



*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 Survey

The Provision of Work-Based Training in Tourism and Hospitality

Inspected: February 2007

CONTENTS

Section	Page
PART ONE	
SUMMARY	
1. AIM	1
2. INTRODUCTION	1
3. CONTEXT	1
4. PROVISION	3
5. THE SURVEY	8
6. MAIN FINDINGS	9
PART TWO	
OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION	
7. STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES	14
8. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND LEARNING	16
9. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART THREE	
KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	
APPENDIX	

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.

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.

PART ONE

SUMMARY

1. AIM

The aim of the survey is to evaluate the quality of provision for learners engaged in work-based training within tourism and hospitality programmes which are funded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL).

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Government is committed to promoting economic development for Northern Ireland (NI) through higher value-added jobs, enhancements to productivity and competitiveness, increased skills levels and improved participation rates in education and training. This commitment is clearly articulated in the 'Northern Ireland Economic Vision' published in February 2005 which highlights the need for individuals to have the skills relevant to future employment opportunities.

2.2 Since 1999, the Government has made available to the further education and training sectors additional funding to develop new provision and to increase participation in six skill areas identified by the DEL as vitally important for achieving economic growth in NI. These are computing, software engineering, electronics and electrical engineering, construction, manufacturing engineering, and tourism and hospitality.

2.3 There are a number of government and sectoral bodies, including the DEL, the Skills Expert Group (SEG) of the Northern Ireland Skills Taskforce and People 1st, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sectors, working together to assist the tourism and hospitality industry in providing a direction and articulation of the skill needs for NI as a region. At present, tourism and hospitality supports over 48,000 full and part-time jobs and contributes approximately 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) to the NI economy (NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) 2006).

2.4 The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey undertaken in 2005 provides a comprehensive snapshot of the current skills and training needs of NI employers. Of particular interest to the tourism and hospitality employers, are those areas where recruitment difficulties are related to technical and practical skill shortages, including a lack of communication and customer handling skills, and a lack of industry related qualifications. Although one third of all employers surveyed (34%) had provided training for their employees, only 17% of employers in the tourism and hospitality sector provided relevant training to their staff in the previous year.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 Since April 1995, DEL has provided a range of work-based training programmes including Jobskills, New Deal and Bridge to Employment (BTE), which promote the vocational and employability skills of the NI labour force.

3.2 The Jobskills programmes aims to equip trainees, particularly school leavers capable of achieving National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), with the skills and qualifications, to meet the needs of the NI economy. The Jobskills programme has three strands: the Access strand which leads to NVQ at level 1, and the Traineeship and Modern Apprenticeship (MA) strands which lead to NVQs at level 2 and 3 respectively. Across the province, of the 12,628 young people registered on Jobskills programmes for the year 2006-2007, there were 14% of trainees (1,755) on Access programmes, 4,575 (36%) on the Traineeship programme, and 6,298 (50%) on the MA programme. Learners registered on tourism and hospitality programmes represent only 5% (597) of the total number of trainees on Jobskills programmes.

3.3 The New Deal programme aims to get the long-term unemployed into sustained employment through a combination of work placement and vocational training by giving them opportunities to develop their potential, gain skills and experience, and to find work. Participation on the New Deal training programme is available to participants across a range of options, including 18-24 year olds, 25 years and over, 50 plus, Lone Parents and Partners. The latest statistics (May 2007) available from DEL show that recruitment to New Deal programmes has decreased slightly over the past three years from 6,159 in 2005/06 to 6,104 in 2007/2008. At the time of the survey, there were only 27 participants registered on New Deal programmes in hospitality.

3.4 The BTE programme is a pre-employment training and recruitment initiative. The main objective is to provide customised training to equip unemployed, in particular long-term unemployed people, as well as those returning to the labour market, with the skills necessary to compete for new employment opportunities on an equal basis with other employees. Employers use the BTE programme to find and train unemployed people to fill current job vacancies. The latest statistics (May 2007) available from DEL show that recruitment to BTE has increased slightly over the past three years, from 572 in 2004-2005 to 617 in 2006-2007. The total number of unemployed people recruited to the vocational area of tourism and hospitality, however, during this period has been small at 44; 25 during 2004-2005 and 19 in 2005-2006. At the time of the survey, there were no learners recruited on a BTE programme in tourism or hospitality.

3.5 There is a wide range of higher education courses provided by the majority (56%) of NI colleges of further education (FE), to cater for those learners preparing for employment in the tourism industry. Despite this, however, there is a lack of work-based training programmes at levels 1, 2 or 3 in tourism as possible routes for learners' progression.

3.6 Although the designated centre of excellence (COE) for tourism and hospitality provides a wide range of full-time and part-time courses across all levels of the national qualifications framework, work-based training programmes funded through DEL are not available.

3.7 This report is based on the evidence from an inspection survey on the quality of provision in tourism and hospitality provided by 17 of the 29 organisations which provide work-based training for DEL through the Jobskills and New Deal programmes throughout NI. These organisations, account for more than 90% of the learners registered on work-based training programmes in tourism and hospitality at the time of the survey. The organisations surveyed reflect a wide range of training providers including, private training organisations and colleges of further and higher education.

3.8 Figures published by the NISRA show that 11% of the tourism and hospitality workforce in NI are migrant workers, with the numbers having grown sharply since the accession of eight eastern European nations to the European Union in 2004. An important aim outlined in the NI Skills Strategy is that migrant workers play a valuable role in the economy. Data generated during the survey, however, shows that only fourteen (3%) of the learners registered on work-based training programmes in tourism and hospitality at present are from Eastern Europe.

4. PROVISION

4.1 Across the 29 training organisations that offer DEL funded work-based training programmes in tourism and hospitality, there is a wide variation in the number of learners in each organisation. Five organisations have more than 50 learners registered; the largest has recruited 112 learners, of which 99% are MAs. The majority of the remainder, 63% or 15 organisations, have less than ten learners registered on tourism and hospitality programmes.

GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS

4.2 At the time of the survey, 597 learners were registered on work-based training programmes in tourism and hospitality, 61% are registered in organisations within the greater Belfast area; 19% are registered in organisations in the North, East and South Down areas; 17% in the Londonderry area; 2% in the Portadown/Lurgan area; and 1% in Ballymena. There are no learners registered in the Enniskillen, Omagh, Strabane or North Antrim areas.

RECRUITMENT

4.3 In the period 2004-2007, the total number of learners recruited to Jobskills programmes in tourism and hospitality has fallen significantly by 60%, from 666 in 2004-2005 to 269 in 2006-2007 (Table1). Statistics show that over the past three years, the number of learners recruited to Access, Traineeship and MA programmes in tourism and hospitality has decreased by 54%, 49% and 66% respectively (Table 2). This decline in the numbers of learners registered on the Jobskills programme raises questions on the extent to which the programme is meeting its objectives in this sector.

Table 1

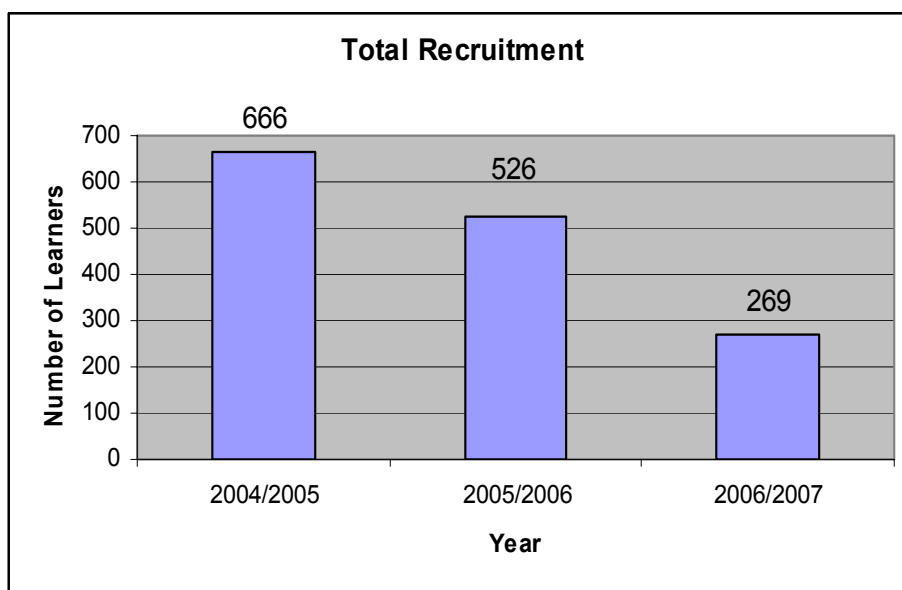
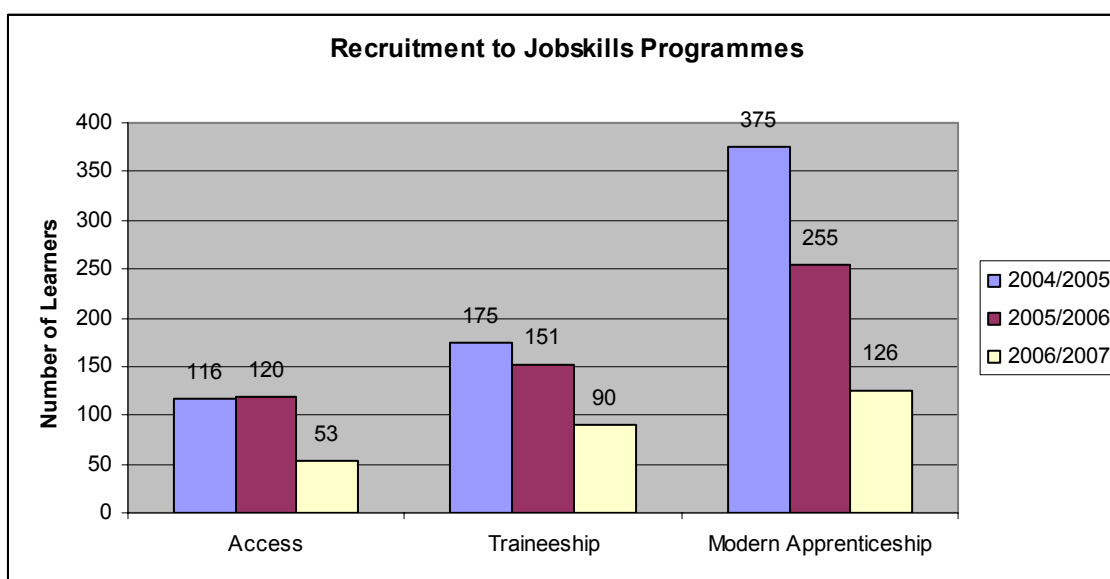


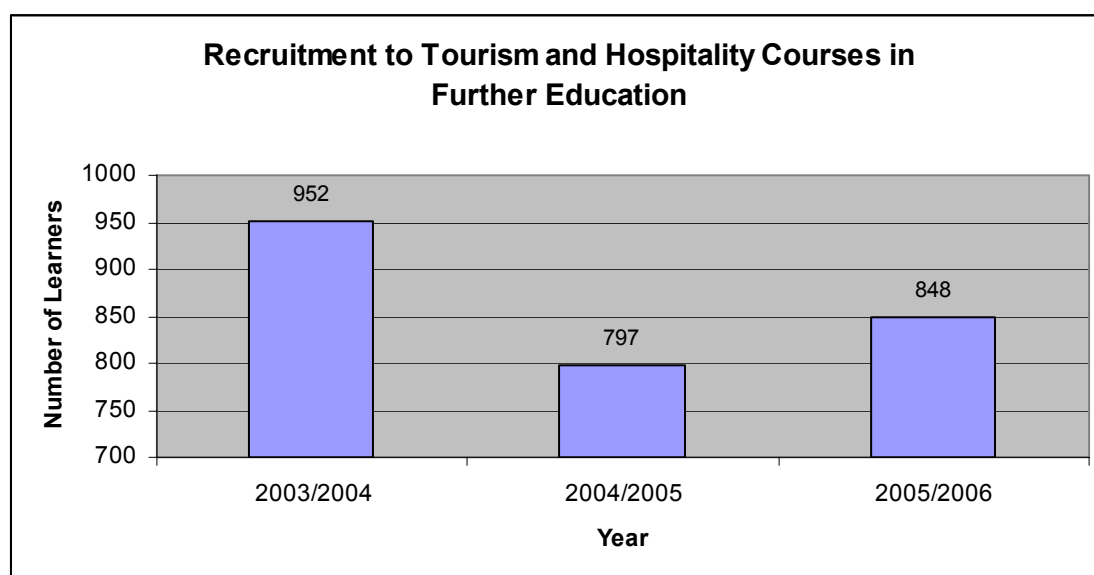
Table 2



4.4 Most of the 16 colleges of FE in NI provide full-time vocational training programmes which are funded under the main FE recurrent budget. This provision is mostly at levels 2 and 3. Consequently, the colleges' role in work-based training programmes is insignificant. Of the total learners currently recruited to work-based training programmes in tourism and hospitality, only 13% are registered in colleges of FE. The Further Education Student Ratio (FESR) statistics available from the DEL shown in Table 3 for the period 2004-2006, show that the number of learners recruited outside of the Jobskills provision to NVQ programmes in tourism and hospitality has decreased by 11% from 952 in 2003-2004 to 848 in 2005-2006.

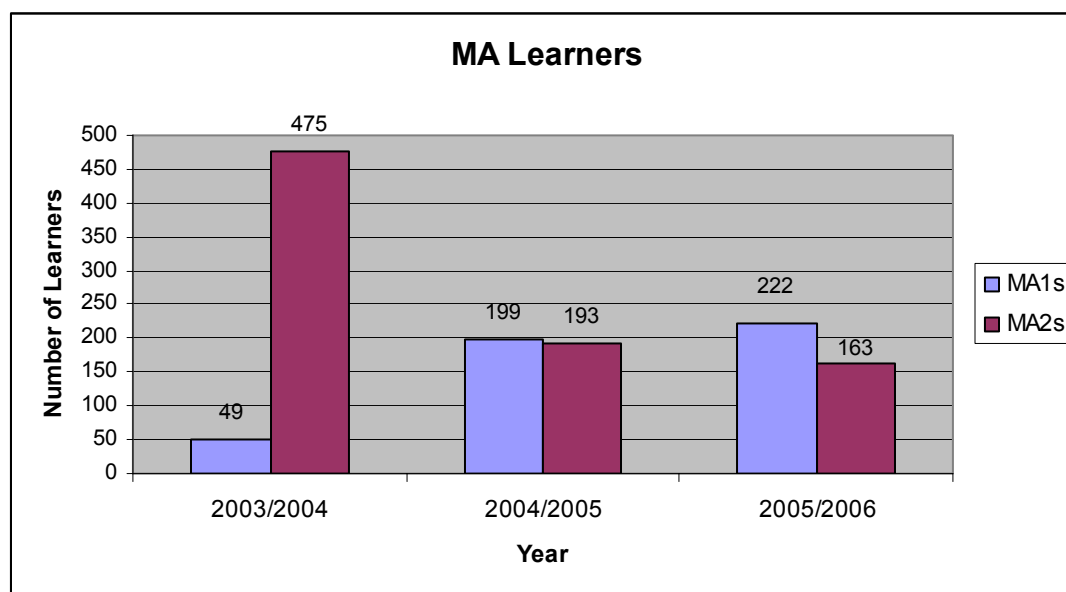
Further analysis of tables 1 and 3 show that for every learner recruited to a Jobskills programme in tourism and hospitality, 1.74 students have enrolled on NVQ courses in this vocational area at levels 1 to 3 within the FE sector. Overall these tables show a significant decrease in the number of learners recruited to this priority skills area during the period 2003-2007.

Table 3



4.5 Of the 385 MAs currently registered on work-based training programmes, 241 (63%) are on the MA1 strand, following an NVQ level 3 programme. The remaining 144 (37%) of the learners are on the MA2 strand, completing an NVQ level 2 before progressing to level 3. Over the past three years, recruitment to the MA1 strand has increased significantly by over 450%, from 49 in 2003/2004 to 222 in 2005/2006. This is due mainly to a number of the training organisations targeting the existing employee programme. In contrast, however, there has been a substantial decrease of 66% in the number of learners recruited to the MA2 strand during this period, from 475 in 2003/2004 to 163 in 2005/2006 (Table 4). Subsequently, such a decline in recruitment to the MA2 programme does not achieve the economic vision outlined within the NI Skills Strategy.

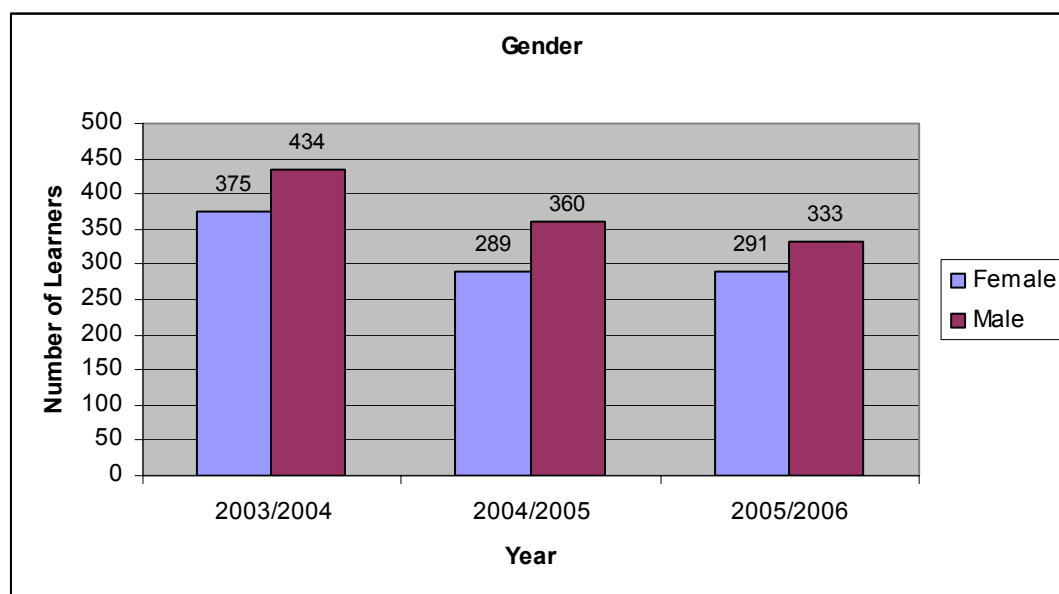
Table 4



GENDER

4.6 During the period 2003-2006, approximately 54% of the overall recruitment to the Jobskills programmes in tourism and hospitality has been male (Table 5). The numbers of male and female learners recruited to Jobskills Access and Traineeship programmes have remained constant during this period. In contrast, however, there has been considerable variance in the number of males and females recruited to the two strands of the MA programme. The number of male and female learners recruited to the MA1 strand has grown significantly by 276% and 465% respectively during this period. In contrast, however, the number of male and female learners recruited to the MA2 strand has decreased considerably by 65% and 66% respectively. Although statistics from the SSC (March 2006) show that 65% of the workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry in NI are female, it would appear that a significant number of female workers are not following DEL funded training programmes.

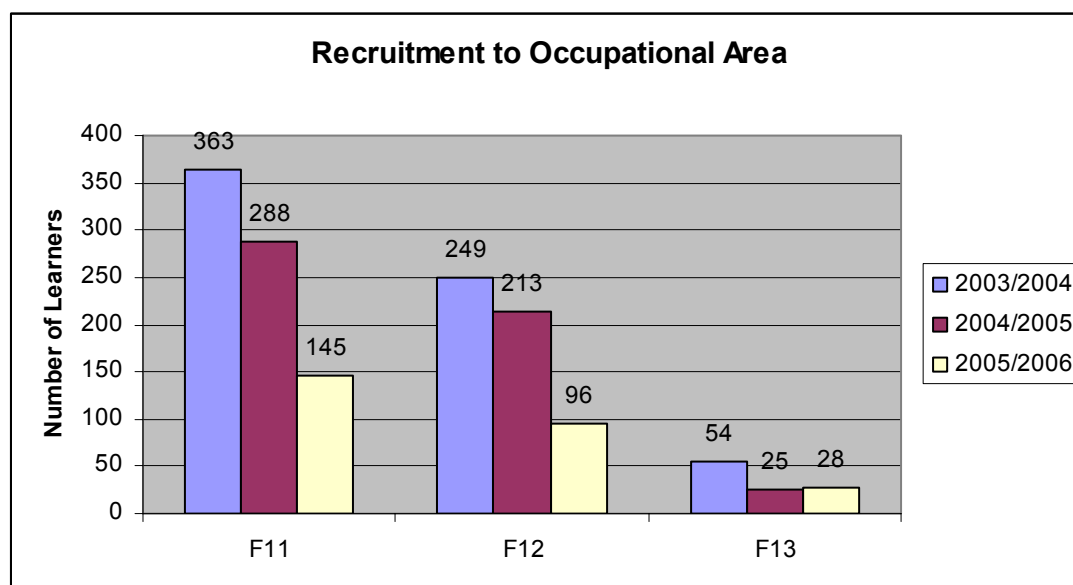
Table 5



4.7 Learners recruited onto hospitality programmes under Jobskills from 2003 were required to take an NVQ at the requisite level, the keyskills specified within the relevant framework, and an appropriate technical certificate. Since September 2006, learners on the Traineeship and MA programmes, are now required to complete a revised framework, in which the technical certificate, including the health and safety and food safety elements, are integrated within the NVQ award. Learners on Access programmes are required to follow the appropriate framework including a NVQ at level 1 and essential skills.

4.8 There is a wide provision of courses in hospitality across the work-based supplier organisations. This ranges from NVQs levels 1 and/or 2 in food and drink service, front office, food processing and cooking, professional cookery, housekeeping and hospitality services. The main provision for hospitality at NVQ level 3 is hospitality supervision and professional cookery as possible progression paths from level 2. Trainee occupational codes (TOC) are used by the DEL for the purposes of funding work-based training within Jobskills. Trainee occupational codes F11, F12 and F13 for the occupational areas of food preparation and cooking, food service and hotel/inn-keeping cover learners recruited to hotel, catering and food preparation. The latest statistics (May 2007) available from DEL show that recruitment to TOCs F11, F12 and F13 over the past three years has decreased significantly by 60%, 61% and 48% respectively (Table 6). Although the provision meets well the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry in NI, the decline in uptake is contrary to the vision set out in the NI Skills Strategy of an expansion in the workforce.

Table 6



4.9 In the organisations surveyed, the academic profile of the learners is mostly poor, with only a minority (20%) holding four or more General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications at grades A* to C on entry to their programmes. A minority (22% and 17% respectively) have achieved GCSE in English or mathematics, at grade C or above. There is considerable variation in the qualifications of MAs on entry to their programmes with the majority of the trainees having achieved at least three GCSEs at grade C or above. A significant minority, however, have no qualifications which inevitably causes challenges for them as individuals and for the future skills levels of the NI workforce. Nearly all of the learners on the Access programme had commenced their training with low levels of educational attainment. Most of the participants on New Deal programmes have no previous qualifications on entry to their programmes.

5. THE SURVEY

5.1 The survey focused on the quality of provision from the inspections of 17 supplier organisations, providing Jobskills and New Deal training in tourism and hospitality over the period 2005-2007. Thirteen of the supplier organisations were privately owned and four were colleges of FE of various sizes, in both urban and rural locations. In total, 578 learners were registered on hospitality programmes in the organisations: 60 (10%) at level 1; 130 (23%) at level 2; and 388 (67%) at level 3.

5.2 In the course of the survey, a team of four inspectors and two associate assessors from the Inspectorate observed training sessions and visited learners in the workplace. A total of 144 learners were observed in 75 directed training sessions, and 165 were visited in the workplace. Discussions were held with managers, programme co-ordinators, training consultants, vocational and essential skills tutors, monitoring and review officers, workplace supervisors and learners. The inspectors sampled vocational and key/essential skills

portfolios, internal and external verifier reports, and other relevant documentation were examined. The manager of People 1st, the SSC for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industries was also interviewed. In addition, a sample of employers were interviewed during the survey, which provided them with the opportunity to comment on the quality of the provision.

5.3 During the survey the Inspectorate evaluated the:

- quality of the provision for tourism and hospitality in supplier organisations;
- level of recruitment in work-based tourism and hospitality programmes;
- standards and outcomes achieved by the learners on these programmes;
- extent to which the careers education and guidance provision in training organisations enables the learners to make informed and appropriate career choices;
- quality assurance arrangements of the provision;
- quality of resources and accommodation; and
- effectiveness of the provision in identifying and meeting the needs of industry.

6. MAIN FINDINGS

CONCLUSION

6.1 The organisations surveyed have strengths in key aspects of their work-based training provision in tourism and hospitality. The survey has identified areas for improvement in important aspects of provision, which need to be addressed to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners, the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry and the economy.

6.2 Since September 2004, the Inspectorate has published grades in inspection reports within work-based learning. As well as publishing an overall grade for the vocational area, which reflects the overall quality of provision, grades are also allocated for standards and outcomes, training and learning and leadership and management.

Table 7

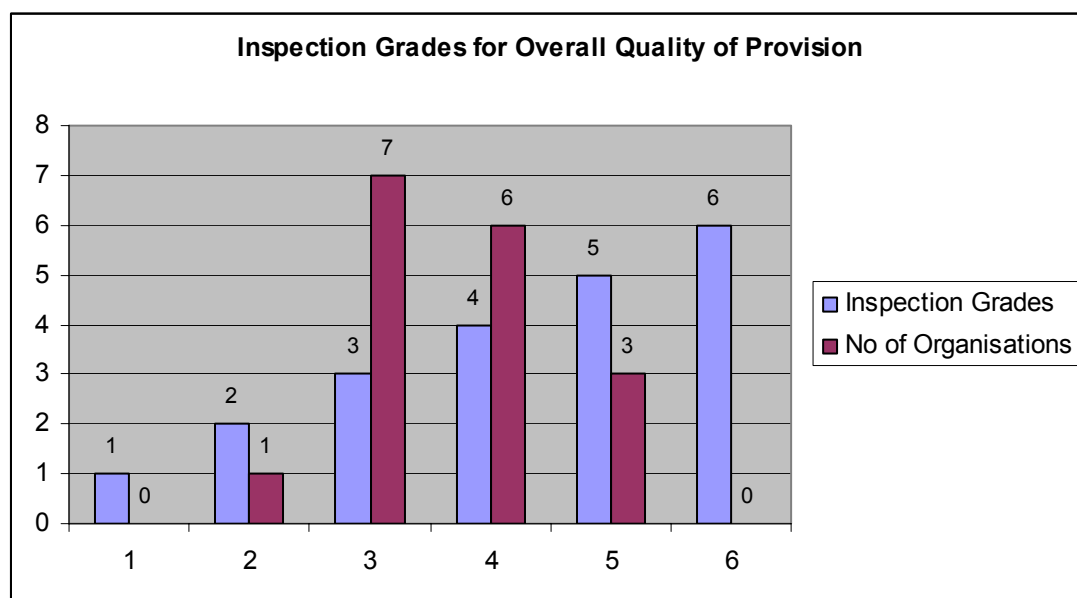


Table 7 demonstrates that of the 17 organisations surveyed a small minority (6%), one organisation, had major strengths. In seven of the organisations, (41%), there were important strengths. Six of the organisations, (35%), were satisfactory but had areas for improvement in important areas. In the remaining three organisations, (18%), there were significant areas for improvement. None of the organisations were outstanding or had major shortcomings in their provision.

Grades

Provision	Number of Learners	Overall Grade
	578	4
Contributory grades:		
Standards and Outcomes	578	4
Quality of Training and Learning	578	4
Leadership and Management	578	4

6.3 STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

The main strengths in the provision of work-based training in tourism and hospitality are the:

- good occupational standards achieved by most of the learners on the Access, Traineeship and New Deal programmes;
- good standards of oral communication; and
- good average success rate on the Traineeship programme at 80%.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- limited range of practical skills development of the majority of learners on the MA programme;
- development of knowledge and understanding of current trends in industry of most of the learners on the MA programme;
- under-development of learners' information and communication technology (ICT) skills;
- modest average retention rates on Access and New Deal programmes, at 64% and 65% respectively, and the poor average retention rates on Traineeship and MA programmes at 58% and 50% respectively;
- satisfactory average success rate on the Access programme at 72%, and poor average success on the MA programme at 25%;
- poor progression rates on Access and Traineeship programmes at 39% and 41% respectively;
- low rates of achievement and progression to sustained employment on the New Deal programme; and
- poor success rates in the achievement of the full framework for the majority of learners.

6.4 QUALITY OF TRAINING AND LEARNING

The main strengths are the:

- good relationships between staff and learners;
- level of commitment and good support from most staff in the organisations;
- good quality of directed training for the majority of learners;
- good quality workplace training for most of the learners;

- regular and well planned assessment procedures in most organisations;
- satisfactory to good quality of the essential skills training for the majority of learners on the Access, Traineeship and New Deal programmes; and
- regular and effective monitoring and reviewing of learner progress in the workplace.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- quality of induction procedures on the MA programme;
- quality of the on-site training to mainly affirm work-based competences for most of the learners on the MA programme;
- limited range of training and learning opportunities in the workplace for a minority of the learners;
- slow pace of progress towards achievement of the NVQ for a minority of the learners;
- greater involvement of employers in drawing up training plans, setting targets and monitoring learner progress;
- development and use of ICT to enhance the quality of training and learning in almost all of the organisations;
- insufficient planning for the development and integration of essential and key skills in a significant minority of the organisations;
- development and implementation of a structured programme of careers education and guidance for learners in a majority of the organisations;
- quality of training plans in a significant minority of the organisations; and
- poor quality of accommodation and resources in a minority of the organisations.

6.5 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The main strengths are the:

- good leadership and management in the majority of organisations;
- appropriately qualified and experienced staff; and
- evidence of good relationships with employers on most of the work-based training programmes.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- commitment of the organisations and employers to the NI Skills Strategy;
- fragmented provision in a minority of the organisations;
- provision for practical skill development during directed training in a significant minority of the organisations;
- strengthening of links with employers to enhance the quality of work-based training; and
- embedding of policies and procedures for pastoral care and child protection in all organisations.

PART TWO

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

7. STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

7.1 The majority of the learners work co-operatively with their peers and training staff, achieve good levels of attendance and time-keeping and have good interpersonal skills to meet the challenges of the industry. A minority of the learners, however, have a negative perception of the industry quoting low pay, long or unsocial hours and poor prospects as issues. Subsequently they are not well motivated in their training, have poor attendance and time-keeping records and are making slow progress towards achieving their NVQ award. Moreover, a small number of the learners have very limited attention spans and the tutors and training consultants work hard to stimulate their interest by providing a range of vocationally relevant learning resources and activities.

7.2 The standards of occupational skills are good for most of the learners on the Access, Traineeship and New Deal programmes, and are commensurate with their ability and stage of training. Most attend in work placements that provide them with good opportunities to develop an appropriate range of practical skills to industry standard. Learners working towards the NVQ at level 2 receive and assist customers, order and receive stock, and work in teams to provide and serve a satisfactory range of starters, soups, main course dishes and desserts. Employers report that the learners are making a valuable contribution to the workplace. A minority of the learners, however, are in work placements that offer only a narrow range of experiences and, as a result, they do not have the opportunity to develop appropriate occupational skills in line with the demands and requirements of the industry.

7.3 In contrast, there is considerable variation in the standards of occupational skills and competences of the learners on the MA programmes across the organisations surveyed. A significant minority have work roles which provide them with adequate opportunities and challenge to achieve the full requirements of the MA framework. They demonstrate good occupational standards and are competent in a wide range of duties, including, preparing complex dishes, supervising junior members of staff and dealing with external customers, such as, environmental health officers and food suppliers. However, the majority of the learners are in either work roles where there is a narrow range of opportunities to cover the NVQ level 3 requirements or in inappropriate work settings for the hospitality supervision MA programme. Subsequently, these learners achieve competence in only a limited range of practical skills required by industry. Although a significant minority of the learners had developed a wide range of relevant skills within industry before entering the programme, there is little evidence that these skills have been sufficiently enhanced as a result of the training on the MA programme.

7.4 The standards of most of the learners' technical knowledge relating to their practical skills are mainly good. They are able to explain well production methods and processes, and demonstrate a good understanding of the various food and drink commodities. A significant minority of the learners, however, require help to give the correct answer particularly in relation to the critical control points such as the temperatures of food at delivery, during storage and at the point of cooking.

7.5 The standards of the literacy and numeracy skills for most learners range from poor to good, and are mostly satisfactory. The standard of written communication and presentation in the portfolios of evidence is satisfactory, in terms of occupational competence. However, a significant minority of learners on Access, Traineeship or New Deal programmes demonstrate weaknesses in their spelling and grammar that are not addressed fully. Although the standard of most of the written work of the MA programme is satisfactory and meets the essential underpinning knowledge requirements of the NVQ, it does not allow learners to demonstrate their skills in extended writing. In order to enhance their understanding of current trends in the industry, most of the learners need to develop the full range of their essential skills, including their reading and research skills, through the use of professional journals and texts at an appropriate level of challenge.

7.6 Almost all of the learners have good standards of oral communication and are able to discuss their work and to identify the main components of health, safety and food legislation. They are developing good skills in using initiative, problem solving, taking instructions and working as members of a team. Across all strands of provision, however, there are insufficient opportunities for most learners to develop their ICT skills, including the use of the Internet to research their work.

7.7 Retention rates across the different strands of provision in the organisations surveyed range from excellent at 100% to poor at 24%. In the 12 organisations providing Access programmes retention rates range from excellent at 100% to poor at 50%. The average retention rate in the period on the Access programmes is modest at 64%. Retention rates vary across the 14 organisations providing Traineeship programmes, from excellent at 100% to very poor at 28%. The average retention rate in the period, however, for the Traineeship programme is poor, at 58%. Of the eleven organisations providing MA programmes, retention rates vary from satisfactory at 72% to very poor at 24%. The average retention rate for MA programmes is poor at 50%. The percentage of New Deal participants who complete their vocational training is modest at 65%.

7.8 The average success rates across the programmes surveyed are satisfactory for the Access programmes at 72%, good for the Traineeship programmes at 80%, and poor for MA programmes at 25%. However, when taking into consideration the learners who have left the programmes prematurely, these figures represent poor achievement rates of 42%, 47% and 13% respectively. The percentage of New Deal participants who achieve their targeted qualification is low at 52%.

7.9 The success rate in the achievement of qualifications in the key skills is variable across the organisations surveyed. In a minority of the organisations, the success rates for the learners achieving the full framework requirements in the essential and key skills are excellent at over 90%. However, for the majority of organisations the success rates for key skills are poor at less than 50%.

7.10 Progression to FE, training or relevant employment for those who successfully completed their programme is poor for learners on the Access and Traineeship programmes at 39% and 41% respectively. Almost all of the small number of learners who successfully completed the MA programme progressed to employment. The progression rate from New Deal programmes to sustained employment is low at 11%.

VIEWS OF EMPLOYERS

7.11 An analysis of the employers' views raised during the survey indicate that the employers consider the education and training provision within Northern Ireland to be ineffective in providing the skills required for the industry. Feedback from employers highlight issues such as the skills shortages particularly for managers and chefs in the MAs, the skills gaps in their existing employees particularly in their female workforce, qualifications that do not necessarily match the needs of industry and the low entry qualifications resulting in most MAs not achieving their targeted qualifications. They feel that the right people with the right skills and qualifications that are fit for purpose is crucial to the future success of the industry.

8. QUALITY OF TRAINING AND LEARNING

8.1 Across all of the organisations surveyed, good relationships exist between Trainers and learners, and between most learners and their employers and supervisors in the workplace. Most of the staff are committed to the welfare and personal development of the learners and work hard to develop the confidence and self-esteem of the learners. Across the organisations, the learners value highly the good pastoral care and the high levels of support and encouragement they receive from their tutors and trainers.

8.2 The quality of the induction arrangements varies across the organisations. While most of the learners are well informed about the administrative aspects of their training programme, the majority have a satisfactory or better understanding of the content and assessment requirements of their vocational programme. In contrast, most of the MAs are not adequately prepared for the demands of a level 3 programme, nor are they well enough informed about the structure, content and assessment requirements of their NVQ. In addition, the majority of learners surveyed, have a poor understanding of the essential or key skills requirements of their respective frameworks.

8.3 In six (35%) of the 17 organisations surveyed, there were strengths with a few areas for improvement in the quality of the training and learning; in one (6%) of the organisations there were major strengths. There were significant areas for improvement in three (18%) of the organisations. The training and learning in the remaining eight (47%) was satisfactory with areas for improvement in significant areas. Of the 75 directed training sessions observed, 16 (21%) had major strengths, and 29 (39%) had strengths with a few areas for improvement. Of the remainder, the training and learning was satisfactory with areas for improvement in important areas in 25 sessions (33%) and there were significant areas for improvement in five (7%) of the sessions.

8.4 The quality of directed training is good or better for a majority of the learners. Individualised training sessions are well planned and provide learners with good opportunities to match the underpinning knowledge for the NVQ with challenging practical activities. Most tutors use an appropriate range of training strategies, including differentiated learning tasks, to suit individual learners' needs. The on-site training, however, for learners on the MA programmes lacks challenge and is mainly assessment driven. There are insufficient opportunities for the learners to discuss or share their knowledge and understanding of current practice with other learners from the programme. The directed training for the remaining small minority of learners lacks rigour and is not matched effectively to workplace training.

8.5 The quantity of the directed training varies considerably across the organisations surveyed. A minority of the organisations deploy training consultants (TCs) within the workplace, where they observe, assess and provide training to the majority (52%) of learners, who are mostly on MA programmes. The TCs visit the learners in the workplace approximately every two weeks to provide vocational and key skills training. The training organisations report that these arrangements meet the needs of the employers, who are reluctant to provide day release training, especially during busy work periods, and that most of the learners find it meets their needs, especially those who are existing employees. For most of the learners, however, this provision is in the affirmation of work based competences to facilitate the achievement of the MA qualification. Moreover, this mode of delivery does not provide appropriate opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge-base of industry or modern working practices. A minority (15%) of the learners attend directed training for two or two and a half days each week and are placed with an employer for the remainder of the week. Another 15% of the learners attend vocational directed training for one day each week, and are in the workplace for work-based training during the remaining four days. They also attend the training organisation full-time for six weeks for directed training and assessment in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy. A further minority (13%) of the learners attend directed training for one day each week and are in the workplace for the remaining four days; they receive vocational training for one half day, and essential skills training for the other half. It is unsatisfactory, however, that the remaining 5% of the learners attend directed training for only three hours every other week.

8.6 The quality of the workplace training is good or better for most learners and is well matched to their levels of training. Most employers set and expect appropriate standards of work for the learners. They provide the learners with good opportunities to develop a wide range of occupational skills and competences that are well matched to their roles and responsibilities in the workplace. For a minority of the learners, however, the workplace training provides a narrow range of training and learning opportunities that hinder the development of appropriate work based training opportunities. In a few instances, there are good examples of trainers moving learners on to a more challenging workplace to allow them to undertake a more complex range of tasks, which will enable them to develop further their skills and meet fully the requirements of their training programme.

8.7 The quality of the assessment arrangements is variable across the organisations surveyed. It is good and well planned in most organisations, where learners are assessed regularly and are provided with meaningful feedback on their performance, and on how to improve. In a minority of the organisations, however, assessment is not planned sufficiently to enable learners to acquire units as they achieve competence and, therefore, the pace of assessment is slow. Most employers report that they are not involved sufficiently in helping prepare learners for assessment in the workplace.

8.8 Almost all learners undergo initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs on entry to their programme. The outcomes from the initial assessments are used effectively to plan individual learning programmes for most of the learners in essential skills. The essential skills training for the majority of learners is good and on occasion, excellent; for a minority of learners, however, on MA programmes the provision has more weaknesses than strengths. For a minority of learners, the literacy and numeracy skills are integrated well into directed training by the vocational tutors and trainers. In a minority of the organisations, however, there is no systematic approach to the provision of essential skills support for learners with

weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. Subsequently, a minority of learners are not making sufficient progress towards the achievement of their NVQ. Moreover, in a significant minority of organisations, the planning for the essential and key skills is not integrated sufficiently within the context of the occupational area.

8.9 The use of ICT is under-developed across almost all of the organisations surveyed. There is a need to develop improved access to ICT facilities and to embed fully the use of ICT to support vocational training and learning, in both a vocational context and within key and essential skills. In addition, there is insufficient access to resources such as books and journals to encourage learners to undertake independent research within the tourism and hospitality area.

8.10 The provision for careers education and guidance is inadequate across most of the organisations. Although the learners receive ongoing information from their tutors, TCs, and workplace supervisors, the provision is not sufficiently developed to ensure that learners make informed choices as they progress through their training programme. Most of the organisations need to put in place a more formal and structured programme of Career, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance to ensure that learners are provided with adequate opportunities to develop their careers' management, and Jobsearch skills, as well as signposting learners to the DEL's Careers Service.

8.11 For the majority of organisations, the arrangements for the monitoring and review of learner progress are mostly good or better. The tutors and training consultants monitor and review learner progress regularly and effectively in the workplace and involve employers well in the process. In a significant minority of the organisations, however, the training plans are too generic and do not monitor individual learner progress in all aspects of their training programme: in the workplace, in directed training and in essential and key skills. In addition, there is a need to involve employers in the negotiation and design of training plans, and with the setting of realistic and specific short-term training targets against which progress can be monitored.

8.12 The quality of the accommodation to support the work-based learning programmes is variable. A small minority of the learners (10%), who are registered in the college-based organisations, have good access to DEL funded state of the art kitchens and an appropriate range of industry standard equipment and resources. In a significant minority of the organisations (47%), while the training accommodation is bright, clean and well maintained, only a minority (18%) have appropriate accommodation to enable learners to undertake basic practical training. The remaining minority (12%) of the organisations have no training facilities available and the range and quality of learning resources is mostly poor.

9. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

9.1 The leadership and management in a minority of the organisations only is strong and progressive, and demonstrates through their provision a commitment to raising the skills of their workforce as set out in the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy. In addition, almost all of the employers interviewed are generally unaware of the strategy or of the significance it has to the tourism and hospitality industry.

9.2 There is considerable variation in the quality of the leadership and management across the organisations surveyed. Two (12%) of the 17 organisations had major strengths, and nine (53%) had strengths with a few areas for improvement. Of the remainder, the leadership and management was satisfactory with areas for improvement in important areas in three organisations (18%) and there were significant areas for improvement in a further three (18%) organisations. In the best practice, the senior managers provide clear leadership, support and guidance to all staff. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and internal communications are good. The work-based training programmes are well managed with sufficient joint planning, monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision. In a minority of the organisations, however, the leadership and management is weak. The planning of the provision is fragmented, and there are insufficient opportunities for vocational, essential and key skills tutors and trainers to work collaboratively to ensure that the work-based training programmes are managed in a coherent manner to meet effectively the needs of the learners.

9.3 In the majority of the organisations, there is evidence of a clear commitment to improvement on the part of the management and vocational tutors and trainers. Senior managers make effective use of management information to plan for improvement, by monitoring closely key performance indicators including retention, success and progression rates. A significant minority of organisations are developing strategies to improve retention and achievement rates; clear targets have been set and these are regularly reviewed by management. In a majority of the organisations, senior managers undertake regular observation of training sessions and provide feedback to tutors and trainers. In a minority of the organisations, however, quality assurance procedures are not sufficiently robust to identify significant weaknesses in the quality of the training and learning.

9.4 Good links have been established with large national and multi-national catering organisations, as well as with a range of local employers; relationships are good and employers find the organisations responsive to administrative requests. However, these links need to be strengthened and formalised to enhance the quality of the work-based training programmes. For a majority of learners, there is insufficient involvement by employers in the training process.

9.5 Across the organisations, most of the vocational staff are appropriately qualified and have relevant industrial experience. However, a small number of organisations must ensure that essential skills tutors comply with the requirements of the DEL tutor education policy for literacy and numeracy.

9.6 While internal verification is in place in all organisations, the procedures lack rigour. There is insufficient observation by internal verifiers of assessment taking place or confirmation of the learners' competence and knowledge-base to ensure consistency in standards. In a significant minority of organisations, the internal verification does not identify sufficiently weaknesses in the learners' ability to complete tasks competently in the workplace or to relate essential knowledge to practical activities.

9.7 All of the organisations have in place effective policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order. While there is clear guidance on the procedures to be followed by staff in the event of any incident, organisations must ensure that the policies are embedded fully and that all members of staff are aware of these procedures and are able to put them into practice.

PART THREE

KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

In view of the general low uptake, retention and success rates of learners, an integrated approach needs to be taken to deliver an appropriate education and training system for this priority skills area of tourism and hospitality. It is important that a co-ordinated approach is taken for better integration of skills and training strategies closely aligned to product development strategies. This will require an effective partnership between government, SSC, employers, and education and training organisations to ensure that the industry's needs are met.

In addition, the following priorities for development need to be addressed if the quality of the provision for learners on work-based training programmes in tourism and hospitality is to improve:

- the continued recognition of tourism and hospitality as a priority economic area;
- development and implementation of strategies to enhance the image of the tourism and hospitality industry as an employer and promote careers into and within the industry;
- a review by DEL of the geographic trends in recruitment, in tourism and hospitality provision to ensure equality of opportunity for all learners;
- a commitment by work-based training providers and employers to the vision set out in the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy and an awareness of the significance it has to the tourism and hospitality industry;
- a greater focus on skills development, especially in key occupations such as managers and chefs;
- ensuring a more integrated and systematic approach to the development of literacy and numeracy across the range of qualifications;
- strategies to ensure that greater emphasis is placed on the learners' ICT skills to enable them to compete in international and domestic markets;
- the development of strategies for greater employer involvement in the design of work-based training programmes, and in the establishment and monitoring of learners' training targets;
- the growing dependence in the industry on migrant workers whilst only 3% of learners on work-based training programmes are from Eastern Europe;

- development and implementation of more rigorous and robust internal verification procedures to ensure consistency in standards; and
- the implementation of the recently developed Sector Skills Agreement by People 1st, and strategies for disseminating information and sharing good practice, across the sector.

APPENDIX

ORGANISATIONS SURVEYED IN THE PERIOD 2005-2007

Austins Quality Training
Belfast Central Training
Belfast Institute Training and Employment Services (BITES)
East Down Institute Training Organisation
Hugh J O'Boyle Training
Impact Training
Lisburn Institute Training Organisation
North City Training
North Down & Ards Institute Training Organisation (ITEC)
North Down Training
Paragon Training
Protocol Skills Belfast
Protocol Skills Limavady
Protocol Skills Newry
Springvale Learning
Swann Training
Workforce Training

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