



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI in North West Regional College

Report of a Follow-up Inspection of  
Wood Occupations in April 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
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## **FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE'S PROVISION FOR WOOD OCCUPATIONS**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of the North West Regional College in November 2017<sup>1</sup> when the quality of the provision for wood occupations was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

The original inspection identified the need for improvement in the following key areas:

- to improve the tracking and monitoring of the progress of the trainees and apprentices across their full framework in order to underpin improvement in the retention and achievement rates on the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, which were too low;
- to develop further the quality improvement planning process at course level to identify more clearly the areas for improvement and to set specific, measureable and incremental targets for improvement in the quality of the learning, teaching and training, and in the retention and achievement rates; and
- to enhance further the communication with employers to involve them more fully in the workplace assessments.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in September 2018 and a follow-up inspection in April 2019.

### **Key findings**

Since the original inspection:

- An improved retention strategy has been implemented, including a range of measures such as more rigorous tracking, monitoring and review procedures underpinned by an effective case conferencing process to support the trainees and apprentices in their training and learning, and in the achievement of their targeted qualifications. As a result, the retention rate on the Training for Success programme has improved from 43% to 59% for the 2017/18 cohort but the college needs to keep the retention of trainees and apprentices under constant review and improve it further.
- A small number of learning and teaching assistants have been recruited to provide in-class support, and project-based learning approaches have been implemented to better engage and provide more practical activities for those trainees with significant and often complex barriers to learning and progression.
- More effective arrangements have been put in place to identify those trainees and apprentices at risk of leaving their training programme early along with tailored interventions to support them. As a result, the proportion of trainees who have re-engaged in their programme following an interruption has almost doubled from 33% to 63%.
- A review of the essential skills provision has been undertaken resulting in a change of awarding body, an increased focus on the development of the trainees' and apprentices' problem-solving skills and on improving their examination techniques and exam-readiness. The evidence from the follow-up inspection shows that the essential skills staff now work effectively alongside the professional and technical tutors in project-based learning classes, leading to better support for the development, and opportunities for the application, of the trainees' essential skills.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/training-for-success-and-apprenticeshipsni-in-the-north-west-regional-college\\_0.pdf](https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/training-for-success-and-apprenticeshipsni-in-the-north-west-regional-college_0.pdf)

- An emerging strength of the provision is the appropriate early progression, to date, of a significant minority (39%) of the 2017/18 trainees to the level 2 apprenticeship programme. There is a need, however, for middle and senior managers to keep under review the progression rate from the level 2 to the level 3 apprenticeship programme, which remains low.
- A stronger culture of reflective practice has been fostered across the provision through a supportive cycle of session observations, increased opportunities for staff to share resources and methodologies and well-targeted opportunities for the continuing professional development of staff, including the opportunity for lecturers to complete an accredited qualification in digital skills for educators at level 3. This improvement work has been supported to good effect by the academy of excellence staff. It is noteworthy that the quality of the learning, teaching and training has improved, with all of the sessions observed during the follow-up inspection process being good or better.
- The quality improvement planning process has been revised and strengthened and is more effective. Training has been provided for staff on the analysis and use of data to inform self-evaluation and more specific targets have been set for improvement by which progress can be, and is, more robustly measured.
- Links with employers have been developed further and to good effect; consequently, there has been a significant increase in the recruitment to the level 2 apprenticeship programme and most (88%) of the trainees on the level 2 Training for Success programme are now in a relevant work-experience placement.
- An e-portfolio system has been implemented across the wood occupations provision and appropriate training for staff and employers has been provided. Trainees, apprentices and employers report that the system has led to the more transparent recording of assessment evidence and reporting of the progress being made in the completion of the training programme. While the lecturing staff have embraced the introduction of the new system, there remains a need for them to continue to develop the process, further embed its use and to evaluate the impact it is having on supporting ongoing improvements in the learning and assessment process, and in the outcomes attained.

## Conclusion

In wood occupations, the quality of the education and training provided by North West Regional College is now good.

The organisation has the capacity to address the following areas for improvement which are to:

- continue to improve the overall retention and achievement rates on the level 2 Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes; and
- improve further the quality of the learning, teaching and training.

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