10 areas, including training for the assessor and verifier awards of the Training and Development Lead Body. Half the teaching staff have achieved accreditation as assessors. Internal verifier training and training for the accreditation of prior learning are less well advanced. Twenty-one college managers are training to improve their skills with certification through the advanced levels of the Management Charter Initiative. Some managers are unsure whether they or the college will benefit from this additional work and as a result not all are making effective progress. Staff who are not teacher trained, and who work for the college for more than five hours a week, are entitled to assistance to achieve the C&G part 1 teaching certificate. About 100 staff have achieved one or more Training and Development Lead Body units. Whilst all these activities are carefully planned, more attention should be given to longer-term staff development such as the achievement of higher awards in the curriculum areas which are central to the college's fulfilment of its mission. Investment in staff development is 1 per cent of the total budget and is expected to increase further next year.

61 Performance indicators for the systematic measurement of achievement are rarely used and their value is generally unappreciated. Many staff have no data on student enrolment, retention, achievement and progression. Measures of added value which identify the contribution of the college to the success of its students have yet to be introduced, but work on this complex issue is progressing.

62 All new courses are subject to internal validation by a programme validation panel which is a subcommittee of the academic board chaired by an assistant director. The system is meticulous and has, among other things, ensured, for the first time, that all programmes submitted to external validators are approved.

63 The management of staff, as it is revealed by the quality assurance and appraisal systems, ranges from the supportive but rigorous to a laissez-faire style which leaves staff unco-ordinated and lacking in direction and drive. Quality assurance mechanisms are not uniformly implemented and many of the reports which pass to the academic board and the directorate lack precision and substance. The college has made determined efforts to improve its quality but much of this work is new and nothing can yet be said with certainty about its effectiveness. Greater attention needs to be paid to the monitoring and management of the newly-established quality processes if the college's work in quality assurance is to succeed.

64 The college's self-assessment report was produced as a result of its own internal inspection in April 1994. A report was produced for each area of study, which included an analysis of strengths and weaknesses under each of the headings listed in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. A cross-college phase was planned to follow but has been postponed. The judgements in the internal inspection document were robust and self-critical. Most were in accord with the findings of the Council's inspectors. The main areas of difference were in the areas of teaching and the promotion of learning and students' achievements. In the former, lessons were graded highly. In the latter, coursework and practical work were evaluated, but not examination results. The overall effect was to present a more optimistic view of teaching, the promotion of learning and students' achievements than was warranted.

RESOURCES

Staffing

65 In addition to the 16 senior management and support posts, there are 193 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 140 full-time equivalent business support and technical staff. Four per cent of staff are from a minority ethnic background. Twenty-eight per cent of academic staffing is part time but the balance between part-time and full-time staff varies significantly between the study areas. The college reviews the use of part-time staff on a monthly basis to ensure that they are employed effectively. Forty-six per cent of the full-time and 56 per cent of the part-time staff are women. However, women are less well represented in senior posts. There are two women governors, one woman on the college executive of seven, and none as managers of study. The college's equal opportunities policy for staff is still being developed and is at the moment only a statement of intent.

66 The college has a detailed recruitment and selection procedure. Requests for new or replacement posts are submitted by managers to an assistant director. Proposals are reviewed by the human-resources manager to ensure consistent practice across the college. There are job descriptions for all staff and these are regularly updated. The new grievance and disciplinary procedure which replaces the former LEA scheme has been published in the staff handbook, although it is still to be ratified by the corporation board.

67 The workload of the 32 programme managers varies. A working party has been established to make proposals on the measurement of workloads and to address discrepancies. Twelve learning-support officers have been appointed whose role is to help with the instruction and assessment of students and the supervision of workshops. This brings greater flexibility to the organisation of teaching and learning. Eighty-two per cent of teaching staff are on new contracts.

68 Sixty-three per cent of teaching staff have a first degree or a higher degree. A further 13 per cent have a higher national diploma or its equivalent. Seventy per cent have a teaching qualification. Sixty-seven per cent of the business support managers and 48 per cent of the administration and secretarial staff have professional qualifications at degree or higher diploma level.

Equipment/learning resources

69 The quality and quantity of furniture and teaching aids in classrooms are generally adequate. Overhead projectors and whiteboards are available in most rooms. The furniture in a number of the science and electronics laboratories is old and inflexible and limits the way in which work can be organised.

70 The technology and engineering centres are well equipped although some redundant and outdated equipment is in need of replacement. Modern computers and software are available for microprocessor work, but some of the development systems are ageing and should be renewed. A range of computer-aided learning software programs has recently been introduced for analogue and digital electronics but some of the basic electrical test and measuring equipment is obsolete. In aeronautical engineering, there is a good range of aircraft parts and engines, and a Meteor fighter on loan from the Fleet Air Arm provides a realistic, but dated, practical facility. A wind tunnel is being commissioned, and an aircraft instrumentation area is being developed using donated instruments. In motor vehicle engineering there is a good range of equipment and the college has overcome some updating difficulties by having an arrangement with a local dealer to provide a new car each year for workshop practice. In construction, equipment levels are sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. Woodworking equipment is well maintained, although some could be removed to release workshop space.

71 There has been substantial recent investment in the service industries area. The college has a well-appointed training restaurant supported by good kitchens and teaching facilities, all of which satisfy changing course demands and the requirements of new food safety legislation. The hairdressing salon is well equipped and the quality of the furniture and decor is good. One technical drawback is that the reception area lacks a modern till and computerised client-booking facilities. The sauna, jacuzzi and steam bath are underused. Leisure studies students use the excellent sports facilities available in a local recreation centre. Computing and communications equipment in travel and tourism are of industry standard.

72 The college has a good language laboratory. The art drawing studio is well equipped, although some of the performing arts lighting and sound equipment is very basic and this limits students' experience. In business studies, there has been sufficient investment in computers to displace all typewriters from administration courses.

73 Information technology is a notable strength. An open-access area with approximately 100 workstations has just been commissioned. There are 425 workstations located in learning-resource centres and other open-access areas throughout the college. There is one machine for every seven full-time equivalent students which is a good provision. Many of the workstations are networked and share a broad range of modern software. Machines are replaced as they become obsolete. One weakness is the mini-computer used by students on computer studies courses. Its terminals are unreliable; there are difficulties getting program listings, and printing facilities are poor.

74 The college has an assets register which is part of the main accounting system. Inherited equipment is on the register but that purchased since incorporation has not been entered. The inventory will be complete by July 1995.

75 The college has opened a new learning-resources centre. It is conveniently situated in the main building adjacent to the entrance and includes the library provision. Six satellite-learning centres in curriculum areas are also being developed. The service provided by these centres and the encouragement offered for students to work independently is good. The main learning-resource centre is fully computerised. The centre's staff are represented on many programme teams but liaison with study areas remains uneven. Staff and students do not take full advantage of the learning support which is available. The number of books exceeds 23,000, 20 per cent having been purchased recently. Outdated texts are withdrawn regularly. The centre is often noisy and lacks facilities which enable both group work and quiet study to take place simultaneously. Many students also use the public library, which is close to the Crawley campus.

Accommodation

76 The college occupies 23,657 square metres, an average of 7.47 square metres per full-time equivalent student. Fifty-five per cent of this space is used directly for teaching purposes. There is a detailed accommodation plan dealing with immediate needs but a longer term view is still being considered by governors and senior management. The accommodation strategy has detailed information about the condition of buildings and their operating costs but information on room occupancy and utilisation is limited.

77 An assistant director is responsible for the estate and he reports through the facilities subcommittee to the corporation. The facilities committee makes well-informed decisions and works efficiently.

78 The quality of the teaching accommodation on all sites is satisfactory and recent refurbishment has improved many areas. Classrooms are usually clean and tidy but some are drab. Most workshops are light and airy and provide a safe working environment. Teaching areas in catering

are particularly clean and well maintained. Many science and engineering laboratories are elderly and inflexible and would benefit from major refurbishment. The huts provide a mixture of good and bad-quality teaching accommodation. Many staffrooms are crowded and do not provide sufficient space for lesson preparation and marking. In Cairnhalt and Ranmore houses, on the edge of the main site, teaching areas are small, uninviting and isolated from college activities.

79 Some specialist accommodation is of a particularly high standard. Examples include: the new rooms at Arun House, the training restaurant, the food court, the open-access information technology centre, the conference centre, the multi-skills workshop and the engineering workshop. A new computer-based learning centre for electronics training has been established with support from the local TEC and a local software company.

80 Access for people with physical disabilities is inadequate. Two teaching blocks on the Crawley site have no lifts. Arun house has no easy access to the first floor. West Green is better served with a chair lift to the upper floor. Modifications to toilets in the main campus tower block are being undertaken.

81 The corporation has recently established a subcommittee to review health and safety matters which will build on the work of the college joint negotiating committee. The college is working with the Health and Safety Executive to prepare a formal policy statement, assessment of the control of substances hazardous to health, and facilities to meet the manual handling legislation. The college has insufficient qualified first aiders to ensure adequate coverage.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

82 The strengths of the college are:

- firm governance
- management which is prepared to confront difficult issues
- good links with industry
- responsiveness to market intelligence
- commitment to improving quality
- commitment to students with learning difficulties
- provision for information technology.

83 If it is to succeed in achieving its aims the college should:

- create an effective management information system
- establish clear objectives for middle management in relation to annual operating plans
- ensure consistent management control of areas of study and service areas

-
- continue to develop its quality assurance system
 - increase foundation level provision
 - improve examination results in those areas where they are below average for the sector
 - ensure that tutoring is of a consistently high quality
 - improve retention rates on some of its courses.

FIGURES

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- 1 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at January 1995)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by age (as at January 1995)

 - 3 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at January 1995)

 - 4 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at January 1995)

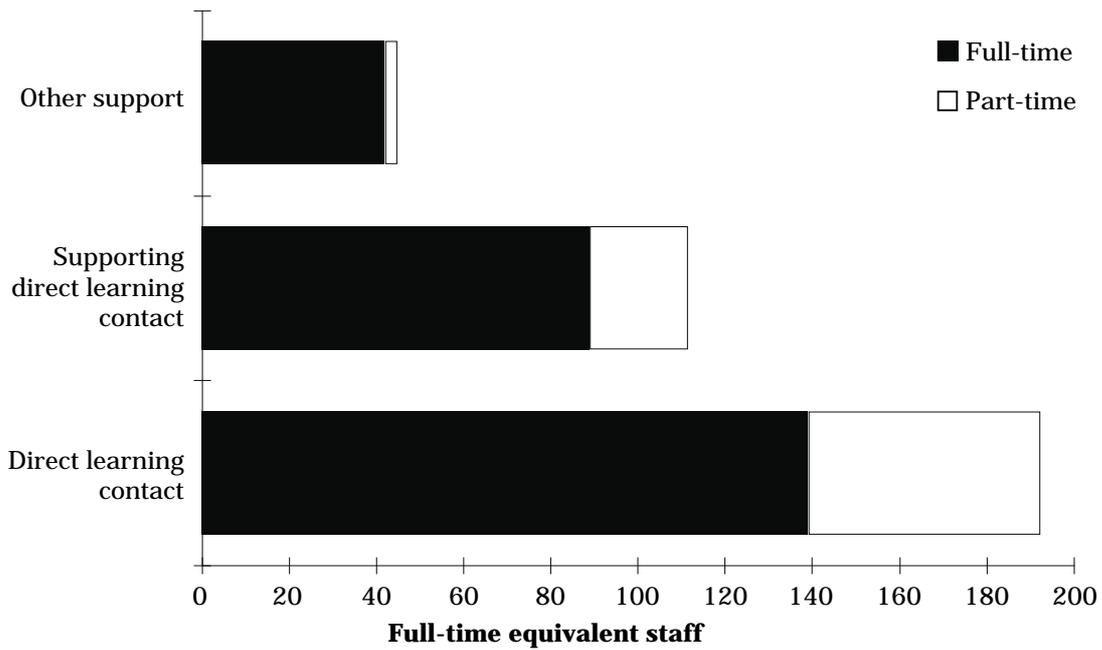
 - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

Figure 1

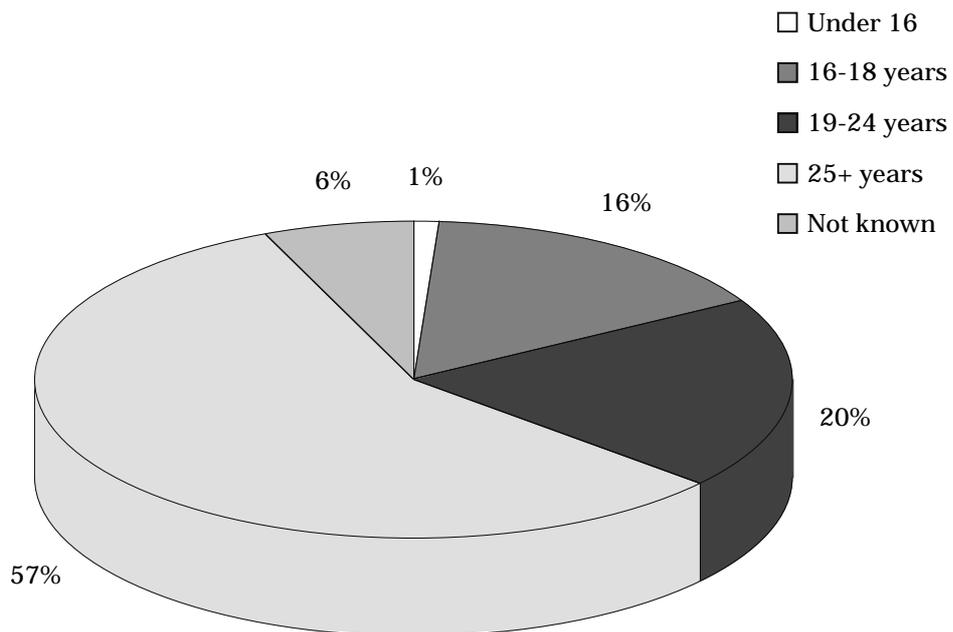
Crawley College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at January 1995)



Full-time equivalent staff: 349

Figure 2

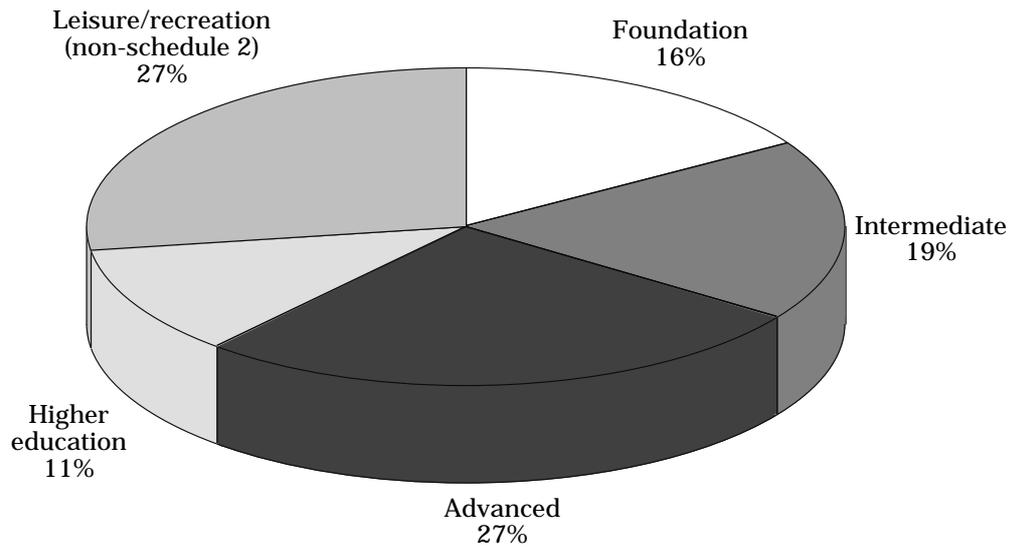
Crawley College: percentage enrolments by age (as at January 1995)



Enrolments: 11,053

Figure 3

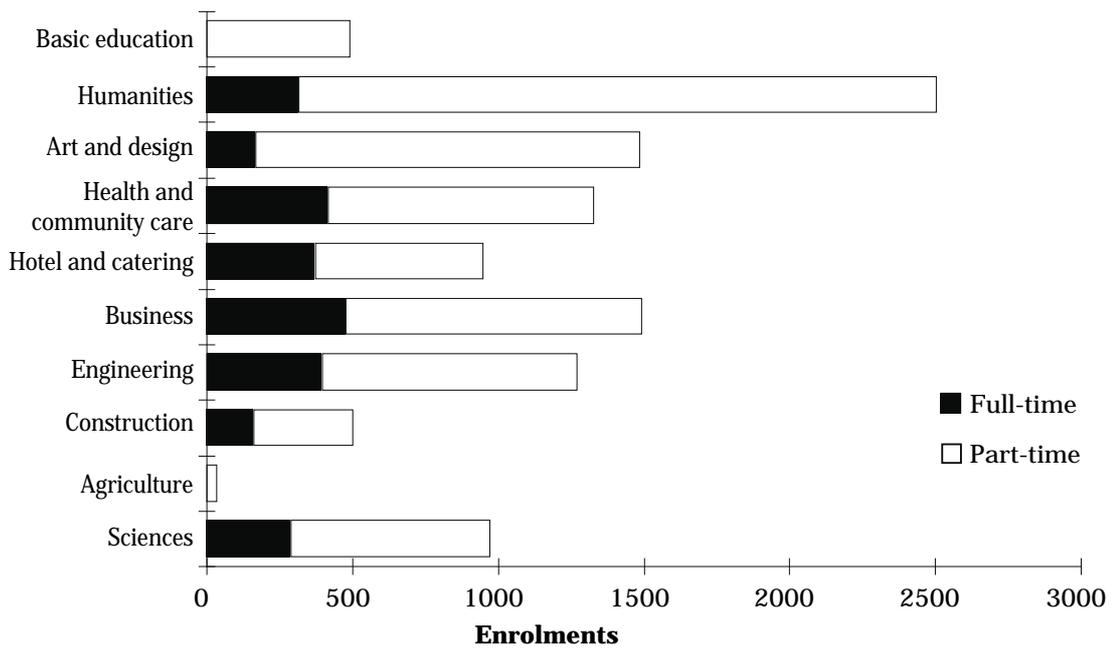
Crawley College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at January 1995)



Enrolments: 11,053

Figure 4

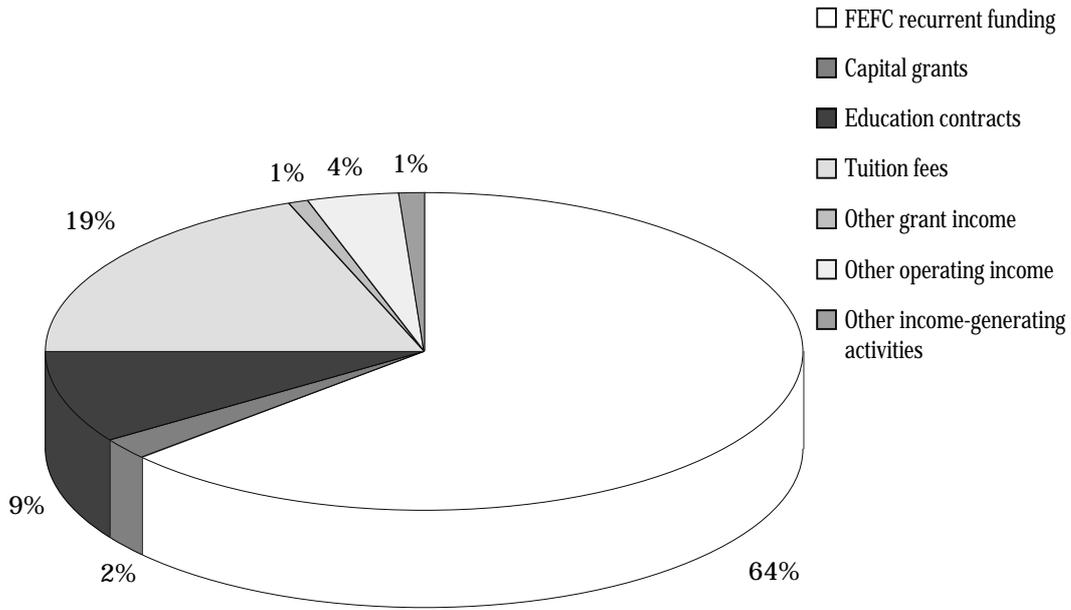
Crawley College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at January 1995)



Enrolments: 11,053

Figure 5

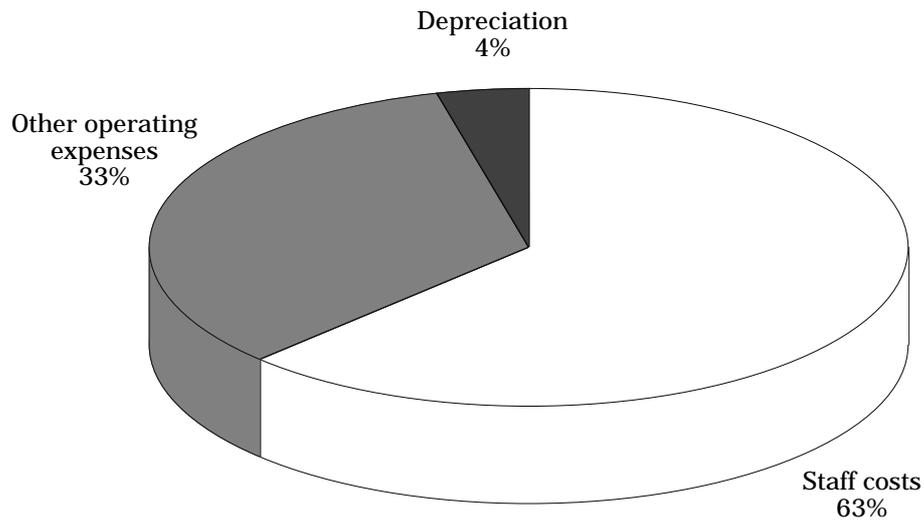
Crawley College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)



Income: £13,991,000

Figure 6

Crawley College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



Expenditure: £13,776,000

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