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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**

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

**April 2007**

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 number.

### 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 grades are recorded in this report, the grade is given on both the old and the revised scales

<b>ORIGINAL GRADE</b>	<b>REVISED GRADE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>
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 carried out in the North East Institute of Further and Higher Education (Institute) in November 2005 found that the areas in which improvement was required included the:

- leadership and management of essential skills and recreation and leisure provision;
- procedures to identify and provide appropriate support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities;
- quality assurance arrangements; and
- planning for the provision of student services, including learning resource centres, across the Institute's campuses.

The Inspectorate monitored the provision over a period of eighteen months. Discussions took place with the Senior Management Team in the Institute and a series of monitoring visits was completed between June 2006 and April 2007.

Over this period the senior management team has provided sound strategic leadership and has demonstrated a strong commitment to address areas for development, through the implementation of a detailed improvement plan. The provision has improved significantly and the following are the most important improvements that have taken place:

### **ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

- the establishment of an essential skills steering committee chaired by a senior manager with good cross college membership, that meets regularly to develop and monitor all aspects of essential skills and to improve the interfaces between curriculum and support functions;
- the effective deployment of a senior lecturer as essential skills coordinator with appropriate administration support;
- the job descriptions of the internal verifiers have been revised to expand and clarify their roles to form a support team that meets regularly;
- the good systems in place for capturing and analysing data to monitor learner attendance and retention on a monthly basis;
- the successful piloting of a new attendance policy on two groups that were identified at risk; and
- the staff development activities that have been organised, with a good start being made in sharing good practice.

## **RECREATION AND LEISURE**

- the effective deployment of staff, and implementation of appropriate training, development and mentorship, which have resulted in stronger curricular leadership, and improved working relationships;
- the implementation of an effective mentoring programme to support part-time and beginning staff, which has led to improvements in teaching and learning;
- the successful introduction of an appropriate strategy to improve student retention; and
- the increased use of information and learning technology on most courses.

## **STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES PROVISION**

- the commitment of significant resources by senior management to this area of provision, including the appointment of a well-qualified and experienced learning support co-ordinator;
- the increased awareness of both academic and support staff of disability issues, as a result of the implementation of appropriate staff development;
- the improved planning, at both strategic and operational levels, to identify students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and provide appropriate programmes of support;
- the robust procedures which have been introduced to monitor and review the effectiveness of the provision; and
- the strong working relationships which have been developed with staff from a wide range of schools and statutory and voluntary agencies.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- the successful implementation of a student-centred, institute-wide Quality Enhancement Strategy, which has a strong focus on raising standards, sharing good practice, promoting employer engagement, and building leadership capacity at all levels in the organisation; and
- the use of innovative methods to acquire and analyse student feedback and implement action for improvement.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

- the improved strategic and operational planning, involving both academic and support staff, which has led to more effective co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of student services provision across the Institute's campuses.

Issues requiring further development include the need for:

- ongoing review and evaluation of the essential and key skills provision to ensure the improvements achieved are sustained and consolidated.

## **CONCLUSION**

The follow-up inspection confirms that the Institute has made very 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 their provision. No further monitoring visits are required.

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