# Evaluation: The effectiveness of the curriculum provision at level 3 in supporting economic and social development

## Belfast Metropolitan College
## Northern Regional College

# Guidance for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum provision at level 3 in supporting economic and social development

February 2023

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# Introduction

The Department for the Economy (DfE) has commissioned the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) to evaluate in Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met) and Northern Regional College (NRC), the effectiveness of the curriculum provision at level 3 in supporting economic and social development.  The evaluation builds on previously commissioned work in the further education sector.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of curriculum planning at level 3 across the colleges resulted in the completion of evaluations in four of the six colleges, from February 2020 to March 2020[1]; with the advent of the pandemic, the evaluations in Belfast Met and NRC could not be undertaken.  An evaluation of the work undertaken by the colleges to progress the development and implementation of the Curriculum Hubs was published in March 2022[2].

This guidance provides Belfast Met and NRC with outline information about the evaluation.

# Aim of the Evaluation

The overarching aim of the evaluation is to determine to what extent:

**The curriculum provision at level 3, including the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, has a measurable impact in supporting economic and social development.**

The objectives of the evaluation are to determine to what extent:

1. the curriculum is well-conceived, well planned and inclusive, with clear progression pathways to meet the needs of learners, business and industry;

2. the delivery of the curriculum is well-led and managed, complemented by appropriate professional learning for staff;

3. collaborative delivery approaches are widening access and meeting the needs of learners, business and industry;

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[1] North West Regional College, February 2020; Southern Regional College, March 2020; South West College, February 2020; South Eastern Regional College, March 2020.
[2]  Evaluation: The Curriculum Hubs in the six colleges of Further Education in Northern Ireland (etini.gov.uk)

4.  the views and ideas of the learners, staff, business and industry are informing ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and responsiveness of the curriculum in meeting needs and emerging needs; and

5.  there is evidence of effective practice and innovative learning.

The arrangements for safeguarding will be evaluated and reported on as part of the evaluation. The completed ETI safeguarding proforma[3] should be available at the time of the visit.

# Methodology

The evaluation visit by an ETI inspection team will take place over five days during March 2023, led by a Reporting Inspector. The evaluation will be informed by ETI's scrutiny in February 2023 of the college's Quality Improvement Planning submission[4]. It will include two of the professional and technical (P&T) areas[5], the essential skills and the provision for preparation for life and work.

A schedule will be drawn up by ETI and the college in advance of the visit. An illustrative schedule of the visit is detailed below in Appendix A. Please note any timings are approximate and for guidance only. During the visit, there will be: learning and training session observations; workplace visits; focus groups with learners and key stakeholders (such as collaborative partners, employers, external agencies); and discussions with the principal, the curriculum director, the quality manager and other key staff (including those responsible for the safeguarding arrangements) and the governing body. Learners will have the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. Scrutiny of relevant data and documentation will include for example, the curriculum plan, samples of learner work and personal training plans.

Oral feedback will be provided on day five to representatives of the professional and technical areas, the essential skills, preparation for life and work, the senior leader(s) and governors, and relevant staff and representatives from DfE's Further Education Division and DfE's Quality Improvement Team. The feedback will highlight key findings and any areas for focus for the college going forward. Following the oral feedback at the end of the visit, the college and DfE will receive a pre-publication draft of the report to check for factual accuracy. The report will be published on the ETI website.

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[3] Safeguarding Proforma – Guidance Mandatory requirements – Further Education and Work Based Learning
[4] December 2022, as part of the pilot DfE arrangements for Quality Improvement Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting in place for the further education sector for the 2022-24 period.
[5] From the classified (Tier 1) sector subject areas.

# Appendices

# Appendix A:  Illustrative planning outline for the visit

| 09.45 am | ETI arrival (online registration) and introductions. |
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| Around 10.00 am | Initial ETI team meeting with senior leader(s). Short oversight presentation by senior leader(s) on the Level 3 provision. Clarification of any queries or amendments to schedule. |
| 11.00 am (onwards) | Evaluation activities. |
| Around 4.00 pm | Brief meeting with a representative of the senior leaders as necessary. |

| Day 2 and Day 3 | Activity |
|---|---|
| Morning | Brief meeting with senior leader(s) to confirm arrangements. Evaluation activities continue. |
| Around 4.00 pm | Brief meeting with a representative of the senior leaders as necessary. |

| Day 4 | Activity |
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| Up to 10.30 am | Evaluation activities continue as required. |
| 10.30 - 12.30 pm | Moderation. |
| PM | Report Writing. |

| Day 5 | Activity |
|---|---|
| 9.00 - 11.00 am | Finalising report. |
| 11.00 - 12.00 pm | Oral feedback to representatives from P&T areas, essential skills and preparation for life and work. |
| 12.00 - 1.00 pm | Oral feedback to senior leaders, a representative from the Governing Body, and DFE officials. |

# Appendix B: General lines of enquiry

The following general lines of enquiry will be relevant for the professional dialogue with staff during the visit about the effectiveness of the curriculum provision at level 3 in supporting economic and social development. They are neither a checklist nor definitive list of prompts.

- **Curriculum development**

  - How does the curriculum planning take account of supporting economic and social development? What are the challenges?

  - Does the work of the Hubs continue to inform curriculum development?

  - Range of full-time and part-time qualifications at level 3? Analysis for the last three years' full data, 2019/2020 – 2021/2022:

    What is the uptake across the qualifications? What is the entry criteria, is there a minimum threshold and are there any examples of this being relaxed and why? Retention across the qualifications? Achievement across the qualifications? Progression?

  - How many learners enrolled in the level 3 provision have attained a level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy OR a GCSE qualification at grade C or better in English and Mathematics What does this look like across the professional and technical areas?

  - How many learners enrolled in the level 3 provision have attained a level 2 ICT qualification OR a GCSE ICT qualification at grade C or better? What opportunities do learners have to communicate, present and learn using digital and ICT skills? What does this look like across the professional and technical areas?

  - What progress has been made in supporting for example the implementation of DfE's Strategies through Funded Skills Development Interventions, if applicable or the implementation of strategies for innovation through additional funded provision?

  - What partnerships/collaborations are currently in place at level 3, for example with colleges and schools, work-based learning providers and other key stakeholders, such as social inclusion projects and multi-agency partnerships? Are any new partnerships/collaborations being developed? Outline the practicalities for collaboration and implementation. What is the college's Entitlement Framework footprint at level 3? Has this remained the same or changed in recent years?

- **Curriculum delivery**

    - What does successful learning look like across the provision, taking account of planning, teaching, training and assessment?

    - What has been the impact of the DFE pilot Advanced Technical programme? How effective has it been in realising the successful integration and embedding of transversal skills combined with project-based learning and work-related learning?

    - What are the benefits of strategies such as skills competitions and/or project-based learning for the learners?

        What has been the impact on the curriculum and for the college's learners and staff of the six colleges' collective successful bid to be part of the Worldskills UK Educator programme? How are such strategies increasing skills and standards across the college, how are they impacting on all the quality of provision for all learners? How is the curriculum provision adding value to the delivery of the Skills Strategy and meeting the needs of the Northern Ireland economy?

    - How are successes across the curriculum provision celebrated and embedded, including in skills competitions and/or project-based learning?

    - Does the curriculum structure allow movement from/to programmes where required?

    - Is there collaboration between the FE and work-based learning curriculum teams within a P&T area for the benefit of the learners, for example in links with the relevant curriculum hub, project-based learning or skills competitions?

    - What does the provision for careers education look like? What is the extent of employer engagement? What opportunities are provided to develop work-ready skills? How many have accessed work placements in this academic year? How accessible are work placements?

    - What provision is there to promote health, wellbeing and keeping safe?

    - What has been the impact of staff professional learning provided? What staff professional learning is planned? To include development and upskilling of the workforce, for example newly recruited industry specialist staff?

    - Have there been staff professional learning opportunities provided to develop provision for learners with a disability? What has been the impact?

- **Progression pathways**

  - How well is the provision realising the potential of learners?

  - How well is the provision preparing the learners for life and work?

  - How well is the provision supporting economic and social development?

  - How is the curriculum structure and delivery supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SLDD) to achieve, as well as progress to higher education or employment?

  - What are the progression pathways to employment and higher education/training? How well are these communicated to learners, parents/carers, schools, business and industry?

  - To what extent are progression pathways informed and developed through collaboration with other stakeholders (schools, the training sector, higher education, employers)?

  - If necessary, are the learners aware of which higher education pathways will accept Essential Skills Level 2 for entry?

- **Resources and accommodation**:

  - How well do the learning, physical resources and accommodation support the delivery of the current level 3 provision?

  - What are the enrolment trends?

    Number of learners enrolled on level 3 full-time and part-time provision at the time of the visit?

    Of these, how many learners are enrolled on full-time courses in the areas being evaluated? Of these, how many learners are enrolled on part-time courses in the areas being evaluated?

    What proportion of the college's total enrolment does this account for?

    What proportion are enrolled in programmes in the college's curriculum hub area?

What socio-economic deprivation quintiles do the level 3 enrolments come from?

What are the demographics (age, race, sex)?

- What is the full-time staffing complement for level 3?  What is the part-time staffing complement for level 3?

- What are the challenges and priorities for sustainability of the provision at level 3?

# Appendix C:  The Report

The report for publication will provide the main findings, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum provision at level 3, including the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, in supporting economic and social development. The following provides an illustrative outline.

- **The introduction/context, which will include:**

  - the aim and objectives of the evaluation;

  - summary information about the college and its context, such as: ethos; location; enrolment data, including disability, newcomer, and social deprivation data; and full-time and part-time staffing complement for level 3; and

  - that the evaluation was informed by ETI's scrutiny in February 2023 of the college's Quality Improvement Planning submission[6]; and that it included the evaluation of two professional and technical (P&T) areas, the essential skills and the provision for preparation for life and work, as well as the arrangements for safeguarding.

- **Summary of key findings, which will include strengths and areas for consideration/further action.**

- **Views of learners.**

- **Key findings about the effectiveness of curriculum development in supporting economic and social development, for example:**

  - strategic planning for curriculum development;

  - appropriateness of the range of qualifications;

  - provision to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SLDD);

  - opportunities to implement strategies for innovation;

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[6] December 2022, as part of the pilot DfE arrangements for Quality Improvement Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting in place for the further education sector for the 2022-24 period.

- practicalities of collaboration, communication and data sharing;

- challenges in supporting economic and social development; and

- the views and ideas of the learners, staff, business and industry informing ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and responsiveness of the curriculum in meeting needs and emerging needs.

- **Key findings about the effectiveness of curriculum delivery in supporting economic and social development, for example:**

- effectiveness of the level 3 provision;

- growth and development of a community of learning;

- employer engagement and opportunities to develop work-ready skills;

- provision to promote health, wellbeing and keeping safe; and

- the identification, celebration and embedding of success.

- **Key findings about the effectiveness of progression pathways in supporting economic and social development, for example:**

- in realising the potential of learners;

- in preparing the learners for life and work;

- in supporting learners with SLDD to progress to higher education or employment; and

- through collaboration with other stakeholders to develop progression pathways.

- **Key findings about the effectiveness of resources and accommodation in supporting economic and social development, for example:**

- the resources and accommodation to support delivery; and

- challenges and priorities for sustainability.

- **A conclusion, which will include areas for development.**

- **If relevant, case studies of effective practice identified during the evaluation.**