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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 an Inspection

Jobskills Provision College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise

Inspected: October 2006

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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 minority

All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise

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

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.

SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE), supplies training for the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) through the Jobskills Traineeship and Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programmes across Northern Ireland. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and DEL have an agreement that DEL fund the trainee allowances and DARD fund the rest of the training provision.

1.2 The three DARD colleges located at Antrim (Greenmount), Enniskillen and Cookstown (Loughery) were combined to form the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, in April 2004, as a result of the O'Hare Review. The CAFRE is part of the Service Delivery Group within DARD and has a service level agreement with the DARD to provide education and training for the land-based and food industries.

1.3 Trainees are recruited to the Jobskills programmes from across Northern Ireland. A significant minority (41%) of the trainees have at least four General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at grades A* to C on entry to their programme. A small number (7%) have 3 grades A* to C; the remainder (52%) have less than 3 grades A* to C. A significant minority (42% and 31%) have at least a grade C in mathematics and English respectively. A minority (20%) have at least a grade C in both mathematics and English.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection there were eighty six trainees registered on Jobskills programmes. Fifty one (59%) were registered on a Traineeship programme and the remaining thirty five (41%) were on MA programmes. The trainees complete the appropriate framework comprising a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), key or essential skills and a technical certificate if required. Thirty one (36%) trainees are in the vocational area of land-based service engineering, fifty two (61%) trainees are in the vocational area of livestock production, and three (3%) trainees are in the vocational area of animal care and veterinary nursing.

2.2 In the vocational area of livestock production, recruitment on the Traineeship and MA programmes has fluctuated slightly over the last three years with an average of 19 and 22 trainees respectively. There is no NVQ level 1 programme provided, however, the College provides vocational training for one trainee registered with another supplier organisation. At the time of the inspection there were 52 trainees in livestock production; 27 on a Traineeship programme, and 25 on a MA programme.

2.3 Recruitment in the vocational area of land-based service engineering has declined on the traineeship programme from a high of 22 trainees in 2003/04 to eleven trainees in 2005/06. The MA programme has been running for two years, however, recruitment is low with only seven trainees being recruited during 2005/06. At the time of the inspection, 31 trainees were registered; 22 on a Traineeship programme, and nine on a MA programme.

2.5 Over the last three years, there have been small numbers recruited to the vocational areas of amenity horticulture, environmental conservation, animal care and veterinary nursing.

2.6 Most directed training is delivered on the Greenmount campus; the Traineeship in Livestock Production is delivered in out-centres located at Ballymoney and Dungannon. Most trainees on the Traineeship and MA programmes attend directed training one day each week. The trainees on the land-based service engineering programmes attend directed training on block release in year one of the Traineeship programme.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 The inspection focused on the vocational areas of animal care, veterinary nursing, livestock production, and land-based service engineering. The area of learning for preparation for life and work, which includes the essential and key skills provision, the provision for trainee support, and the careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provision, was also inspected. These areas, in total account for all the trainees registered at the time of the inspection.

3.2 During the inspection a team of four inspectors from the Inspectorate observed training sessions and visited trainees in the workplace. A total of 18 directed training sessions were observed. Inspectors also visited 17 trainees in the workplace. Discussions were held with the Director, the senior management team responsible for training, course managers, vocational and essential skills lecturers, instructors, employers and trainees. The inspectors sampled vocational and key skills portfolios, internal and external verifier reports and other relevant documentation.

3.3 A large sample of trainees completed a pastoral care questionnaire prior to the inspection, which provided them with the opportunity to comment on the quality of their learning experiences and the pastoral care arrangements in CAFRE. The Director also completed a questionnaire relating to the provision of pastoral care within the organisation.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In the areas inspected, the organisation has major strengths in its educational and training provision. The educational, training and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met, along with the needs of the community and the economy. The parents and community can have confidence in the organisation's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-inspection is required.

4.2 Standards and Outcomes

The main strengths are the:

- excellent to good standards of trainees' practical skills and technical knowledge;
- excellent retention on the MA programmes;
- good success rates on the Traineeship programmes;

- excellent success rates in key skills for most vocational areas; and
- excellent progression to further education, training or employment for all programmes.

The main area for improvement are the:

- low recruitment levels to amenity horticulture, environmental conservation, animal care and veterinary nursing; and
- satisfactory success rates on the livestock production MA programme.

4.3 **Quality of Training and Learning**

The main strengths are the:

- excellent to good quality of nearly all the teaching and learning;
- excellent provision of enhancement courses provided in nearly all the programmes to improve the trainees' employability skills;
- excellent to good quality of workplace training; and
- excellent facilities and equipment.

The main area for improvement is the:

- level of monitoring and assessment of livestock production trainees in the workplace.

4.4 **Leadership and Management**

The main strengths are the:

- excellent leadership and management;
- excellent links with employers and industry; and
- appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- provision of level 1 programmes; and
- pre-employment checks for all staff who have unsupervised access to trainees.

Table of Grades

Grades	Revised Grading System	Original Grading System
Overall Grade	2	1
Contributory grades:		
Standards and Outcomes	2	1
Training and Learning	2	1
Leadership and Management	2	1

Area of Learning grades	Revised Grading System	Original Grading System
Animal Care and Veterinary Science	n/a	n/a
Agriculture (Land-Based Service Engineering)	2	1
Agriculture (Livestock Production)	2	1
Preparation for Life and Work	2	1
Contributory Grades:		
Essential Skills-Literacy	n/a	n/a
Essential Skills-Numeracy	n/a	n/a
Key skills	2	1
Careers education, information, advice and guidance	3	2
Trainee Support	2	1

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

5.1 Almost all of the trainees are highly motivated and committed to achieving their vocational and key skills qualifications. Their time-keeping and attendance are good and they respond well to their lecturers, instructors, workplace supervisors and other trainees.

5.2 The standards of the trainees' practical skills are excellent to good. They are able to carry out a wide range of tasks to industry standards. In land-based service engineering, the trainees are carrying out task commensurate with their stage in training ranging from servicing tractors and carrying out pre-delivery inspections to diagnosing and repairing faults using a range of techniques and equipment including specialist computer diagnostic systems. In livestock production, the trainees were observed using modern machinery to carry out a range of tasks including slurry spreading and carrying out a range of animal husbandry tasks including feeding livestock, livestock disease prevention and fertility treatments.

5.3 The trainees' technical knowledge in the areas inspected is excellent to good. The skills and knowledge gained by the trainees in directed training match well with their experiences in the workplace. They have a good understanding of health and safety requirements within the industry.

5.4 The standards of the literacy and numeracy and information technology (IT) skills for most trainees are good or better. They can communicate effectively with their supervisors and customers and make appropriate written records. The standard of written communication and presentation in the portfolios of evidence is good. Almost all the trainees are able to discuss their work and relate the work done in directed training to the workplace. The trainees have good IT skills; land-based service engineering trainees are able to use computer diagnostic equipment and the livestock production trainees are able to use the Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS).

5.5 Retention rates across the programmes inspected range from excellent to poor. In livestock production, retention is good on the Traineeship programme at 80% and is excellent on the MA programme at 94%. In land-based service engineering, retention has improved on the Traineeship programme and for the last two years is good at over 80%. Retention is poor on the animal care Traineeship programme at 22%; however all of the trainees who have left the animal care Traineeship programme early, have fulfilled their career aspirations of successfully progressing to full-time employment in an approved veterinary practice and completed the level 3 veterinary nursing programme in CAFRE. Retention is excellent in the veterinary nursing MA programme at 100%.

5.6 The success rates across the programs inspected are good or excellent for nearly all of the programmes. In livestock production, success is excellent on the Traineeship and satisfactory on the MA programme at approximately 90% and 70% respectively. In land-based service engineering, success is good on the Traineeship and excellent on the MA programme at approximately 80% and 100% respectively. In veterinary nursing success is excellent at 100%.

5.7 Over the last three years, of the 92 trainees who started the Traineeship programme, 62 completed the programme and 53 gained the full award. Taking into consideration the 10 trainees still on training at the time of the inspection, these figures represents a satisfactory retention rate of 78% and a good success rate of 85% for those who complete their programme.

5.8 Over the last three years, of the 84 trainees who started the MA programme, 60 completed the programme and 42 gained the full award. Taking into consideration the 16 trainees still on training at the time of the inspection, these figures represent an excellent retention rate of 90% and a satisfactory success rate of 70% for those who complete their programme.

5.9 Over the last three years, progression to further education, training or relevant employment is excellent for the Traineeship and MA programmes at 95% and 100% respectively.

6. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND LEARNING

6.1 The analysis of the trainee questionnaires, completed prior to the inspection indicates that approximately 95% of the trainees report high levels of satisfaction with their experiences in CAFRE.

6.2 Across the vocational programmes inspected, good relationships exist between lecturers, instructors, trainees and employers. In all of the training sessions observed during the inspection, the trainees were provided with a caring and supportive environment.

6.3 The quality of nearly all of the directed training sessions have more strengths than weaknesses and none of the training is poor. Approximately two-thirds of the training sessions have significant strengths. The sessions are well planned and in most cases there is a good match between the theory and practical classes with further opportunities for the trainees to practice and develop these skills in the workplace. In livestock production good effective use is made of a number of commercial farms in the Dungannon and Ballymoney areas to provide training and assessment opportunities for the trainees. Most lecturers and instructors use a good variety of training and learning methods. Information learning technology (ILT) is used effectively to support learning in most areas, however, its use in land-based service engineering is limited.

6.4 The livestock production trainees are provided with opportunities to complete a good range of courses beyond the requirements of the framework, which greatly enhance their employment prospects. Examples include courses in pesticide application, material handling, artificial insemination, good business sense and excavator operation. In addition a good range of study visits are organised in both Northern Ireland and Scotland to farms, food processing and manufacturing plants.

6.5 After consultation with employers, the mode of delivery in the first year of the land-based service engineering Traineeship has been changed to block release. An excellent, coherent sixteen-week programme has been designed to develop the trainees' practical skills and knowledge base at the start of their Traineeship. During this block release trainees also have opportunities to complete other options including manual handling, first aid and tractor driving courses. Trainees also have an opportunity to complete a multi-skills programme in agriculture, which has been developed for those trainees from a farming background who have decided to get off-farm employment but continue to farm on a part-time basis.

6.6 Vocationally relevant tasks have been well designed to integrate the various key skill requirements into a single portfolio. In Livestock production, for example, the portfolio requires the trainees to monitor animal performance (weight gain), predict waste storage and feed requirements for groups of animals. Trainees also produce written and oral reports on their work placement farm. In the vocational training sessions opportunities were exploited to reinforce the importance of having good literacy and numeracy skills. In one session the trainees visited a supermarket to investigate how beef is marketed. The trainees were asked to record the price of the various cuts of beef displayed. Good use is made of this information to calculate and compare the approximate price received by the supermarket and the farmer for a typical beef animal. In preparation for the development of essential skills to replace the current key skills provision, an essential skills pilot in literacy and numeracy is being offered in one vocational area. At present CAFRE has no staff suitably qualified to deliver essential skills and is working in collaboration with staff from the North East Institute of Further and Higher Education (NEIFHE) to deliver the pilot.

6.7 The quality of workplace training is excellent to good for most trainees. In the vocational areas of land-based service engineering and animal care and veterinary science, regular, effective visits are made to monitor, review and assess the trainees' progress and achievements in the workplace. In livestock production, however, the visits are not carried out on a regular basis and training and assessment opportunities are being missed. Where the workplace training is excellent, the workplace supervisors, the lecturers and the instructors work closely to provide good opportunities for the trainees to develop and demonstrate the competences required for their qualifications.

6.8 Trainees have a personal tutor who meets with them regularly. There are mechanisms in place to identify trainees with additional learning needs. External organisations are used to assess trainees with learning needs and tutorial sessions and individual support are provided where appropriate.

6.9 The quality of the training accommodation is excellent to good. The majority of the workshops and classrooms are spacious and provide access to a good range of equipment and resources.

7. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The Director and senior management team provide clear strategic leadership with clearly identified roles and responsibilities. The co-ordinator of Jobskills programmes provides good leadership and guidance to all staff.

7.2 The programmes are all managed and coordinated effectively. Where small numbers are recruited to Jobskills programmes, the Trainees are well integrated into similar non-Jobskills funded programmes. Internal verification procedures are well planned and implemented regularly and rigorously.

7.3 The lecturers are well informed of progression routes and career opportunities within their vocational area and provide their trainees with informal CEIAG. A careers portal has been included on the virtual learning environment (VLE). Formal CEIAG is not well developed, however, and a learner support officer has recently been appointed to develop this across the three CAFRE campuses.

7.4 The CAFRE does not offer an NVQ level 1 or equivalent provision. At present CAFRE facilitates another supplier organisation by providing vocational training for one level 1 trainee. There are, however, little opportunities in Northern Ireland for young people to participate in land-based training at level 1 and to provide progression routes to level 2 programmes.

7.5 The CAFRE has in place appropriate policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Young People and Vulnerable Adults. An on-going programme of staff development is in place to train staff in pastoral care and child protection procedures. For some time all new staff that will have unsupervised access to trainees have had pre-employment checks (PECS) carried out however, there are some staff in post prior to the introduction of this policy that have not been checked.

7.6 The CAFRE has developed excellent links with a good range of employers, colleges and other agencies to support the training programmes.

7.7 The CAFRE provides self-evaluation reports and development plans for all the programme areas. The inspection confirms that the self-evaluation procedures are mostly implemented rigorously and effectively. Each vocational area has a development plan that addresses many of the areas for improvement identified in the individual reports. However, an organisational development plan for the Jobskills provision is not produced.

Revised Grading System	Original Grading System	Total No of Trainees
n/a	n/a	3

9. AREA OF LEARNING: AGRICULTURE (LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION)

Programmes inspected: Livestock Production Traineeship NVQ level 2
Livestock Production MA NVQ level 3

9.1 In the areas inspected, the organisation has major strengths in its educational and training provision. The educational, training and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met, along with the needs of the community and the economy. The parents and community can have confidence in the organisation's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-inspection is required.

9.2 The main strengths are the:

- good (80%) and excellent (94%) retention rates on Traineeship and MA programmes respectively;
- excellent (approx 90%) success rates on Traineeship Programme;
- excellent progression to relevant employment;
- high standards of work produced by the trainees;
- good to excellent quality of teaching and learning and the excellent knowledge and enthusiasm of the Lecturers and Instructors; and
- excellent range of relevant enhancement courses, beyond the requirements of the framework that improve the employability of the trainees.

9.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- modest success rates (68%) on the MA programme;
- structured integration of workplace activities into the training programme; and
- level of monitoring and assessment in the workplace.

Revised Grading System	Original Grading System	Total No of Trainees
2	1	52

10. AREA OF LEARNING: AGRICULTURE (LAND-BASED SERVICE ENGINEERING)

Programme inspected: Land-based Service Engineering Traineeship NVQ Level 2
Land-based Service Engineering MA NVQ Level 3

10.1 In the areas inspected, the organisation has major strengths in its educational and training provision. The educational, training and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met, along with the needs of the community and the economy. The parents and community can have confidence in the organisation's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-inspection is required.

10.2 The main strengths are the:

- excellent standards of practical work demonstrated by most of the trainees in the workplace and in directed training;
- good retention rates at over 80% last year for both the Traineeship and MA;
- good (approximately 80%) to excellent (100%) success rates for the Traineeship and MA respectively;
- excellent full-time training programme provided for trainees to develop a wide range of practical skills prior to their work-based training;
- excellent quality of the training experiences provided for the trainees during directed training to develop a wide range of practical skills and technical knowledge;
- excellent quality of most work placements that provide the trainees with good opportunities to develop a wide range of skills;
- well-planned and effective arrangements for monitoring, reviewing and assessing the trainees' progress and achievements in the workplace;
- excellent facilities and range of machinery for practical skills training; and
- excellent links with local employers.

10.3 The main areas for improvement is the:

- low recruitment to the MA programme.

Revised Grading System	Original Grading System	Total No of Trainees
2	1	31

11. AREA OF LEARNING: PREPARATION FOR LIFE AND WORK

Programmes inspected: Essential skills
 Key skills
 Trainee support
 Careers education, information, advice and guidance

11.1 In the areas inspected, the organisation has major strengths in its educational and training provision. The educational, training and pastoral needs of the learners are being well met, along with the needs of the community and the economy. The parents and community can have confidence in the organisation's capacity for sustained self-improvement.

No follow-inspection is required.

11.2 Main strengths are the:

- appointment of a student support and development officer;
- good standards of work produced by students in key skills;
- excellent success rates (90%) in key skills for most vocational areas;
- trainees clear understanding of their chosen career pathways;
- good course design and enhancements that prepare trainees well for life and work;
- appropriate learner support arrangements; and
- appropriate pastoral care procedures.

11.3 Main areas for Improvement are the:

- on-going development of the essential skills provision; and
- development of centralised and formalised procedures for careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Revised Grading System	Original Grading System	Total No of Trainees
2	1	86

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The CAFRE needs to revise its annual development plan to take account of the following key priorities for development:

- the development of strategies to improve the modest success rate on the livestock production MA programme;
- complete the training in pastoral care and child protection procedures and carry out pre-employment checks for all relevant staff who have not been already checked;
- provision of appropriate NVQ level 1 programmes (or equivalent) to cater for the needs of young people who are not ready to progress to level 2; and
- the provision of an effective programme of CEIAG for all trainees.

JOBSKILLS TRAINEESHIP TABLE

Year	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate %	Success Rate %	Progressed to Modern Apprenticeship %	Progressed to relevant employment %
2003/04	40	73	86	50	42
2004/05	22	91	85	30	70
2005/06	30	77	85	32	62
Average		78	85	37	58

10 trainees still on training

JOBSKILLS MODERN APPRENTICESHIP TABLE

Year	Started (completed 4 weeks)	Retention Rate %	Success Rate %	Progressed to full-time education or training %	Progressed to relevant employment %
2003/04	20	85	69	10	90
2004/05	36	89	66	0	100
2005/06	28	96	80	17	83
Average		90	70	9	91

16 trainees still on training

JOBSKILLS OVERALL SUMMARY

Year	Completed 4 weeks	Retention Rate %	Success Rate %	Progressed to relevant employment or training %
2003/04	60	77	80	92
2004/05	58	81	83	97
2005/06	58	86	82	100
Average		81	81	95

All of the figures included in the tables and in this report were supplied by CAFRE

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