

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

**Sir George
Monoux College**

November 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.*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 113/95

SIR GEORGE MONOUX COLLEGE

GREATER LONDON REGION

Inspected January - March 1995

Summary

Sir George Monoux College, which is a sixth form college in central Walthamstow, north east London, provides an environment in which young people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures feel valued and secure. The provision is designed mainly for school leavers who wish to study full time. It has been extended by the development of evening classes for adults, and by the introduction of GNVQs. The college offers a broad range of GCE A levels, a selection of GCSEs, and GNVQs in art and design, media studies, science, business, health and social care, leisure and tourism, and information technology. The college was insufficiently prepared for incorporation and was affected by many simultaneous internal changes. Governors are committed to the college but have had little training to provide them with an adequate understanding of their roles. They tend to concentrate on operational rather than strategic issues. Some aspects of staff management lack clarity. The effectiveness of curriculum area management is uneven. The quality of teaching and the achievements of the students are variable. Achievements in performing and visual arts are outstanding. The college is supportive of its students and has a strong recruitment and induction programme. Parents are particularly appreciative of the support offered by the college. Guidance and support systems are in place, but are not consistently implemented. There is no overall quality assurance system and existing arrangements are insufficiently rigorous. Appraisal of teachers and management information systems are at early stages of development.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	3	Performing and visual arts	1
Mathematics	2	Humanities	2
Business	4	English	3
Leisure and tourism	2	Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities,	
Health and social care	3	English for speakers of other languages	4

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INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of Sir George Monoux College, Walthamstow took place in three stages. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1994. Specialist subjects were inspected between January and March 1995. Aspects of cross-college provision were inspected in March 1995. Eleven inspectors spent a total of 55 inspection days in the college. They visited 139 classes, inspected a broad range of students' work and examined extensive documentation relating to the college and its courses. Meetings were held with staff and students, governors, parents, a representative of the local training and enterprise council (TEC), parents, and representatives of local schools, employers and the community.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 The college was designated in 1986 as the result of a secondary reorganisation in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It is a co-educational sixth form college on a single 17.5 acre site in central Walthamstow, approximately seven miles to the north east of the City of London. The site includes two playing fields although the ownership of one is a matter of dispute between the college and the local authority. The main building, which has an attractive facade, is listed as being of architectural interest. Behind the main building there is a sports hall, a theatre, three mobile classrooms and a single-storey block for art and design. During the summer, drama students use the two attractive quadrangle gardens for open air theatre productions. Apart from two mobile classrooms, all the buildings are accessible to students with restricted mobility. Lifts are provided in the main building and the library. The college buildings formerly housed a boys' grammar school dating from the original foundation and endowment of Sir George Monoux in 1527. A students' centre was added in 1990.

3 The Office of Population Census and Surveys recorded the 1991 population of the London Borough of Waltham Forest as 212,033, approximately 25 per cent of whom were from minority ethnic groups. Thirty-eight per cent of the students at Sir George Monoux College are from minority ethnic groups. Waltham Forest has unemployment rates above the average for the area covered by the London East TEC. Unemployment rates in the south of the borough are about 23 per cent and in the north about 9 per cent. Most of the college's students come from the south of the borough. The most significant employment categories are manufacturing, distribution, financial services and public sector services.

4 Most of the students come from the 16 secondary schools in Waltham Forest. They are young people who want to receive their further education in a sixth form college environment. Sir George Monoux College is situated close to Waltham Forest College, where students can take a similar range of courses within the different environment of a large general college of further education.

5 In September 1994, 1,006 students were enrolled on full-time courses, against a target of 994. Evening classes were offered for the first time in 1994-95 and about 100 students have enrolled for each of the three terms. Enrolments by age and level of study are given in figures 1 and 2. Full-time enrolments by curriculum area are given in figure 3. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is given in figure 4.

6 The college's mission is to provide high quality post-compulsory education for students who wish to continue their studies in a sixth form college environment. The college's key strategic objectives are to extend its provision, and to maximise the benefit and value of all courses to every student undertaking them. Provision of effective guidance and support, the promotion of equality of opportunity, managed growth, and the development of staff and estates are seen as underpinning these objectives.

7 Sir George Monoux College is a particularly friendly and supportive establishment, in which young people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures feel valued and safe. It is committed to open access, and staff pride themselves that, to date, a course has been offered to every applicant. The college retains much of the ethos of the grammar school from which it sprung, and many of the students and their parents regard this as a strength.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8 The college offers over 30 subjects at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and 23 subjects at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Sixty per cent of the students are enrolled on two-year, full-time GCE A level courses. Fifteen per cent of students are on a one-year GCSE programme, most of them retaking their GCSEs. This year, GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses are limited to English, mathematics, law and archaeology. The first three of these are generally taken by students who have dropped one of their GCE A levels. Archaeology, is more usually a first choice, taken in addition to three GCE A levels. A particularly wide range of provision in art, design, media and the performing arts includes GCSE and GCE A level courses and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs).

9 The college is achieving some of its strategic objectives by successfully developing a range of GNVQs. There are intermediate GNVQs in art and design, media, science, business, health and social care, leisure and tourism, and information technology. Advanced GNVQs are offered in business, health and social care, leisure and tourism, and information technology. There is also a City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) diploma in sports management. Plans include the introduction of advanced GNVQs in all areas currently offered at the intermediate level so that students enrolled on intermediate GNVQs can continue their studies of the college. The senior management and academic board have discussed the introduction of foundation GNVQs. They have also considered a reduction in the number of GCSE subjects on offer and the hours allocated to them.

No policy has been agreed on the character of the college. Some departments are not offering GNVQs because they disagree with the strategic plan.

10 About 100 adult students attend the 11 classes which are offered one evening a week. Courses include photography, first aid, wordprocessing, Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and English for speakers of other languages. Tutors have identified qualifications and progression routes for each of the subjects offered.

11 There is one combined course for students with learning difficulties and for students, often newly arrived in the country, who are beginners in learning English. In addition, 73 students are enrolled in English classes for speakers of other languages. About 42 per cent of the college's students are speakers of other languages. Not all of them require additional support, but many do and the workshop support available for these is inadequate. The college provides signers or notetakers for students with a hearing impairment.

12 The college's sports facilities are of a high standard. They are hired out to local groups for weight-training, football and basketball classes four evenings a week. The sports hall is also let to local groups for aerobics and badminton.

13 A school liaison officer visits all secondary schools in the borough, and some outside it, at least once a year to speak to 16 year old pupils. There is no borough-wide planning of the post-16 curriculum but the college is represented on a 14-19 strategic forum which has been established to promote co-operation. The forum has representatives of the schools, sixth form colleges and the further education college. Good relationships with the local education authority's adult education service have been an advantage in developing the college's evening provision. The adult education service uses the college for its own classes one evening a week.

14 The college is just developing links with the London East TEC. It has been successful in a bid for £15,000 to develop GNVQs and it is using the TEC as a resource for information and advice. The TEC's view is that the college is prepared to be positive about its changing role and is responding to new demands and initiatives.

15 There are close links with parents but the college has few formal links with other members of the community. Contacts have been made with members of Asian organisations as part of the development of the equal opportunities policy.

16 Two members of staff have responsibility for links with higher education. The college participates in several schemes to enable students to gain places at universities. These include the Queen Mary and Westfield schemes, East London PROPEL, and the Oxford Access Scheme. Six students gained places at Oxford University in 1994. The college holds a

higher education fair in the summer term which is attended by between 10 and 15 universities. An evening event is held to inform parents about the financing of students at university.

17 Students' contacts with employers are mainly through their work experience placements. A few subject teachers have also invited employers to speak to students, or help with job applications. Although representatives from public services such as the police, the local health service and social services come to the college and provide information to groups of students, they are not consulted about the relevance of the curriculum to their needs as employers. With the introduction of GNVQs, it is important that the college uses and extends its contacts with business and industry. Little use has been made of the borough's teacher placement scheme, for which the staff are still eligible, or any other such opportunities which enable staff to gain or update industrial experience.

18 Students are responsible for finding their own work placements. Until recently, there has been no systematic approach to work experience. The newly-appointed co-ordinator is beginning to establish an employers' database and to make more organised arrangements. He is also organising an employment activities week when students can undertake work experience or carry out projects related to business. Projects are very much second best to work experience, especially for business studies students. A day conference with a European focus was held for all students on GNVQ intermediate programmes. However, the college has no links with European institutions. During 1994-95, the only proposed visit abroad is to France for language study.

19 The college promotes itself through open days, visits to schools and road shows which are part of public events. Taster days for school pupils were successfully piloted last year, and are to be extended this year. An attractive, informative prospectus is backed up by more detailed course leaflets which include information on entry requirements, course content and progression. A communication officer issues press releases and works with students to produce the college newsletter, which is distributed to local schools and libraries. News about students and college activities appears regularly in the local press. One of the vice-principals has been given responsibility for co-ordinating all these promotional activities and for developing market research. To date, there has been little research into potential markets or the perceptions people have of the college and what it offers. Some new courses have been introduced because of individual effort and interest rather than as the result of co-ordinated planning. This has had mixed consequences. It has led to some success in courses in media and performing arts, where staff have identified gaps in provision, and in mathematics where the department has worked closely with schools to adapt the provision to meet the needs of school leavers. However, an access to GCE A level course for those without sufficient GCSE passes was not successful. Evening classes were also introduced with little research as to likely take up from prospective students.

20 There are almost equal numbers of male and female students. According to the returns made by new students in 1994, 25 per cent of them are Pakistani, 8 per cent are black African and 7 per cent black Caribbean (40 per cent in total). An equal opportunities policy is included in the college charter and a charter and equal opportunities monitoring committee was formed in October 1994, chaired by the principal. Five people were selected to attend the committee, including the vice-principal with responsibility for developing the equal opportunities policy, and a representative of the students' committee. The committee has met twice. Its aims include identifying groups unrepresented in the college and monitoring the achievements of different groups of students. If it is to be fully effective, the membership should be extended to a wider range of staff and students.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

21 The corporation has 12 members. They include a local businessman who represents the TEC, two members from the local community, five members with an interest in various aspects of education, one student, two staff members and the principal. Governors' meetings take place at least once per term and there is usually a satisfactory level of attendance. However, a meeting arranged for the governors to meet inspectors during the inspection was attended only by the chairman and one other. Members of the corporation are supportive of the college but they have had little training to enable them to develop an adequate understanding of their roles. Minutes of corporation meetings and inspectors' observation of a meeting indicate that discussions often concentrate on operational rather than strategic matters while major policy decisions are deferred. The chairman of the corporation has weekly meetings with the principal and other governors have visited the college recently.

22 The governors have established five committees which report to the full governing body. The three committees for audit, finance and general purposes, and personnel meet once per term and senior managers are in attendance. The recently-established curriculum and development, and remuneration committees have met once only. Committee minutes are received by the corporation but there is little recorded evidence of these resulting in action.

23 The college experienced difficulties both before and at the time of incorporation. 1993-94 was a period of turbulent change. Incorporation, the early retirement of the previous principal in mid-1993, the appointment of an acting principal at short notice, the resignation of the chairman of the corporation, replacement of the clerk to the governors and the financial controller, all contributed to a period of considerable instability in the governance and management of the college.

24 The achievement of consensus is considered to be an important attribute of college management. It has resulted in a period of stability

after the stresses of the recent past. In meetings, and in discussions with inspectors, corporation members, managers and teachers did not express uniform support for significant strategic matters, such as the intention to develop vocational provision within the college.

25 The college is organised into six programme areas, each comprising a number of subject departments. Programme managers are responsible for the delivery of the curriculum and the recruitment, guidance and support of students in their area. There are two vice-principals and two directors, with vice-principal status, who have cross-college responsibility for marketing and administration, premises and guidance, personnel and planning, and the curriculum, respectively. Each of the senior managers has a nominal relationship with one or more programme areas and a responsibility for monitoring cross-college roles carried out by staff. Some members of staff have separate elements of their work monitored by two or three different senior managers. There is scope for rationalising the monitoring process in such circumstances.

26 Job descriptions for the senior management team set out current activities of the present post holders. There are general job descriptions for teaching staff but these do not necessarily reflect individuals' responsibilities. Not all technical and administrative staff have job descriptions.

27 The senior management team, comprising the principal, the two vice-principals, the two directors and the financial manager, meets weekly. It discusses organisational issues, receives reports and handles all requests for capital expenditure. The team has standing agenda items on finance and the strategic plan. A system is in place to ensure that the college's performance against strategic objectives is monitored.

28 The senior management team and the programme area managers meet weekly to co-ordinate college activities, share information and prepare issues for subsequent decision by the senior management team. The group, known as the academic board, focuses on the day-to-day management of the college. The board operates well. Meetings are carefully prepared and minuted, routine matters are effectively addressed and, as a result, these aspects of the college run smoothly and staff feel well informed.

29 There is inconsistent operational practice at departmental level. Some departments, such as art and design, and languages, plan efficiently and effectively. Other departments, such as business studies, have not developed appropriate frameworks for ensuring a consistent approach to teaching, monitoring students' achievements and the evaluation of courses. Students and staff would benefit from the dissemination and adoption of effective management practice.

30 Many cross-college groups are in operation. Some have been assembled with little regard to the priorities in the strategic plan, the

workloads of staff, and effective use of staff time. Although there are instances where groups have been set up to address particular issues, sometimes they have no agreed remit and no specific objectives. There is little evidence of action resulting from the discussion which takes place in some of these groups.

31 The college does not comply with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 with regard to the provision of religious education. However, there is a Muslim group and Christian group which meet regularly.

32 Management information systems are at a very early stage of development. Data are collected to meet the essential requirements of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Retention and destinations of students are monitored. Accurate, up-to-date information is not available to inform strategic planning and help monitor progress against strategic objectives. The college is moving towards being able to meet the FEFC's requirements for performance indicators.

33 The college achieved its targets for an 8 per cent growth in enrolments in 1993-94 and 1994-95. Its average level of funding in 1993-94 was £19.77 per unit. In 1994-95 the college will receive an average of £19.22 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges is £19.81 and the overall median for the sector is £19.01. The college's income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

34 The college has a well-developed programme of liaison with local secondary schools, particularly at subject teacher level. This is co-ordinated by the two vice-principals. Students say that they were influenced in choosing the college by the welcoming atmosphere created by staff and students at open evenings.

35 The procedures for handling applications are well documented and coherent. Applications are processed by a vice-principal and passed to the relevant programme area. Interviews are conducted by teaching staff who are specialists in the applicants' chosen subjects. Applicants for GNVQ courses are interviewed by members of the relevant teaching team. Staff are briefed on procedures and details of courses, and are provided with a detailed interviewers' pack and a checklist. Each member of staff is allocated a batch of application forms and is responsible for contacting applicants personally and for meeting them at reception when they arrive for interview. Interviews were thorough, unhurried and relaxed, and conducted in the classrooms which would normally be used by the students. Applicants subsequently receive a letter which provides information on enrolment the following September. Late applicants are placed on a waiting list. Students at the college who wish to progress from an intermediate to an advanced course are interviewed in May or June, usually by a senior member of staff.

36 Enrolment takes place over a period of three-and-a-half days, and is co-ordinated by the director of curriculum. Students are interviewed by staff from the programme area in which they wish to study, and referred to other specialist teachers if necessary. A member of the borough careers service is present to offer advice. Students are then allocated to tutor groups and receive their student identity cards. The procedure is smooth. Students are not pressured. Those who cannot decide on a course are encouraged to come back later. Although they were identified in advance and given specialist interviews a small number of students with learning difficulties, and some for whom English is not their first language, found the process difficult to cope with.

37 A new, college-wide system of induction was introduced in 1994. New students are made aware of important aspects of the college, introduced to the library and flexible-learning centre, and receive a taster lesson in each subject they are to study. There is an extended tutor period every day for the first week. Students are provided with a handbook which gives details of the college's facilities and procedures and which sets out the standards of behaviour and commitment expected of them. However, they are not issued with copies of the college charter at the beginning of the academic year nor asked to sign a learning agreement. The college's evaluation of induction indicates that the new system has resulted in a significant increase in the use of the library and flexible-learning centre. Students can change their courses within the first two or three weeks, after consultation with their tutor, subject teachers and director of curriculum. Changes are permitted at a later date, but students may be set specific targets for covering the work missed in their new subject. Students who had changed course felt that they had received excellent counselling and support.

38 The role of the tutor is central to the support and guidance of the students. All GNVQ students, almost all GCE A level students and more than a third of GCSE students are tutored by one of their subject teachers. Students register with their tutor each day, and there is a daily 15 minute slot which can be used for individual interviews or group meetings, at the discretion of the tutor. Students and tutors appreciate the regular contact, saying that it helps communication and enables relationships to be built up. A weekly bulletin to all tutors provides information to be given to students during tutorials. However, there is no tutorial programme. In practice, tutors usually use the sessions to meet individual students to discuss their progress and to help them devise action plans for their learning. Tutors also oversee students' applications to higher education institutions. Students can maintain their records of achievement within the tutorial framework. Tutors are guided by a comprehensive tutorial file which outlines their role, responsibilities and procedures, and provides checklists to help them monitor their work. Tutors are readily accessible to their tutees on an informal basis.

39 A tutor co-ordinator has been appointed within each programme area. Tutors are not accountable to them for the content or quality of their tutorial work, but can use them as a resource. Tutorial issues are reviewed by a cross-programme tutor steering group which meets every three weeks. There is a set of procedures for responding to students giving cause for concern, although it is expected that most will be dealt with at an early stage by the tutor and subject teachers. Tutors appreciate the amount of autonomy they have, but there is insufficient monitoring of their work to ensure that all are working to the same high standards. Responsibility for following up students' absences is unclear. Parents receive regular reports on students' progress and praise their quality. They also value the subsequent consultation evenings at which they can discuss their children's progress. The collation of the subject reports, carried out by the tutors, is not always well managed. Firm deadlines should be set to avoid tutors or students having to chase up and remind staff who are late with their contributions.

40 Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are inadequate. Students should be registered at each of their classes, and also by their tutor. However, not all staff complete registers assiduously and tutorial registers are checked only twice a term. Although the students' day does not begin until 09.30, some staff have low expectations of their students' punctuality. Inspectors identified a correlation between teachers' expectations and levels of attendance and punctuality. A survey of retention and attendance conducted by the principal in December found that in 90 per cent of GCSE classes one quarter of students have a poor attendance pattern. The problem is less severe for GCE A level students. Attendance levels on GNVQ courses, where students are closely monitored, are good.

41 The three members of staff who comprise the student services team advise students on welfare and financial matters, and co-ordinate careers, counselling and learning support services. As in most small colleges, these staff also have substantial teaching loads. A guidance services group, which meets monthly, has been formed to improve the existing framework and procedures in the light of increasing demands as the college grows. The head of student services and a trained counsellor contracted to the college provide counselling for students, either at their request, or on the advice of their tutors. Sessions are provided on an appointments basis, but one daily slot is kept free for students with urgent problems. Another counsellor provides expert advice for female Asian students on one afternoon a week, and the borough educational psychologist visits for several sessions during the year.

42 Careers guidance is provided by the careers teacher and a careers officer from the borough careers service. Advice is available at key moments such as immediately after GCE A level results, at open evenings and at parents' consultation evenings. The reference library includes computer programmes on career and progression opportunities. Careers education is delivered through groupwork, and through individual advice

and guidance interviews. Students are encouraged by tutors to make and keep careers appointments. Priority for these is given to one-year students, and those in the second year of their GCE A level courses who do not intend to progress into higher education. Students appreciate the guidance they receive on higher education, but are less appreciative of careers interviews. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the careers programme, particularly for students on GNVQ courses.

43 The college does not have an effective learning support programme. Diagnostic testing is carried out only for students with learning difficulties and those beginning to learn English as a second language. Additional learning support is provided if students ask for it by contacting the head of student services directly or if they are referred by their teachers. Some subject staff also provide additional help in their subject, in workshops and surgeries. Most students use the support for a specific assignment rather than undertaking a sustained programme to deal with underlying problems. Staff respond to requests for help but do not always actively intervene to provide it. For example, in one session in the flexible-learning centre, the teacher sat apart from students and did not approach them at any point. Those students who asked for help were given it readily and effectively but the teacher had no way of knowing whether other students did not need help or whether they were unable to identify their need for it. There is no systematic feedback to tutors on students' progress if they receive additional support.

44 Support for students with disabilities is good. For example, one student with a hearing impairment, who had received his secondary education in a residential special school, is supported by a communicator who signs and interprets. He is achieving high standards in mathematics and science on his GCE A level course. All but two rooms are accessible to students who are wheelchair users and so they can always be timetabled in suitable accommodation. The learning support co-ordinator liaises with mainstream and special schools before the transfer of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

45 Students can contribute to the life of the college through the students' council which is made up of representatives from each of the tutor groups. The council meets every half term, and deals with social matters and issues of interest to the students. The council also organises the election for the student member of the corporation. Students have the opportunity to participate in a range of sporting and cultural events, visits and special interest groups.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

46 Fifty per cent of the sessions inspected had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. In 19 per cent of sessions the weaknesses outweighed the strengths. The following table shows the grades awarded for the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		7	30	21	7	0	65
GCSE		1	16	8	6	0	31
GNVQ		0	7	8	7	0	22
Other		0	8	7	6	0	21
Total		8	61	44	26	0	139

47 Much of the teaching observed was competent, particularly at GCE A level. The range of teaching strategies was narrow and too little routine use was made of equipment and visual aids. There were too few opportunities for students to develop independence in their studies, and few differentiated tasks were provided to allow students to learn at different rates. There was little evidence of students developing the skill of working effectively in a small group. Many students were too reliant on the teacher's direction. Teachers are very supportive of individual students. Cordial relationships and respect for staff contributed to the students' motivation. Most students worked hard, but some showed little excitement about their learning. There were too few ways in which good teaching practice could be shared across the college and too little monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching strategies. The absence of a college-wide policy on homework and marking resulted in considerable differences in practice between courses.

48 The subject-based departments of the college have considerable autonomy within the programme areas. Consequently, there are also marked variations in aspects of teaching and learning.

49 In mathematics, the quality of teaching was generally good. Lessons were well prepared and had clear aims and objectives. Teachers had a good command of their subject. They ensured that there was an effective balance between teaching and opportunities for students to engage in oral and written work. Support for several deaf students was outstanding. Some GCSE mathematics students do not produce homework regularly or on time. Biology, chemistry and physics teaching was sound but lacked intellectual excitement and failed to extend able students. Teaching was mainly through verbal instruction. There was little use of teaching aids, or of information technology. The syllabuses were covered adequately. Teachers set and marked regular tests and students' written work was assessed fairly. In one GCSE science class, however, homework and practical assignments had not been marked four months after the beginning of the course.

50 The business studies department was ill-prepared for the delivery of GNVQ programmes. There was little difference in the materials or tasks used to teach intermediate and advanced levels. While individual members of staff were developing a good rapport with the students, they and the students were not supported by efficient organisation or clear direction.

51 The quality of work in health and social care was generally satisfactory but some lessons lacked sufficient pace and challenge and vocational aspects of the courses were not considered in enough depth. Most activities were directed effectively by the teacher, but there were some opportunities for students to take the initiative and develop their own ideas. Occasionally, groupwork was unsuccessful because the tasks were not appropriately chosen. Health and social care is a new area of work for the college. None of the staff has worked recently in this area.

52 There was a high standard of teaching in most modern language classes. Lessons were planned in detail. Teaching methods and well-organised learning materials ensured that work was varied and interesting. Homework was set and marked regularly. Records of students' progress were thorough. Students completed their written work conscientiously. Teachers' explanations, given orally when work was handed back to students, were helpful. The absence of a language laboratory impeded students' progress in working independently. There was little use of information technology; only one example was seen of work which students had wordprocessed. Urdu classes at both GCSE and GCE A levels presented few opportunities for students to speak.

53 Students with learning difficulties, and those who are beginners in learning English, were taught together on a specially designed course intended to provide them with the skills to undertake further study. The combining of these two categories of students in a single course was inappropriate, as they had too wide a diversity of needs and abilities. For example, one session focused on drawing a pie chart, using compasses and a protractor. Students had to calculate the number of degrees for each segment of the chart. Some students learning English as a second language had clearly progressed further than this in mathematics and completed the task easily. Students with learning difficulties did not understand what they were doing, and the least able student could not use the compass to draw a circle. The staff on this course provided considerable individual guidance and support, but some were inexperienced in dealing with the learning needs of these students.

54 English teachers covered the syllabuses and examination requirements. Great care was taken over the marking and return of written work. The quality of teaching was satisfactory but generally lacked variety, innovation and vigour. There were no strategies to cope with different levels of ability in a group. Some effective teaching was observed in a GCE A level English literature class where students were studying *The Duchess of Malfi*. The students were divided into small groups to answer questions and support their answers with evidence from the text. At a point when the groups were running into difficulty, the teacher interrupted to read a scene which included a good example of the evidence they were seeking. In another GCE A level class, the teacher read from a handout. No use was made of diagrams or maps, or of students' own first languages or study of other languages. When the students failed to contribute to a

subsequent question and answer session, the teacher decided to introduce work in pairs, but instructions were not clear and students were unsure of what to do.

55 Documentation for art, art and design, drama, media and music was well organised. The material for students was well presented and deadlines were set for the submission of work. There was a regular programme of visits to support all subject specialisms. Across the programme areas, students received effective teaching; they experienced widely different methods of working and learned to use a range of techniques. The diversity of the students' ethnic and cultural background was considered and utilised in the design and content of the teaching programme. Students were kept informed of their progress. The wide range of learning opportunities included presentations by ex-students, lectures, discussions and groupwork, and student presentations. Role play, drama games, the production of videos and case studies were used to promote learning in performing arts, theatre studies and media.

56 The general standard of teaching in the humanities was good. Students were involved and studying at appropriate levels, but few were given the opportunity to work independently. At GCSE level teachers took too little account of the differing abilities of students in the class. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers of philosophy and psychology gave rigorous attention to subject matter. However, they employed a narrow range of teaching strategies and students were generally expected to listen and take notes as teachers lectured. Sometimes teachers' lack of clarity in explaining the content and structure of the lesson meant that students were not able to take full advantage of their knowledge and experience. Students' participation in class was often poor; some students contributed nothing to discussion and were not being encouraged to do so. Time keeping was sometimes poor. Sessions started late and some students arrived even later. History staff helped the students to learn by breaking down the syllabus for the twentieth century history GCSE programme into topics with subtitles. Students were given clear guidance on the resources required and the length of time to be allocated to each topic. In a GCSE geography lesson, good use was made of the recent earthquake in Japan as a departure point for discussion. Classes in law were taught by knowledgeable staff who displayed good classroom management skills and used a variety of teaching styles. All GCSE law students were encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning and many took a lively part in class discussions. The pace and delivery of the GCE AS law course, which is being piloted this year, was too slow for the work to be covered in the time available.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

57 In most classes students were well motivated and appeared to be enjoying their studies. The standard of work was high in the visual and performing arts. Some imaginative practical art work has been completed,

using a variety of media, including mosaic, paint and collage. Students' work had been used to enrich the environment in the art department and in some other areas of the college. Last year, a GCE A level media studies student was awarded a prize by his examination board for an outstanding performance. In mathematics, GCE A level students displayed good levels of knowledge and understanding, which they could apply to complex problems. In law, both at GCE A level and GCSE, students could apply theory to practice and were keen to participate in discussions. In GCE A level English, most students showed that they had a good knowledge of their subject. In GCE A level business studies, students showed some ability to apply theory in practice, but the analysis of issues lacked depth. Some students with learning difficulties and those who were learning English as a second language were working hard in class and making good progress. The achievements of others were limited because they were unable to understand the task, or to get on with it independently.

58 Students were developing the skills needed to work effectively in groups in science, mathematics, leisure and tourism, and most language classes. Opportunities were not always available in other subjects. Students' study skills were well developed in GCE A level mathematics. In law, students' folders were well maintained. Language students were encouraged to practise speaking and listening. Core study skills were integrated with other aspects of assignment work in leisure and tourism and careful attention from teachers ensured that the performance criteria were being met. However, in many subjects including GNVQ business studies there was little evidence that core skills were being developed. In humanities, students' oral communication was good but some of the written English was inadequate for the standard of essay writing required in these subjects. In most subjects, there was little opportunity for students to develop their skills in information technology. There was a suitable balance of practical work and theory in sciences, arts and performing arts. Leisure and tourism students have limited opportunities to undertake practical exercises. Appropriate attention was paid to safe working in practical work.

59 Last year, 270 students were entered for examinations in eight GCE AS and 31 GCE A level subjects. National performance tables published by the Department for Education show that the 230 students aged 16-18, taking two or more GCE AS/A levels, gained an average points score per candidate of 11.4 (where A=10 and E=2). In 1993, the figure was 10.8. The national average for 1993-94 was 15.3 per candidate. The average points scores per candidate for the other five sixth form colleges in the outer part of north east London were between 9.1 and 19.2. The figures for the general further education colleges in the area were between 3.7 and 13.2. The college's points score per entry was 4.2 which places the college in the middle third of colleges within the further education sector.

60 In 1994, the college's pass rate at GCE A level was comparable with the national figure of 83 per cent for 16-18 year olds in sixth form colleges.

The pass rates in most subjects have been variable in the past three years. In 1994, good pass rates were achieved in art, the performing arts, mathematics, human biology, English language, government and politics, German, Italian and Urdu. Pass rates in psychology have been low for the past three years.

61 Few students take GCE AS examinations. Results were variable. Last year there were 48 entries in eight subjects. Twenty-seven resulted in passes at grades A-E. There were no GCE AS results for law as the course was new this academic year. However, the results in the mock exams in December were poor.

62 In 1994, there were 972 entries for GCSE examinations in 24 subjects. The average pass rate per subject at grades A-C was 40 per cent, compared with a provisional average for sixth form colleges of 49 per cent. Pass rates were above 65 per cent in accounts, English literature, photography and Urdu. They were below 40 per cent in 13 subjects. In English language 86 of the 225 students who sat the examination gained a pass at grades A-C. Some students are retaking the examination for the third time with questionable benefit. In mathematics, 65 of the 240 students gained grades A-C. Again some of them were retaking the examination for the third time.

63 It is not yet possible to provide comparable measures of students' achievements in GNVQ subjects. However, in intermediate and advanced business studies GNVQ students are not meeting the performance criteria in their assignments. In GNVQ leisure and tourism the requirements are being met. At this early stage, students are achieving satisfactorily in art and design, media studies, science, and information technology. Levels of achievement in health and social care are hampered by the lack of an appropriate vocational focus. The bridging course, for students who have additional support needs, is not accredited, although some students believe that they are working on a foundation GNVQ.

64 Because the management information system is at an early stage of development, statistics on students' attainments are not yet produced in a form which facilitates their use as performance indicators. A similar shortcoming applies at this stage to data on retention rates and student destinations. About 50 per cent of college leavers have achieved a place in higher education in the past three years.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

65 A policy statement has been produced, but the college has not yet developed a formal quality assurance system. A range of quality assurance activities has been undertaken but the setting up of these initiatives depends on the enthusiasm and commitment of individual departments and managers. Many departments have produced departmental handbooks and departmental development plans. A review of the 1993-94 departmental development plans was presented to the academic board in January 1994. It drew attention to the variations in the format

and quality of the plans and the lack of a common approach to performance indicators. There is no recorded action arising from this review and the plans for 1994-95 exhibit similar weaknesses to those for 1993-94. Departmental handbooks provide useful information on the organisation of the department and the range of provision offered. Some include references to quality assurance.

66 Quality development became a standing item on the academic board agenda in April 1994. A number of discussion documents has been received by the board and a limited number of initiatives has been agreed. A quality development research group has been established with a remit to produce a form for teachers to report on student progress and achievement in each of the subjects they are studying. These reports will be reviewed by managers to ensure that agreed minimum standards of report writing are achieved. A similar system of review is in place for higher education applications.

67 There is a standardised system for monitoring, reviewing and reporting on vocational courses. Attendance, retention and students' achievements are monitored and course teams are advised to report on teaching and learning methods, assessment, course management, resourcing, recruitment, work experience and future development. In several vocational areas, there was little evidence that these procedures were adhered to systematically. Internal verifiers and assessors of GNVQ programmes have been identified, but internal verification systems are at an early stage of development.

68 Surveys of students' opinion are administered at entry, during, and at the end of courses by a programme area manager who has responsibility for these surveys. The results are collated and analysed. Some departments use this information in their development plans. This information has also been considered by senior managers and some action has resulted.

69 The Advanced Level Information System has been used since 1991. Most departmental development plans indicate that the data from the Advanced Level Information System are used in formulating plans for improving quality. Some departmental development plans, however, make little use of information relating to value added.

70 The college charter follows the National Charter for Further Education. It was produced by a working group chaired by the principal. Procedures for handling responses to the charter are being developed by the group.

71 The corporation has only recently considered proposals on appraisal for teaching staff. It is intended that the appraisal will include classroom observation and that all teachers will have job descriptions before the scheme comes into operation. As yet, there has been no training for appraisal. The college has made a commitment to pursue registration as

an Investor in People. To prepare for this, an initial report has been prepared by an external consultant. The report highlights the need to build assessment and evaluation of the outcomes of the appraisal cycle into the strategic planning and review activities. It also notes that few managers have undergone any management training and that there is considerable variation in management practice. At the time of the inspection, the college had not submitted an action plan for the achievement of the Investors in People award to the TEC.

72 Under the college's staff-development policy, funds are delegated to managers using an agreed formula. This year, £16,600, which represents 0.5 per cent of recurrent funding, was allocated to staff development. This has been supplemented by funds from the technical and vocational education initiative to support the training of assessors and verifiers for GNVQ programmes. All the staff received five days in-service training. Training has included preparation for inspection, moderation of coursework, preparation for enrolment and a staff conference on value added, quality and quality assurance. Staff attending courses are required to complete an evaluation proforma. Most curriculum-development activities focus on events arranged by the examination boards. A manual has been produced to support the induction of newly-appointed staff. In the current academic year, two sums of £500 have been identified to support individuals or groups for staff development or training.

73 Criteria for assessing bids were established by the academic board. The induction programme includes a week-long event for newly-recruited teaching staff. There is no formal system for the induction of support staff.

74 The college's self-assessment report describes working practices and recent developments. Although it contains judgements about strengths of the college, it fails to address many weaknesses identified by the inspection.

RESOURCES

Staffing

75 There are 54 full-time teachers and 10 part-time teachers, making a ratio of teaching staff to students of 1:15. Most staff are well qualified for the work they undertake in the teaching of GCE A levels and GCSE. However, staff are not adequately prepared for the teaching of GNVQs, and those teaching English as a second language and courses for students with learning difficulties lack sufficient experience to develop appropriate teaching strategies. About 40 per cent of the teaching staff and 18 per cent of middle managers are women. There is one woman in the senior management team.

76 Eighty-eight per cent of the teachers have first degrees or equivalent professional qualifications. One-third have higher degrees and 78 per cent have a teaching qualification. Three-quarters of the teaching staff have recently undertaken staff development relevant to their subject or their college responsibilities. However, few have up-to-date commercial

or industrial experience. Progress in gaining Training and Development Lead Body assessor and verifier qualifications is unacceptably slow. Thirty-four staff have registered for the training but to date only one has qualified. This is inadequate if the college is to develop its GNVQ provision in line with the strategic plan. The level of technical and administrative support is satisfactory, and the staff are effectively deployed. There are also 12 part-time support staff who work in the library, the flexible-learning centre and in classrooms. Sixteen per cent of the staff in the college are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

77 The library is managed by one full-time librarian who is supported by a part-time assistant. This level of staffing is not sufficient to provide an adequate service to students and staff.

Equipment/learning resources

78 There are satisfactory levels of basic classroom equipment. The levels and adequacy of specialist equipment in the classrooms varies. The departments in which the quality of work is high, such as art and design also have better specialist equipment. Specialist equipment in areas such as leisure and tourism, basic education and business studies is either not available or inadequate for effective delivery of the curriculum. There is no language laboratory and the listening stations provided are now obsolete and unusable.

79 Again, those departments with high standards of work and achievement also have the strongest holdings of books in the library. Weaker departments are less well equipped and have the fewest up-to-date books. The librarian is dependent on informal contact with teaching staff for discussion on library stock. Some departments do not give library acquisitions a high priority and there is no mechanism for ensuring consultation takes place. The library has a limited budget of £12 per full-time equivalent student. Priority in the allocation of the library budget is given to new subjects and to project work. The range of audio and video cassette tapes is good but the range of periodicals and newspapers is inadequate. There are two compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases, which are mainly used for newspaper references.

80 In the flexible-learning centre, there are 35 computers for students' use, 32 of which are networked to a server in the computer department. This is a valuable resource. A further 16 computers for the centre are to be purchased next term with the final technical and vocational education initiative payment. There are 49 terminals in the computer suite, four in the library and three in subject classrooms. There is no electronic mail facility nor access to the Internet. The ratio of terminals to students is 1:11. Information technology resources and their use are underdeveloped throughout the college and a recent students' questionnaire has revealed a need for greater access to computers.

81 The development of information technology across the college has not had a high priority. In September 1994, an information technology

group was formed to address this. Its terms of reference are wide and include advising the academic board on information technology equipment needs, the use of information technology in the curriculum, setting targets for improving students' information technology skills and increasing students' access to information technology. Staff are unaware of a specific budget allocation for information technology across the college. The provision of computers has largely been funded by technical and vocational education initiative money and there is no policy to address the issue of funding when technical and vocational education initiative funding ends.

Accommodation

82 There is a maintenance and decoration programme. Priority has been given to urgent work to develop curriculum provision, such as the conversion of a workshop block to provide classrooms and recording facilities. Classrooms are generally clean and tidy. However, some are in urgent need of decoration. Science and art and design blocks are well decorated and there are high-quality displays of students' work. Students' work is also displayed in some corridors in the main building. There is scope for extending this initiative throughout the college to provide a more visually-appealing environment.

83 The library and flexible-learning centre are pleasant, well-furnished rooms which provide a stimulating learning environment. The library has 70 spaces for private study, the flexible-learning centre provides 83 study spaces. This gives an overall ratio of one study space to every six students. In addition, the three computer classrooms are used as drop-in facilities for students, but only if space permits. The library is open throughout the college day, but closes at 16.00 hours. The flexible-learning centre is open for half an hour before the college day begins, and remains open for an hour after it ends. These times do not allow adequate provision for students' current private study needs and will be more inadequate when GNVQ provision and the associated assignment work come fully on stream.

84 Some subjects such as business studies and leisure and tourism lack dedicated rooms. Storage space for subjects such as geology and geography is severely restricted. Students' learning in GNVQ courses is adversely affected by the lack of realistic working environments, such as a training office or retail outlet.

85 Sports facilities include two playing fields, a large sports hall and a weight training gymnasium which are also available to hire to the local community. Students use local facilities for tennis, cricket, netball and athletics. The student centre provides a refectory and a gallery common room area. The gallery is not adequate for the number of students.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

86 This college is moving slowly towards the achievement of its mission.

The strengths of the college include:

- the high regard in which the college is held by parents and students
- positive relationships between staff and students
- the good range of GCE A level subjects offered
- the high proportion of staff with first and higher degrees and professional qualifications
- recruitment and induction procedures
- students' achievements in art, performing arts and media studies.

87 To make further progress, the college should address the following issues:

- the achievement of a unified view on the character of the college and its future direction
- the effectiveness of the corporation board
- job descriptions that do not necessarily reflect individuals' responsibilities
- the need to ensure that all committees work within a management structure
- the variable effectiveness of departmental management
- the development of systems to ensure consistent delivery of the curriculum and cross-college initiatives
- some aspects of teaching, learning and student achievement
- systems for identifying students who require learning support
- the provision of appropriate learning support
- links with industry and the lack of awareness of the world of work
- the development of a coherent quality assurance system
- appraisal linked to staff development within the strategic plan.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

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

 - 3 Full-time enrolments by curriculum area (1994-95)

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

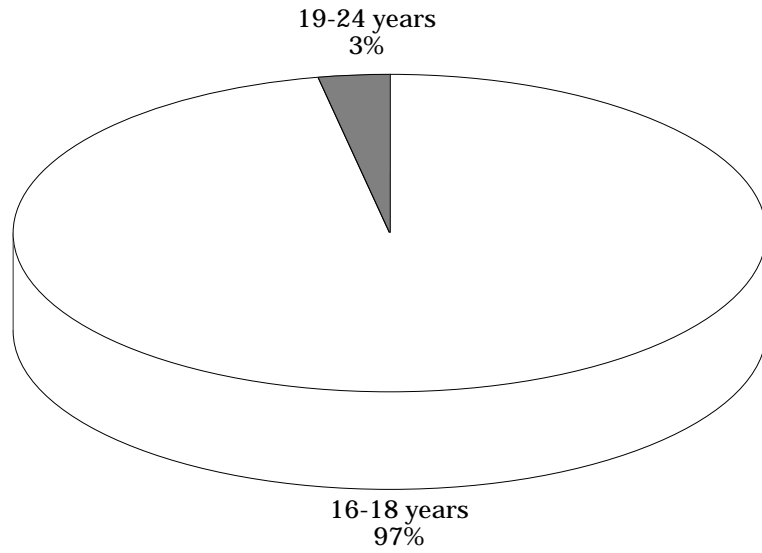
 - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 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

Sir George Monoux College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

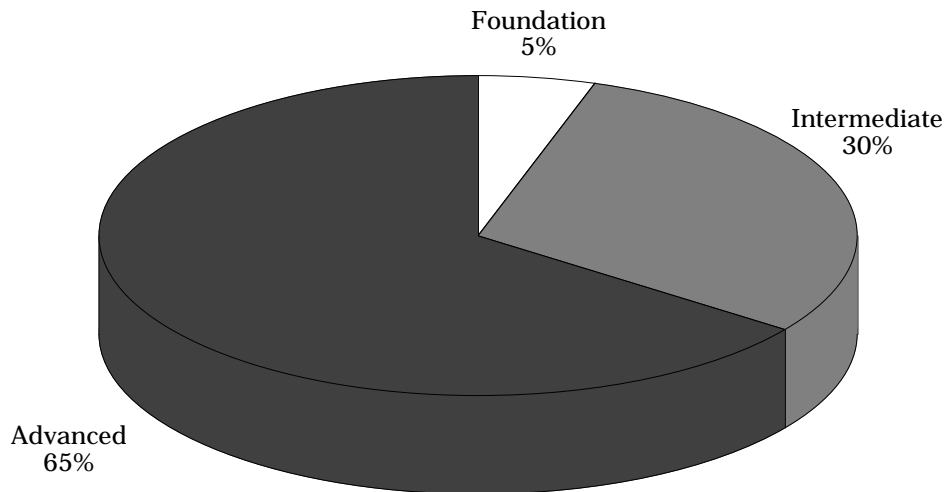


Enrolments: 1,006

Note: this chart excludes one enrolment aged under 16 years.

Figure 2

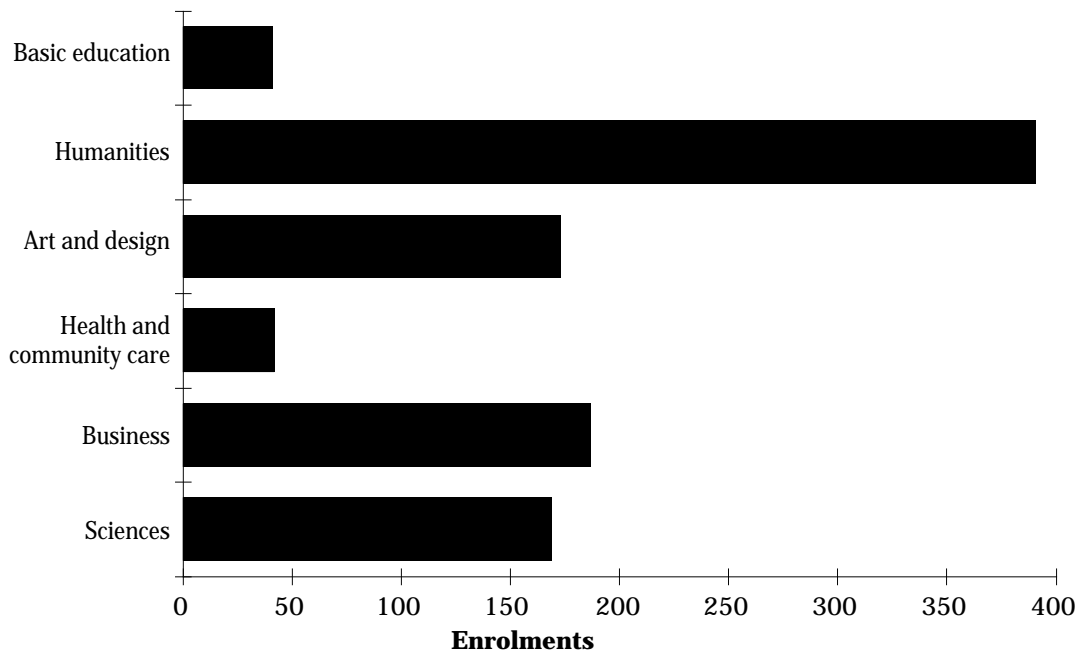
Sir George Monoux College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 1,006

Figure 3

Sir George Monoux College: full-time enrolments by curriculum area (1994-95)

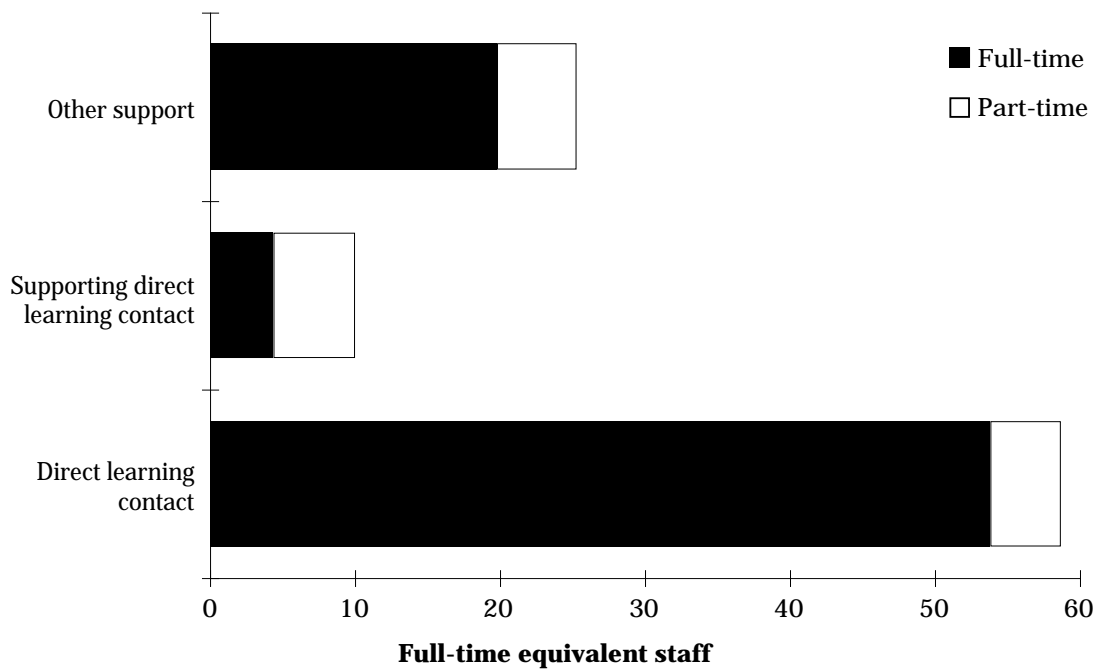


Enrolments: 1,006

Note: this chart excludes three fee-paying students.

Figure 4

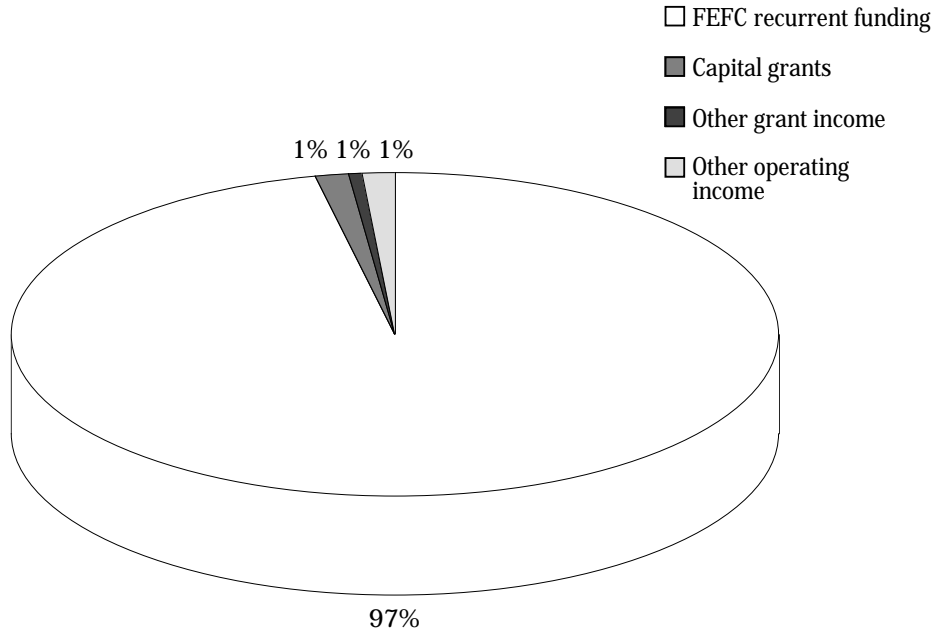
Sir George Monoux College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 94

Figure 5

Sir George Monoux College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)

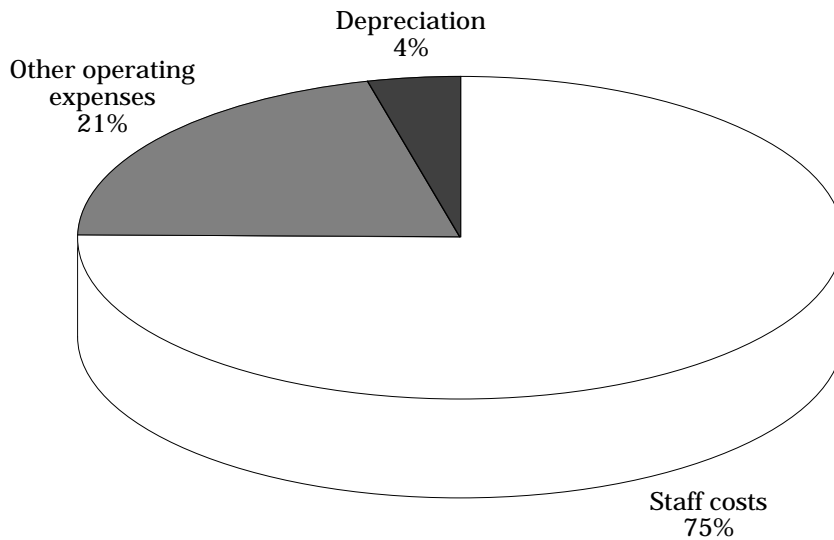


Income: £4,056,000

Note: this chart excludes £18,000 other income-generating activities and £1,000 tuition fees.

Figure 6

Sir George Monoux College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



Expenditure: £4,217,000

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