

18. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA GAMING

Performance Level: Good

Areas Inspected:

- Full-time and part-time information technology (IT) and media gaming further education courses at levels 2 and 3.

CONTEXT

18.1 The College offers an appropriate range of full and part-time provision in IT and media gaming across its main campuses, at levels 2 and level 3; an on-line subsidiary diploma in IT is also offered remotely to a group of learners in Zambia. Enrolments to IT courses are good with a total of 429 learners registered on IT programmes.

The quality of leadership and management is good.

18.2 The IT and gaming courses are well-managed and co-ordinated. While there is a good strategic vision from senior managers for the development of the provision there is a lack of a cohesive curriculum strategy to support this longer-term planning across the campuses. A good range of links have been established with key industry bodies for both IT and media gaming to support curriculum development and, while these are mostly implemented on higher education programmes, they are beginning to be used to good effect to support the development of the curriculum at levels 2 and 3. The introduction of a software testing component on the extended diploma in IT and the development of a range of cutting-edge gaming techniques in gaming courses in one of the campuses are good examples of this development.

18.3 The staff are well-qualified and experienced and are provided with good professional development opportunities. The accommodation and resources to support learning, including the IT technical infrastructure, is of a very high standard and learners have good access to modern computer facilities. There is, however, only limited evidence to demonstrate that the IT staff and learners, across the campuses, are making sufficient or effective use of the range of contemporary, sector-leading facilities and equipment available in the College's innovation centres to support their teaching and learning. While the quality improvement plans for the IT and media gaming provision are effective working documents, the self-evaluation reports do not comment sufficiently on the quality of teaching and learning or highlight the standards of work and technical skills the learners achieve.

The quality of provision for learning is good.

18.4 A good curriculum offer is in place which provides learners with the opportunity to undertake relevant programmes of study in IT and ensures they have access to appropriate progression paths to further or higher education or employment. The quality of the teaching, training and learning was good or better in most of the sessions observed, it was very good or outstanding in around one-half of them. The best practice is characterised by good planning for learning, the effective use of active learning strategies and questioning, and the development of a range of differentiated tasks which provide stretch and challenge for the learners. In a minority of the sessions observed, however, there was a lack of innovative practice including limited use of workplace or real-life scenarios, or references to current technologies. In these sessions, strategies for discussion and active learning were underdeveloped and the pace of the learning was generally slow. Across almost all of the sessions observed, the innovative use of ILT by the lecturers to support their teaching and learning was underdeveloped. There is a need for management and staff across the campuses to continue to develop more collaborative working in order to share good practice and improve further the overall quality of the teaching and learning.

18.5 The quality of the learning resources available for the learners is mostly good or better and the assessment process is effective; the assessments are well-planned, rigorous and there is sound evidence of marking for improvement. Progress in learning is well-tracked and monitored. The learners are supported very well and a small number of them are availing of additional learning support, including appropriately English for Speakers of Other Languages. The quality of the provision for careers information, advice and guidance is very good and it is clear that the learners are well aware of progression pathways to work or higher education.

The achievements and standards are very good.

18.6 Almost all of the learners are acquiring and applying a good range of IT skills and competences, including the development and testing of games and computer systems through the use of industry standard software and modern programming languages. They can identify key elements of management information systems and are able to remove and replace hardware components safely and to industry standard. The quality of most of the learners' written work is good or better. Over the past three years, the overall retention rate on full-time and part time courses at levels 2 and 3 is very good at 82% and the overall achievement rate is good at 84%. There is evidence of good progression of the learners to further or higher education and training.

Table of Achievements

Course Type	Completion Year 2010/11			Completion Year 2011/12			Completion Year 2012/13			Three Yr Average		
	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)	Ret (%)	Ach (%)	Succ (%)
Full-time Courses at Level 2	83	84	70	87	88	77	89	94	84	86	89	77
Part-time Courses at Level 2	92	87	80	98	72	70	85	76	65	92	78	72
Full-time Courses at Level 3	79	94	74	71	88	62	71	79	56	74	87	64
Part-time Courses at Level 3	100	63	63	64	67	43	88	71	63	84	67	56
Overall	84	87	73	80	83	67	81	83	67	82	84	69