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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

**East Antrim Institute of
Further and Higher Education**

March 2007

Grading System

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) is piloting a new 6-point grading scale to replace the original 4-point scale as set out below. Where a grade is recorded in this report, the grade is given on the revised scales.

ORIGINAL GRADE	REVISED GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
1	1	Outstanding characterised by excellence.
1	2	Consistently good; major strengths.
2	3	Important strengths in most of provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address.
2	4	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed.
3	5	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action.
4	6	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action.

The focused inspection of East Antrim Institute of Further and Higher Education (the Institute) carried out in November 2004 identified significant areas for improvement in a number of areas of the Institute's work. The follow-up inspection in January 2006, whilst acknowledging some improvements, also assessed the provision in the following key areas as having on-going areas for further improvement:

- business and management; and
- essential and key skills.

As a result, the Inspectorate was commissioned to monitor the provision and a series of three monitoring inspection visits was carried out between May 2006 and March 2007.

In the interval since the follow-up inspection a number of changes have taken place which affect the work of the Institute, including the:

- retirement of the head of school for business and management;
- reorganisation of the business and management section within the school of engineering;

- provision of improved accommodation and Information Learning Technology (ILT) resources for staff and students in business and management; and
- appointment of a quality performance manager to identify and address quality issues across the Institute.

The Institute has received support from the Learning and Skills Development Agency Northern Ireland (LSDA NI) and has provided internal support and staff development in both business and management and essential and key skills.

Over the period of the monitoring visits the following are the most important improvements that have taken place:

- the provision of more effective leadership in business and management resulting in the development of a more cohesive course team, including improved links with industry;
- the significant increase in the number of students enrolling on the national diploma in business over the last two years and the improved excellent retention rate for the current year-one students;
- on the national diploma course in business, the introduction of a well-planned induction course, the development of procedures to monitor more effectively student progress, and the implementation of action to reduce the assessment burden on students;
- the well-planned support from the institute's ILT Champion to develop further the use of ILT in teaching and learning, and in the tracking of student progress in business and management;
- the development of a comprehensive action plan for essential skills which, over the course of the monitoring visits, has been modified to reflect internal and external constraints;
- the provision of a range of appropriate structures and procedures by the head of unit, co-ordinator and course team, to support the teaching, learning and assessment processes in essential skills;
- the collection of a good range of data within the essential skills provision;
- the introduction of an attendance management policy for essential skills, resulting in improved retention rates; and
- the improved outcomes for essential skills over the 2005/2006 period, with realistic targets being set for 2006/2007.

The following issues require further development:

- the continued support for students on year two of the national diploma in business, to ensure they meet the assessment requirements for the award; and

- the regular monitoring of the essential skills provision, by management at all levels, to ensure further and sustained improvement.

Conclusion

The follow-up inspection confirms that the Institute has made good progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the original inspection report. The Inspectorate is confident that the actions implemented will result in sustained improvements in the quality of the provision. No further monitoring visits are required.

Provision	Grade at original inspection	Revised grade
Business and Management	3	4
Essential and Key Skills	3	4

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