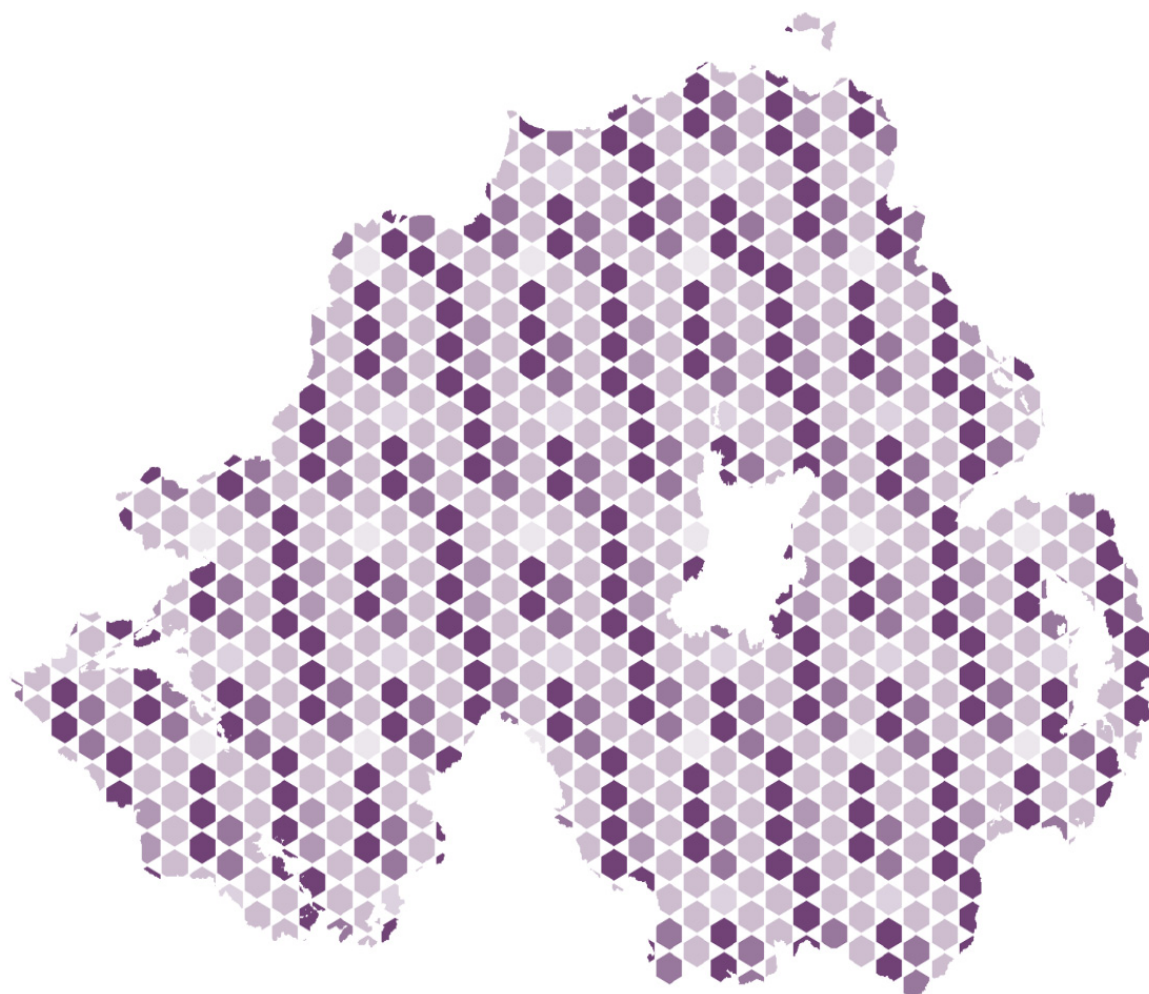


FURTHER EDUCATION INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Deloitte Employability
Programme

Report of an Inspection
in March 2010

CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE EVALUATION	2
3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS	2
4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	4
5. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	5
6. QUALITY OF THE PROVISION	5
7. CONCLUSION	7
8. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	7

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

The statistics used in this report have been supplied and verified by Belfast Metropolitan College.

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 the 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 The aim of the Deloitte Employability Programme is to bridge the gap between education and employment by helping learners to develop the personal skills and competences valued by employers thereby improving their chances of securing and sustaining employment which is well matched to their ability and aspirations.

1.2 There are two main strands to the Deloitte Employability Programme: Training the Trainers and delivering the Deloitte Employability Programme to students. The Deloitte 'Train the Trainer' course is an intensive programme which builds on a trainer's personal qualities to develop the specific skills and resources required to deliver an employability programme effectively. Deloitte Employability Centres have an exclusive license to deliver the Deloitte 'Train the Trainer' course.

1.3 A key feature of the Deloitte Programme is the very good quality of the learning materials developed by Deloitte and provided under license to participating colleges. These include a scheme of work for all units within the programme and a comprehensive range of information packs to support the consistent quality of its management and delivery. The unit specifications clearly define learning outcomes and signpost links to the evidence the unit provides towards achievement of the National Open College Network Level 2 Certificate in Employability. The materials place appropriate emphasis on developing the students' capacity to plan, manage and reflect on their learning.

1.4 A distinctive characteristic of the Deloitte Programme is the involvement of Deloitte volunteers in the delivery of the Programme. The Deloitte Volunteers are drawn from a group of young, professional Deloitte employees who volunteer to provide employability and mentoring sessions to students from a range of professional and technical programmes.

1.5 An important aspect of the Deloitte Programme is the Deloitte Student of the Year competition. The competition requires the Deloitte students of each college to nominate the student who will represent their college and compete to become the Deloitte Student of the Year. The competition requires the nominees to work within groups comprising of students from each college, who are tasked to work as a team to illustrate and present their interpretation of one of the Deloitte employability competences. Throughout this process, the students are observed by the judging panel who evaluate each of the student's individual contributions to the work of the group. The panel includes representatives from Deloitte and from local business and industry; they provide detailed feedback to the students on their observations and identify the successful student.

1.6 In June 2007, Deloitte approached Belfast Metropolitan College to participate in the Deloitte Employability Initiative. Belfast Metropolitan College became one of nine Deloitte Employability Centres of Excellence operating in the United Kingdom who are responsible for Deloitte employability skills training and delivery.

1.7 Subsequently, Belfast Metropolitan College applied to the Department for Employment and Learning's (the Department) Innovation Fund to establish the programme across the further education sector. To date, Belfast Metropolitan College, as the lead college, has received two tranches of funding from the Department through the Innovation Fund and is the lead college for the roll out of the programme throughout the further education sector. The aim of the first tranche was to:

- establish a central Deloitte Employability office within Belfast Metropolitan College;
- undertake a marketing campaign for the initiative;

- train two further staff cohorts across the Northern Ireland further education sector;
- quality assure the programme;
- establish a network of links to include student mentors, placements, guest speakers; and
- roll out a level 2 certificate in employability across the further education sector in Northern Ireland.

1.8 The objective of the year two funding was to enable Belfast Metropolitan College, as the lead college, to drive and support the roll-out of the Deloitte Employability Programme across the further education sector in Northern Ireland.

2. THE EVALUATION

2.1 In March 2010 the Department requested the Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) to undertake an evaluation of the Deloitte Employability Programme. The objectives of this survey were to evaluate the:

- quality and impact of the programme in providing further education students with an accredited, relevant employability qualification;
- appropriateness of the programme as discrete or stand alone provision and its relationship to the wider further education curriculum; and
- suitability of the selection process and the potential for roll out across the sector.

2.2 A team of five inspectors visited the five colleges currently offering the Deloitte Programme to students on level two and level three professional and technical programmes. Discussions were held with approximately thirty key staff including members of senior management teams and staff with responsibility for aspects of the Deloitte Programme across the colleges who are delivering the Programme. Fifteen Deloitte Employability sessions were observed, in addition to a workshop facilitated by volunteers from Deloitte. The Deloitte Student of the Year competition was also observed. In each of the colleges, discussions were held with focus groups of students who were representative of a range of professional and technical areas and levels of programmes. At the time of the evaluation, the provision of the Programme at North West Regional College was limited to students taking higher education courses and was, therefore, not included in the inspection.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 The main strengths of the Deloitte Programme include the:

- very good strategic vision and the strong leadership provided by the lead college for a whole-college approach to the development and embedding of employability skills;
- clearly articulated links in the lead college between the employability strategy, the whole college improvement plan and the college development plan;

- good start made by the lead college to develop a student curriculum entitlement which includes the development of employability skills;
- clear understanding by the staff in the lead college of the potential of the Deloitte Programme to build on the students' prior learning;
- excellent quality of the support provided for the partner colleges by the highly committed Master Trainers;
- excellent quality of the support provided by the Deloitte volunteers;
- quality of most of the teaching; 75% of the lessons observed were either good or very good;
- contribution of the Deloitte Programme to the development of the students' communication skills;
- very good quality of the Deloitte learning materials which complement the college's Individual Learner programme (ILP) process; and
- the opportunities afforded by the Deloitte Student of the Year competition.

3.2 The main areas for improvement of the Deloitte Programme include the:

- inconsistent arrangements for the selection of lecturers to participate in Deloitte training;
- inconsistent arrangements for the selection of the student participants and the targeting of those for whom the Programme will provide greatest benefit;
- underdeveloped arrangements for the management of the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes across all participating colleges;
- limited co-ordination, across all the colleges inspected, of the integration of the Deloitte employability programme within key aspects of the students' learning programmes;
- insufficient planning for progression within the programme for a significant minority of students who have undertaken other employability programmes prior to enrolling on their college course;
- rigid adherence to the Deloitte training materials, by a significant minority of lecturers, which diminishes the quality of the students' learning;
- inconsistent opportunities for students to undertake work-related learning experiences to which they can apply their learning; and
- limited dissemination of the examples of good practice.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The Deputy Director for Curriculum Services in the lead college provides clear strategic direction for the delivery of the Deloitte Programme, both internally as a vehicle to implement the lead college's employability strategy and externally to drive and support the roll-out of the Deloitte Employability Programme across the further education sector in Northern Ireland.

4.2 The lead college has a very good strategic vision for a whole-college approach to the development and embedding of employability skills; this is evidenced by the clear strategic links between their employability strategy, the whole college improvement plan and the college development plan.

4.3 The Deloitte Programme is recognised and valued by the lead College as a strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning and subsequently, to support the improvement in the retention, achievement and sustainable progression of students.

4.4 The lead college has established a student curriculum entitlement, which places a particular emphasis on the integration of the Deloitte Employability Programme within the key elements of the students' learning programmes, including the tutorial process.

4.5 A Deloitte Steering Group has been established by the lead college to manage the roll out of the Deloitte Programme across the further education sector. While these arrangements were appropriate in the early period of implementation of the Deloitte Programme, it should now be an integral part of whole college strategy for the development of employability skills.

4.6 The lead college has in place three Master Trainers who provide training and support to the further education sector in Northern Ireland. They have trained twenty-two trainers within their own organisation and nineteen across the remaining five colleges. In addition, there are fifteen further places for training in April 2010, to date, Belfast Metropolitan College has selected seven staff for this round of training.

4.7 The lead college has adopted an increasingly strategic approach to the selection of staff to undertake the Deloitte training and to the selection of students to participate in the programme. Appropriately, the Deloitte Programme is viewed by the lead college as being of benefit to a specific profile of student. However, despite the lead college sharing selection and recruitment guidance for the programme with the other colleges, the identification of trainers and students to participate in the programme, within almost all of the partner colleges, is not sufficiently strategic or systematic.

4.8 The arrangements for the quality assurance of the Deloitte Programme in the roll-out to the other further education colleges, is underdeveloped. Currently, the Master Trainers undertake the role of internal verifier and carry out one session of observation in partner colleges; where concerns arise, a second observation takes place. In the lead college, appropriately, all of the professional and technical programmes participating in the Programme evaluate the quality of the programme against Improving Quality, Raising Standards (IQ:RS) indicators culminating in a self evaluation report. However, the responsibility of the partner colleges for the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning is not sufficiently well defined. In addition, there was limited dissemination of the examples of good practice.

4.9 The colleges do not sufficiently promote the integration of employability skills within key elements of the student's learning programme. There are limited opportunities across all the colleges to ensure that the outcomes achieved by students participating in the Deloitte programme impact positively on their work in essential skills, and in their main professional and technical programmes. It will be important for the colleges to explore the mapping of the programme with key elements of the student's learning programme in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to make the programme more accessible to students.

4.10 The lead college and the Deloitte Steering Group are aware of the potential for the Deloitte Programme to provide continuity and progression for students in developing their employability skills beyond those achieved through their post-primary school. Across the colleges, however, a significant minority of students currently undertaking the Deloitte programme find it insufficiently different or challenging in comparison to the provision experienced at their previous school. There is significant potential for the development of a progressive framework for employability skills through the collaboration between colleges and their partner schools, through the local Area Learning Communities.

4.11 The Department's Innovation Fund has been a key factor in the continuance of the Deloitte programme, for example, the additional funding has enabled support and guidance to be provided by the Master Trainers to the sector.

5. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

5.1 The achievements and standards of the students participating in the programme are variable across the five colleges inspected. However, when a college demonstrates a high level of management commitment to the Programme there is greater progression in learning and higher standards of work for the majority of students.

5.2 Across the five colleges inspected, the majority of the students are well motivated. They value their participation in the programme and talk enthusiastically about the benefits it provides, in particular preparation for employment. They report that they find the Deloitte employability programme more useful than similar programmes undertaken in school due mainly to the active learning approaches used by their college tutors.

5.3 For the minority of students who previously demonstrated disruptive or inappropriate behaviour, there is good evidence that the Programme is enabling them to develop increasingly mature attitudes and attributes which will support their progression to employment.

5.4 Across the colleges, students participating in this programme are able to develop well their communication skills, for example through discussions, presentations and opportunities to provide constructive feedback to each other.

5.5 Most students, from all five colleges, participating in the Programme are able to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and are making good progress in identifying strategies to prioritise and address the areas which need to be improved.

6. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

6.1 The quality of teaching and learning ranges from inadequate to very good; three-quarters of the lessons observed were either good or very good. One lesson was evaluated as inadequate due mainly to the unsuitability of the student group. The teaching and learning which was evaluated as good or very good was characterised by the:

- well planned links to the students' professional and technical programmes;

- good match between the deployment of the Deloitte Programme tutor and their capacity to integrate the programme with the students' main professional and technical programme;
- confidence building strategies employed by tutors and embedded within the Deloitte programme;
- good use of active learning approaches to which the students respond well;
- motivation and participation of almost all of the students in the activities;
- students awareness of the necessary attitudes and aptitudes and behaviours in becoming work ready; and
- emphasis placed on developing the students' self awareness.

6.2 In a minority of the lessons observed the quality of the students' learning was constrained by the:

- insufficient information and induction provided to the students to ensure their understanding of the relevance and potential value of the programme;
- slow pace of the lessons;
- activities and tasks being pitched at an inappropriate level;
- limited adaptation of the Deloitte materials to match the ability and interests of the students;
- insufficient account taken of the students' prior learning or achievement of employability skills, resulting in duplication and reduced student motivation;
- discrete teaching of the programme which is unrelated to the students' work placements or simulated work experiences; and
- insufficient integration of elements of the Deloitte Programme within the students' professional and technical programme, and essential skills programme.

6.3 Students who have part-time employment or have work placements are better able to relate to the programme and achieve higher standards in their work. Across the colleges, there is inconsistent emphasis placed on supporting all students to undertake work-related learning activities in order that they maximise the full benefit from the Programme.

6.4 The Deloitte volunteers make a positive contribution to the Programme. In the workshop observed the volunteers quickly established an excellent rapport with the students. Their drive and enthusiasm for the topics discussed, combined with their open communication of their real life experiences enhanced the students' high level of interest and enjoyment.

6.5 The Student of the Year competition, which was launched in 2009 within the lead College and then extended in 2010 to include representation from all of the partner colleges, provides a valuable enrichment experience to the students' learning. It provides students

with an excellent opportunity to gain important insights into the world of work and demonstrate their ability to work together to apply the competences they have achieved through the Programme.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This evaluation has identified that the overall delivery of the Deloitte Employability Programme by the colleges inspected is good. The are important strengths which include the clear strategic direction provided by Belfast Metropolitan College, the excellent support provided by the Master Trainers, the emphasis placed on active learning strategies and the important contribution to the enrichment of the Programme by the Deloitte volunteers. The evaluation has identified areas for improvement which the colleges have the capacity to address. These include the arrangements for the self-evaluation and quality improvement of the provision, the integration of the Programme to the students learning programme and the management of the selection of lecturers and students to participate in the Deloitte Programme. The Inspectorate will monitor the college's progress on the areas for improvement.

8. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

This evaluation has identified a number of key priorities for development which include the need to:

- establish procedures for the overall self-evaluation and quality improvement of the Programme, to include the dissemination of good practice ;
- make explicit linkages between the Deloitte Employability Programme and the Northern Ireland Curriculum in the planning and delivery of the Programme; and
- integrate the Deloitte Employability Programme fully within the students' learning programmes.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2010

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

