

18. PERFORMING ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

Performance Level: Satisfactory

Areas inspected:

- Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success and the ApprenticeshipsNI programme at levels 2 and 3.

CONTEXT

18.1 The College provides the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success in performing engineering operations. Recruitment to this strand has declined, from an average of 13 learners per year down to 6 currently. A further education programme is provided for those learners who do not have a work placement. The College works in a sub-contractor arrangement with Engineering Training Services with regard to the ApprenticeshipsNI provision. The number of apprentices is small, with ten level 3 two level 2 apprentices in performing engineering operations.

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate.

18.2 The co-ordination of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is inadequate, resulting in poor planning, a fragmented training provision and, for a minority of the level 3 apprentices, an inappropriate curriculum offer. Industrial links and partnerships are underdeveloped leading to a decline in enrolments in this priority skill area. An employer's forum, however, has recently been established to inform future developments, including appropriate changes to the programme curriculum; this engagement has resulted in staff development being organised in hydraulics and pneumatics. It is a concern that a small number of the level 3 apprentices, who have completed the NVQ and technical certificate components of their training still have outstanding essential skills qualifications to complete in order to meet the requirements of their framework. The self-evaluation process needs to be more rigorous and better informed by all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the provision meets the needs of local industry and addresses the low levels of recruitment.

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory.

18.3 It is a concern that the quality of teaching, training and learning was satisfactory in 75% of the directed training sessions observed; it was good in the remainder. Where the teaching and learning was satisfactory, it was characterised by a lack of appropriate contexts to demonstrate the theories and skills being taught and low levels of engagement in their learning by a minority of the learners. In addition, there was insufficient use of ILT by the lecturers to enhance or extend learning. The accommodation for teaching, training and learning is not sufficiently fit for purpose. In the good sessions, the learners were well engaged in appropriate project work. It is noteworthy that 80% of the Programme-Led Apprentices have a work placement, and are provided with good opportunities to develop and apply their skills. The arrangements for reviewing and monitoring the progress of a majority of learners in the workplace are inadequate; there are insufficiently regular monitoring and review visits by the College staff. While the learners are provided with good on-going careers information and advice by their lecturers, the quality of their personal training plans are inadequate. The plans are generic in their nature and the reviews are not well enough informed by the lecturers, the essential skills tutors and workplace supervisors.

Achievements and standards are good.

18.4 The standards of work in the learners' portfolios, and the quality of their practical work, ranges from satisfactory to very good; most of the learners are making good progress in their professional and technical units. Where the standards are very good, the learners are able to complete appropriate engineering procedures including the fitting and maintenance of complex automated machines and fabrication of intricate steel structures to a consistently high standard, with minimal supervision. They display high levels of motivation and are able to work independently or in teams. Over the past three years, for the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand, the average retention rate is satisfactory at 60%, but the achievement and progression rates are very good at 93% and 86% respectively. Over the same period, the average retention rate for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is very good at 86% and the achievement rate is outstanding at 100%.

Table of Achievements (over the last three years)

Programme/Strand	Numbers registered who completed 4 weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate for those who achieved full award %
Programme-Led Apprenticeships	25	60	93	86
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 3	40	86	100	100