Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of an Evaluation of

The Dissemination of Best Practice in Cultural Diversity in the Colleges of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland

March 2010

CONTENTS

Section Page

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small minority

Grading System

The Education and Training Inspectorate use the following performance levels (grades) in reports:

Performance Level	Grade	Descriptor
Outstanding	1	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	2	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	3	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	4	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	5	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	6	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Northern Ireland has witnessed many changes in the ethnic mix of both its workforce and its local communities over the past decade, see Appendix. Relevant legislation, particularly Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Race Relations Order (NI) 1997, require organisations to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people from different racial groups. The legislation also specifies a number of duties for public bodies, including preparation and maintenance of a written race relations policy, and assessment of the impact of their policies on different racial groups. The legislation also requires organisations to ensure that no individual is discriminated against on the grounds of disability, gender or sexual orientation.

1.2 The further education sector has played a significant role for over 30 years in providing education and training for members of all communities in a society divided by social and political conflict. In Northern Ireland, divisions are evident in politics, cultural expression, education, employment and almost every aspect of daily life. In enabling students from different traditions and cultures to come together to work and learn with others from different community backgrounds, further education has the potential to make an important contribution to the development of a stable, more harmonious society. Attention to such aspects as cultural understanding, the ability to listen and debate and an appreciation of the global market place will all support the development of learners who are able to operate in a multicultural society and engage more effectively with others regionally, nationally and internationally.

1.3 The promotion of good relations is a statutory legal requirement for the Colleges, arising from the Northern Ireland Act (1998). Central to this duty, is the requirement to assess the impact of their policies on students and staff from different racial groups, through screening and equality impact assessment. Colleges are also required to monitor the admission of students and the recruitment and career progress of staff by racial groups. To assist the Colleges in taking this duty forward the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) established, in 2000, from within the further education sector, a Cultural Diversity Working Group, to produce a good practice guide for the Colleges, and help address cultural diversity issues within the sector.

1.4 The Department issued to all Colleges in July 2003 a draft Cultural Diversity Working Document, formulated from the Working Group's report. The purpose of this working document was to assist the Colleges by providing a practical starting point for the promotion of good relations. In March 2004, the Department made a total of £150,000 available, to fund three cultural diversity pilot projects (£50,000 for each pilot). The projects aimed to explore strategies for the promotion of good relations in the further education sector, by providing opportunities for students and staff from differing identities, backgrounds and traditions to develop and enhance relationships of trust and understanding, and promote mutual respect in every aspect of College life.

1.5 In 2005, the Department asked the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) to evaluate the cultural diversity pilots, and to provide exemplars for the further education sector. To complement this work, the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges also commissioned research to identify Chill Factors, that is, factors associated with religion or community background within the Colleges, and to generate practical suggestions on how these could be addressed. The Department also commissioned work on racism and homophobia in the Colleges, and implemented a seminar for Colleges, to share good practice identified by the Inspectorate through the evaluation of the pilot projects.

1.6   Circular FE 02/06 'Cultural Diversity Dissemination' built on the evaluation of the pilot projects and associated research and set out the Department's intention to address and advance cultural diversity issues within the further education sector in Northern Ireland. The circular identified the context and arrangements for the roll out of best practice in cultural diversity and Colleges were asked to make bids for monies to support the dissemination activity.

1.7   Since April 2006 the Department has allocated £300,000 across the Colleges for the dissemination of best practice in cultural diversity. All six Colleges submitted project bids totalling £300,000 but due to variations in costings the final spend for the pilot amounted to £259,565.28.   Typically, work in the Colleges followed an incremental approach to the development of the good practice dimensions identified in the FE 02/06 circular. Projects included the embedding of cultural diversity issues within induction, engagement with representatives from key external agencies and with the student body, and the implementation of training and development activities for staff. There was also considerable emphasis on the inclusion of a series of multi-cultural activities, aimed at increasing students' awareness of different faiths, cultures and beliefs. The specific areas addressed by the projects were determined in large part by the previous level of engagement of key staff in the College in the pilot projects, and work that had already been undertaken to develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures and structures to support the embedding of cultural diversity within and across College services.

1.8   The further education sector has witnessed many changes over the past three years, particularly, the merger of the 16 Colleges into six area- based Colleges. In addition to the restructuring these revisions required, the Colleges have faced considerable challenges as a result of the development and implementation of revised management structures, staffing changes, new building projects, and prolonged industrial action. All of these factors have required considerable effort and energy, and have impacted on the pace at which curriculum change can be implemented.

1.9   In October 2009, the Department requested that the Inspectorate complete an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the six Colleges in implementing the key recommendations of circular FE02/06. This evaluation report is Phase 1 of a two-part survey. Phase 2 will take place at a later date and will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the further education sector in responding to and implementing recommendations from the Chill Factor, Racism and Homophobia reports previously commissioned by the Department. Phase 1 of the evaluation focused on, in particular:

- the effectiveness of the Colleges in disseminating the outcomes of the 2006 Cultural Diversity Circular (FE02/06); and

- the further action that needs to be taken by the Department and by the Colleges to support the further dissemination of best practice in cultural diversity.

1.10   In October 2009, a team of inspectors completed an evaluation of the projects that had been implemented in each of the Colleges, outlined in Appendix 2. Discussions were held with approximately 65 key staff including lecturers, project co-ordinators, support staff and senior managers from the Colleges involved. In total, 12 teaching sessions were observed. In each of the Colleges, focus groups were held with students from a range of cultural backgrounds, and approximately 135 students were interviewed or observed during the evaluation.

2.   SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

2.1   In the areas evaluated, the effectiveness of the Colleges in disseminating the best practice in cultural diversity varies from very good to satisfactory, but is mostly good.

2.2   The main strengths identified include the:

- good or better progress made by most of the Colleges in implementing the project objectives;

- development and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, including codes of conduct for staff and students, to support good relations and promote equality of opportunity within the Colleges;

- effective embedding of diversity and equal opportunity by the Colleges into the students' induction programmes;

- increased awareness by both academic and support staff of cultural diversity issues, as a result of the implementation of appropriate staff development;

- good use made, by the relevant College staff, of established links with a wide range of appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies to inform planning for social inclusion; and

- good links with the Students Union in the majority of the Colleges which have been used effectively to promote access to student services.

2.3   The main areas for improvement identified include the:

- more effective use of student data and market intelligence to identify trends and inform policy and planning;

- implementation of further whole-College staff training, with particular emphasis on the planning for the embedding of cultural diversity within and across the curriculum; and

- further development of quality improvement arrangements to support the evaluation of cultural diversity, focus more sharply on the evaluation of teaching, training and learning and the quality of the student experience, and disseminate best practice within and across the Colleges.

3. LEADE   RSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

3.1   There is a growing need for Colleges to address the learning requirements of the increasing number of people from minority ethnic groups and communities in Northern Ireland, including the growing numbers of immigrant and migrant workers and their families. All of the Colleges report increasing numbers of students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds within their populations. A particular increase has been observed over the past ten years, due in large part to the influx of migrant workers and students from Eastern European countries.   Figure 1 below identifies key characteristics of the changing population, with the attendant implications for further education Colleges.

Figure 1: Non-United Kingdom nationals entering Northern Ireland and allocated a National Insurance number: Top ten countries each year of registration

2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
ROI	942	ROI	859	Poland	5460
Portugal	808	Poland	752	Rep of Lithuania	2131
Philippines	428	India	613	Slovak Republic	1483
India	424	Portugal	555	Rep of Ireland	1059
China	206	Rep of Lithuania	433	India	737
Australia	134	Philippines	276	Rep of Latvia	531
South Africa	115	Slovak Republic	210	Portugal	484
USA	97	China	186	Philippines	422
Germany	85	Ukraine	160	Czech Republic	364
France	83	Rep of Latvia	123	China	283

Source: 100% extract from National Insurance Recording System at 31 December 2006

3.2   The data made available by the Department for this evaluation is based on Section 75 data, which does not include an Eastern European category within its classification system. The table below identifies the number of students from ethnic minority groups attending the further education Colleges in the period 2005-2006.

Figure 2: Students attending the Further Education Colleges in the period 2005-2006*

Ethnicity	BMC	NRC	SERC	SRC	SWRC	NWRC	TOTAL
White	39,543	21,618	21,449	27,178	17,523	20,013	145,324
Black	278	50	37	26	34	43	468
Indian	113	26	9	22	10	27	207
Pakistani	51	18	2	4	26	8	109
Bangladeshi	21	5	10	21	9	-	66
Chinese	427	74	124	51	34	25	735
Other/ Irish Traveller	885	82	50	57	71	135	1,280
Total	**41,318**	**21,873**	**21, 681**	**25,359**	**17,707**	**20,251**	**148,189**

* Data provided by the Department for Employment and Learning

3.3   According to the data for the period 2005-2006, the largest number of students from a non-white background was based in Belfast Metropolitan College, which had 890 students from those groups specified under the Section 75 classification and 885 from the 'other' category. The next largest was the North West Regional College with 238 and 135 students respectively.

3.4   Senior managers in all of the Colleges are aware of the changes in the ethnic make up of the student population. There are, however, variations across the Colleges in the extent and degree of precision with which data on ethnicity is collated and the use made of the data to inform curriculum planning. In one of the Colleges that has been collecting data by specific ethnic group since 2007, there was a large influx of students in 2008/2009 from Poland (867), Slovakia (148), Czech Republic (76), Lithuania (72), Bulgaria (35) and Romania (32). Two of the Colleges in particular have implemented a proactive approach to gathering market intelligence about the composition of the current or potential student population, in terms of community and ethnic background. These Colleges have used the

information effectively to inform planning. In the remainder, there is currently insufficient emphasis on the collection, analysis and use of data on ethnicity. In all of the Colleges, robust systems need to be developed to support the use of data on potential and actual learners from minority ethnic groups, to inform strategic planning for social inclusion, both regionally and locally.
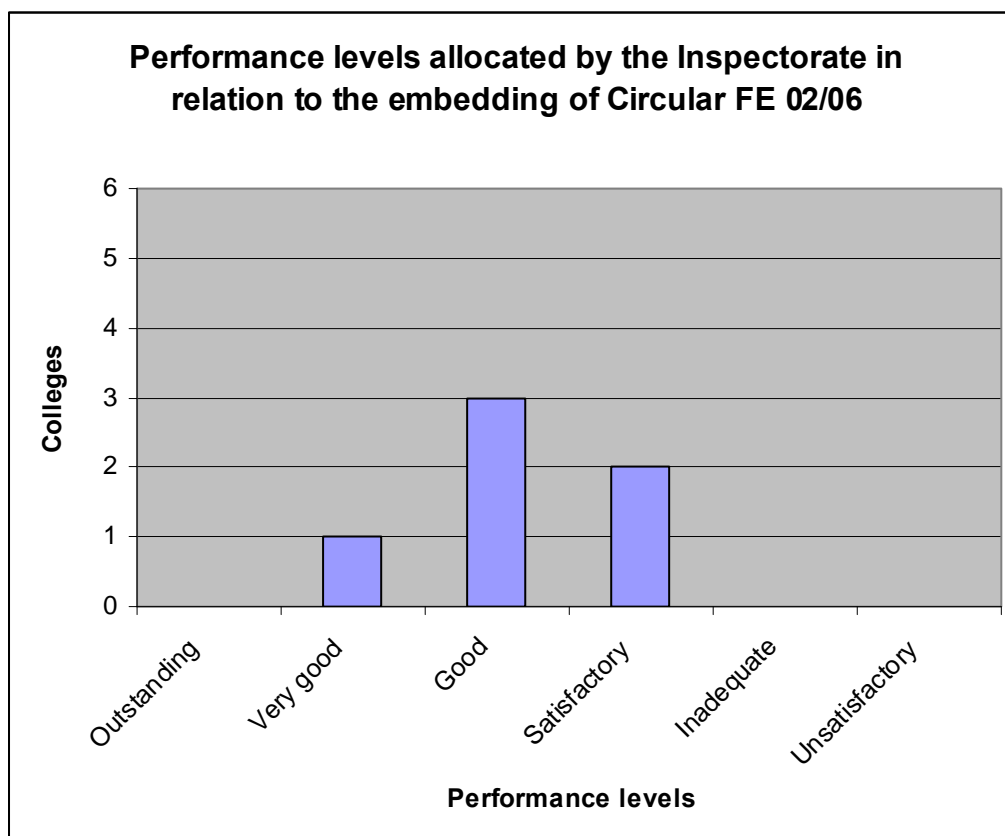
One College which collects detailed data on ethnicity has used information effectively to devise case studies for staff training, and also to determine how money available through the project can be used most effectively to produce information about library resources. As a result of the analysis of the data, the College has produced materials in the languages of the eight key ethnic groups within the College, including Mandarin, Polish and Lithuanian, and placed them on the Virtual Learning Environment [VLE].

Two extensive pieces of research were commissioned by one of the Colleges on travellers and migrant workers in the local area. The objectives of the research were to examine the views, experiences and needs of the traveller community with specific reference to education, relationships with statutory agencies, employment and housing and racism. The migrant workers report focused on identifying existing communities of migrant workers within the area, consulting with the communities on their education and training needs, and undertaking a comparative analysis on models of support. The findings of both reports include specific, high quality analysis of data including that relating to the College's provision and barriers to ethnic groups accessing education and training. The reports highlight examples of good practice and include a series of recommendations for the College to consider when devising future programmes.

3.5   Almost all of the Colleges appointed full-time project managers to implement the projects resulting from the guidance outlined in the Department's 2006 cultural diversity circular. All of the projects have made good or better progress in achieving almost all of the objectives contained within the funding bids. In the majority of the Colleges, however, these posts were terminated when funding was discontinued at the end of the project period. In Colleges that retained these posts, cultural diversity has been given a strong priority at a strategic level and these Colleges have made most progress in developing cultural diversity, inclusion and equality.

3.6   The progress made by the Colleges in implementing all aspects of the Department's 2006 Cultural Diversity Circular ranges from very good to satisfactory. In one of the Colleges, progress towards the embedding of the components of the circular is very good; it is good in three of the Colleges, and satisfactory in the remainder. In the College in which provision is very good, there are robust systems in place for the management of issues relating to cultural diversity, clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and robust data on ethnicity. In addition, senior management show strong commitment to the development of a whole-College ethos which promotes inclusivity and respect for diversity. Despite the good or better progress made by the majority of the Colleges in implementing most of the project objectives, more remains to be done in the implementation of all of the aspects of the circular across all the Colleges.

Figure 3

Performance levels allocated by the Inspectorate in relation to the embedding of Circular FE 02/06

A bar chart titled "Performance levels allocated by the Inspectorate in relation to the embedding of Circular FE 02/06". The vertical axis is labelled "Colleges" and ranges from 0 to 6. The horizontal axis is labelled "Performance levels" with categories: Outstanding, Very good, Good, Satisfactory, Inadequate, Unsatisfactory. Bars: Very good = 1, Good = 3, Satisfactory = 2. No bars for Outstanding, Inadequate, Unsatisfactory.

3.7   There is considerable variation in the priority accorded to equal opportunity and cultural diversity within the College development plans (CDPs). The evaluation found that there is a strong relationship between the emphasis placed by senior managers on this issue within the CDPs, the clarity of the associated targets and resource allocation, and the extent to which an inclusive and harmonious culture is established across each of the Colleges and their constituent campuses. In a significant minority of the Colleges, a strong strategic vision for diversity and inclusion, including a clear management structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and well defined arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of provision is at an early stage of development.

3.8   Each of the Colleges has established structures to manage cultural diversity and equal opportunity, and these have been mostly effective in developing and implementing suitable policies. Typically, this takes the form of an Equality Steering or Working Group, which has a remit to develop and implement appropriate policies, practices, and procedures, including codes of conduct for both staff and students. In the best practice, these fora are comprised of representatives from the main functional areas of the College, including curriculum, student services, libraries and learning resource centres, employee development, finance and management information. Central to the importance of ensuring that the policies and services developed are fit for purpose is the presence on these fora of representatives from external organisations which reflect the interests of minority groups and the student population. In one of the Colleges, there is an International Office, which serves as an important point of contact for students.

> *In one of the Colleges, the merger was used to pull together the particular expertise of personnel from each of the three legacy Colleges in student services, disability and ethnicity respectively; these were brought together well to promote joint planning of policies and procedures to develop a common and standardised approach to policy formulation.*

3.9   Most of the Colleges have devised and implemented clear codes of conduct for staff and learners, including anti-bullying and harassment policies. Their prospectuses and marketing materials have been adapted to reflect the cultural and diverse mix of the student population. Staff in a significant minority of the Colleges have also worked hard to make the approach to inclusion and cultural diversity transparent throughout the College. In the majority of Colleges the tone and style of notice boards complement effectively the promotion of good relations throughout the College. In those Colleges, however, where there is a public finance build (PFI), the opportunities to display relevant documentation are limited and the potential for the displaying of useful information about inclusion and cultural diversity is under-developed.

3.10   A significant minority of the Colleges have used discussions with student and staff focus groups to identify trends, views and opinions relating to cultural diversity. In the best practice, staff in one of the Colleges administered an online student equality survey. One hundred and forty nine students responded and the College drew up an action plan to address issues raised through the survey. In most of the Colleges, however, the quality assurance arrangements for evaluating the quality of the provision for cultural diversity, equal opportunity and inclusion are underdeveloped. There are insufficient opportunities to embed these aspects effectively in the self - evaluation and quality improvement processes.

3.11   A significant minority of the Colleges have incorporated sessions on cultural diversity and equality into their whole-College staff development programmes. Another produces an Equality Update report each term to inform staff throughout the year on the progress made in relation to Section 75. It also acts as a reminder to staff of their responsibility to promote equality and good relations.

> *In one of the Colleges, excellent training materials have been produced for a Training the Trainers programme on cultural diversity. The materials were based on actual and challenging situations that had been faced by lecturers in classroom situations, and were used to underpin problem-solving workshops on cultural diversity. The training was very positively evaluated by participants and the 'case-study' approach has now been embedded into the wider staff development programme, with cultural diversity issues providing an appropriate medium for exploring other staff development issues, including equality and child protection training.*

3.12   Almost all of the Colleges have developed good working relationships with a range of other providers and a significant minority have developed excellent working partnerships with key agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors. In the best practice, representatives from minority groups engage effectively with senior members of the College to inform provision and curriculum planning. In one of the Colleges, excellent progress has been made in establishing links with the local Health Trust. The project provides training to community volunteers to enable them to provide better support for people from ethnic minority groups, including travellers. One of the outcomes from the project will be the production of a series of four DVDs on the themes of Workplace, Health, Education and Housing. These will be circulated across the Health Trust area and possibly on a province-wide basis. The College's aim is to be able to access these through the College VLE. One former College student from Bulgaria has undertaken the training and is actively applying her learning through supporting others within the community.

3.13   In the majority of the Colleges there are good and at times excellent links with the Students Union, which play an important role in the development of an inclusive ethos within the Colleges. One of the Colleges, for example, was the first educational establishment to join the Campaign Against Hate initiative, and the Students Union was instrumental in implementing this activity. In two of the Colleges, however, the Students Unions are under-developed and there is insufficient opportunity for the students to contribute effectively to the development of services to meet the needs of individuals from diverse and ethnic minority backgrounds.

In one of the Colleges in conjunction with the College's Students Affairs Officers and the NUS/USI, Students Union personnel are working to develop the welfare of all students, including those from foreign countries. They have worked with community policing in each of the four main campuses to provide advice and guidance on student issues, including: drug and alcohol awareness; alcohol and substance abuse; hate crime information; personal safety, bullying and harassment. The key personnel from the Students Union recently attended the World without Labels residential in Belfast and are planning a poster and coaster campaign aimed at removing labels. The Students Union has successfully managed to translate the Students Union card and related information, allowing foreign students to understand and avail of the discounts available in local stores.

4.   QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1   All of the Colleges have worked hard to incorporate diversity issues into their publicity materials and to promote a welcoming and stimulating environment for all learners. In most of the colleges, induction materials have been adapted and amended to incorporate diversity and inclusion. Most of the Colleges articulate their values clearly within student induction handbooks and these often include the requirement for students to behave responsibly and with respect for others.

In one of the Colleges, cultural diversity is particularly well embedded in the induction programme for both staff and students. Student handbooks are available in a number of different languages, including Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Russian. In this College, cultural diversity aspects are also embedded well into both essential skills teaching in literacy, and the tutorial system for full- time students.

4.2   The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation, ranged from good to excellent and was mostly good. In teaching sessions observed relationships among staff and students are mutually respectful. Students are encouraged to value one another and to express their own views while appreciating the views of others. In classes, the majority of students are well engaged and actively involved.

4.3   Most of the Colleges provide a series of events which aim to broaden the students' understanding of the values, beliefs, and interests of people from other community and ethnic backgrounds. In a minority of Colleges, however, the momentum to provide a range of multi-cultural events has been lost since the projects and the associated funding came to an end.

One of the Colleges demonstrated a wide range of imaginative and creative approaches to embedding cultural diversity on a whole-College basis. The ambitious International Food Fest held at one of the campuses was highly effective in exposing those who attended to different cultures through sampling differing cuisines, dance, music and visual arts. Feedback was unanimously positive from the 210 College students and 230 local school pupils who were present at the event. In addition, a Cultural Diversity Road Show visited all of the College's main campuses.

4.4   A majority of Colleges introduced a wide range of themed days during the 2008/2009 academic year, including Food and Education Days celebrating Mexican, Thai and Chinese cuisine. In one College, a Cultural Cocktail event was hosted by students on a First Diploma programme to celebrate the diversity of cultures within the College. The students organising the event collaborated with a local multicultural support group and the event included ethnic minority guest speakers. Those who attended had the opportunity to explore various exhibitions, and receive advice and information from a multi-cultural forum. The Cultural Cocktail was effective in helping the College community learn about other cultures and raising awareness about the problems that ethnic minorities may face.

4.5   The majority of the Colleges have implemented student exchanges to other countries, including Finland, Japan and Hungary, and have incorporated multicultural classes into their provision.

4.6   A significant minority of the Colleges have produced cultural diversity calendars, often in conjunction with their art and design students. In one such calendar, a faith group including Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and Sikhism, is featured each month. The significant dates for different ethnic groups are detailed and perspectives on diversity in customs and practices are highlighted within the calendar.

4.7   One College, in collaboration with a local Travellers Association, launched a 'Promoting Equality' art and design project. The task was to develop a three-dimensional piece of artwork that had connections with the word equality. Essential Skills provision was also advertised at one of the traveller sites, with a view to organising classes for the travelling community.

4.8   The Colleges have invested considerable effort and energy in adapting induction materials to include cultural diversity issues. However, it remains the case that a strategic approach to the embedding of cultural diversity across the curriculum is required in almost all of them. Comprehensive curriculum audits need to be implemented to determine where cultural diversity is occurring naturally within course specifications. Whilst some of the curriculum areas have adapted aspects of their programmes to reflect relevant issues within vocational contexts, the potential to use cultural diversity as a theme for project-based work to enhance students' understanding of global issues, is under-developed. It remains the case that, apart from induction, the impact has been primarily on those curriculum areas, for example, health and social care, in which consideration of issues of prejudice, discrimination and anti-bias practice, and their effects on behaviour, are already critical components.

4.9   The curriculum projects across the Colleges have made an important contribution to the development of cultural diversity materials. These materials include College policies on equal opportunity and diversity, and support materials such as library guides and software to support students for whom English is not the native language. Increasingly, the Colleges are

moving towards making customised learning support available for ethnic minority groups, through study skills packs and support facilities on the VLE. The majority of the Colleges also produced DVDs on cultural diversity issues. Most of these were of a good or better quality, and extracts from them have been placed on the majority of the Colleges' websites.

4.10   Within the majority of the Colleges, the staff have worked hard to remove barriers to learning for students for whom English is not the first language. A significant minority of Colleges have translated their anti- racist and anti- bullying policies into different languages. In one of the Colleges, for example, the staff and student harassment policies have been translated into both Chinese and Polish. In addition, the College provides the opportunity for other policies, such as the essential skills policy, to be translated into other languages if required.

4.11   In the Colleges in which cultural diversity is a high strategic priority, there is an increasing emphasis on providing a 'culturally- sensitive' environment. Examples include the adjustment of absence management policies to take account of specific religious festivals and holidays. In addition, the majority of the Colleges enable all of their students to use SKYPE technology to communicate with family and friends, and this facility is of particular value to students who are far from home.

4.12   There is variation in the quality of the initial advice and guidance provided to students. In the best practice, College managers develop the capabilities of front- line staff to enable them to provide effective pre-entry advice and guidance, including information on how student can access the full range of student services including financial issues, and if appropriate, visas.

> *This training programme was developed in-house and provided for front- line staff and the admissions team in particular. Within this initiative, data was used effectively to illustrate the need for training. For example, staff were made aware that forty one percent of the students who had been interviewed in the previous year had rejected their place in the College, and thirty eight percent of students who had applied did not enrol. Training explored influencing factors and gave clear guidance in relation to the requisite features of applicants' initial experience, to maximise enrolment. Excellent guidance was provided for staff on the various stages of the admissions process and included: a checklist of information; guidance on interpersonal and communication skills for use with students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds; information on careers education, advice and guidance, and student support available.*

5. CONCLUSI   ON

5.1   The findings from the evaluation indicate clearly that provision for cultural diversity within Colleges has improved since the evaluation of the pilot projects in 2005, and is good or better in the majority of Colleges. Despite the structural challenges further education has faced over the past three years, almost all of the Colleges have met or exceeded the objectives of their projects, and have demonstrated their willingness to disseminate further the outcomes of Circular FE02/06. Considerable progress has been made by the Colleges in revising provision to focus more strongly on the inclusion of students from ethnic minority groups, and improving staff awareness on cultural diversity issues.

5.2   The evaluation has identified many examples of good practice in cultural diversity and inclusion. Across the Colleges best practice is characterised by:

- a strong strategic commitment from senior management, reflected in the implementation of policies, structures, procedures and services which reflect accurately and effectively the needs and interests of individuals from different backgrounds and cultures, and support the promotion of good relations for all staff and learners;

- the effective collection, analysis and use of relevant data to inform planning;

- the identification of a person or key people who have responsibility for addressing the good relations and cultural diversity agenda at College- wide level;

- the effective involvement of students and representatives from key external organisations in the development, implementation and monitoring of whole-College policies on good relations;

- innovative curriculum planning which uses cultural diversity appropriately as a medium for thematic, project-based work and relevant assignments;

- displays in corridors, classrooms, learning resource centres and other spaces which publicise the College's commitment to cultural diversity and give sufficient coverage to related events and services;

- strategies for learning support, advice and guidance, which have been adapted to become more 'culturally sensitive' and to take account of the needs of diverse individuals and groups;

- bespoke training for all staff through a systematic staff development programme;

- opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities that address cultural diversity; and

- robust systems for the review and monitoring of provision and appropriate strategies to effect improvement.

6.   KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

6.1   Despite the good or better progress made by the Colleges in implementing most of the project objectives, more remains to be done across all of the Colleges, particularly in relation to integrating cultural diversity within the curriculum. The evaluation has identified a number of key priorities for development.

6.2   The Department should:

- organise and facilitate, in conjunction with the sector, a Cultural Diversity dissemination event to feed back these findings;

- review and revise existing Departmental polices, in partnership with the sector, to encourage the sector in ensuring the effective dissemination of the good practice identified through this evaluation; and

- require the Colleges to include cultural diversity as a strategic objective within their College Development Plans.

6.3   The further education Colleges should:

- identify cultural diversity as a priority within their College Development Plans, and gather and use relevant data, including local labour market intelligence, to support planning for diversity and inclusion;

- integrate cultural diversity more effectively throughout the curriculum, and develop and implement appropriate strategies to support inclusion; and

- ensure the dissemination of best practice throughout all of the campuses of each College.

COLLEGES VISITED DURING THE SURVEY

Belfast Metropolitan College
Northern Regional College
North West Regional College
South Eastern Regional College
Southern Regional College
South West College

INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE