

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Craven College

September 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education every four years. The inspectorate also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum and gives advice to the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge and experience in the work they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member who does not work in education and a member of staff from the college being inspected.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also use a five-point grading scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses. The descriptors for the grades are:

- *grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*
- *grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- *grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*
- *grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- *grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 99/95

CRAVEN COLLEGE
YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION
Inspected March and April 1995

Summary

Craven College based in Skipton, offers an extensive range of full-time and part-time courses available through different modes of attendance in a variety of locations. All sites are well maintained. The governors are actively involved in the work of the college and promote its interests in the local community. They support the mission statement and have a clear understanding of their statutory duties. The strategic planning process is well defined. It includes a published annual strategic planning diary of procedures and meetings involving teachers and support staff. Students speak highly of the commitment of staff and the support they provide. Well-qualified and experienced staff maintain a consistently high standard of teaching. Examination results are generally good. There is a well-structured course review process. Ambitious plans to extend the college's provision through European funding are hindered by the lack of careful planning and rigorous target setting. The strong focus on divisional management results in poor co-ordination of some cross-college initiatives and services. The college has not assessed in a formal way its current and future management information needs. Performance indicators are not used systematically to inform planning. There is insufficient specialist careers guidance. There is inconsistency in the delivery and quality of tutorial support.

The grades awarded as a result of the inspection are given below.

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematics and computing (including science)	2	Hotel and catering	2
		Health and community care (including hair and beauty)	2
Agriculture	2	Humanities	2
Business	2	Basic education	2
Sport and leisure	2		

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INTRODUCTION

1 Craven College was inspected mainly during the period March to April 1995. Prior to this, the college's enrolment and induction procedures had been inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1994. Three full-time and eight part-time registered inspectors spent a total of 30 days inspecting curriculum areas. They visited 115 classes, held meetings with college staff and inspected a broad range of students' work. The inspectors also examined a variety of documents about the college and its courses. In the week beginning 24 April 1995, four full-time and four part-time registered inspectors spent a further 38 days examining aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection there were meetings with governors, a representative of the North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), head teachers, local employers, parents, students and college managers, teachers and support staff.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Craven College is based in Skipton, known as the Gateway to the Dales, and serves the community of the Craven district, an area of some 500 square miles in the north and west of North Yorkshire. It is bounded to the south by the metropolitan authority of Bradford, to the east by Harrogate and to the north and west by the sparsely-populated areas of Cumbria and the Pennines, which include the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The population of the Craven district is about 51,000. One-third is in the market towns of Skipton and Settle; the remainder is widely dispersed in small settlements, each with its own particular identity.

3 The economy of the district is primarily based on agriculture, tourism, light manufacturing and the service sector. There has been a significant shift over the last decade from traditional upland farming to tourism, recreation and leisure, and related services.

4 In 1894, the Skipton Mechanics Institute was expanded and renamed as the Science and Arts School. Craven College marks its beginnings from that date and celebrated its centenary in 1994. The college occupies four sites in Skipton and another two in Settle. It also uses about 30 premises throughout the area. The Skipton town sites consist of the High Street building which is an imposing eighteenth century listed structure which also houses the main town library; the Aireville campus about one mile from the town centre, part of which formerly belonged to the Aireville school complex; and the Coach Street annexe, another listed building which was formerly a fire station. There is a creche adjacent to the Aireville campus. In Settle, the Watershed Mill is used for leisure studies and Settle Town Hall for other courses.

5 Only 0.8 per cent of the local population is from minority ethnic groups, mainly Asian and centred in Skipton. The unemployment level in the area is low, typically about 5 per cent, ranging from 8.7 per cent in the Keighley travel-to-work area to 2.9 per cent in the Settle travel-to-work area. Unemployment is greater among the young.

6 The proportion of pupils aged 16 staying on in full-time education in the Craven area is 78.6 per cent, well above the national average of 68 per cent. There are two 11-18 grammar schools in Skipton and one 11-16 school. In addition, there is an 11-16 school at Grassington, an 11-18 school at Cross Hills and a 14-18 school in Settle. The nearest colleges are at Keighley, eight miles away, and in Nelson and Come, 12 miles away.

7 Since 1989 the college has grown significantly, doubling its full-time equivalent student numbers. At the time of the inspection, there were 4,536 students on roll. Of these, 636 were undertaking full-time courses and 3,900 part-time courses including day-release, and evening-only students. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2, respectively. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3.

8 The curriculum of the college is grouped into 10 divisions: agriculture and countryside; administration and secretarial; business, leisure and tourism; catering; engineering; general education; hair and beauty; information technology; learner support; and community education. The courses offered range from basic education to higher education, including teacher training. Cross-college responsibilities are managed by the acting principal, two curriculum managers, and managers for finance, personnel, management information systems and marketing. The college employs 96 full-time equivalent teachers and 54 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

9 In its mission statement, the college indicates that it aims to work in collaboration with other individuals and organisations within the Yorkshire Dales and beyond, to ensure a relevant and flexible provision of high quality. It also seeks to improve and widen access for individuals and to provide a supportive learning environment in which students can maximise their learning potential. To reflect the college's intention to become a key provider within regional development and regeneration strategies, the college has adopted in its 1994-97 mission statement an additional aim of playing a central role in the district's development and regeneration. Key aims in the 1993-96 strategic plan include: increasing participation; the development of stronger links with industry, commerce and the community; deploying resources effectively; increasing full-time provision; and working in collaboration with other organisations.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10 The college is making a significant contribution to the achievement of national targets for education and training in the Craven area. College figures show that current student enrolments exceed targets. A small decrease in full-time enrolments has been more than offset by an increase in part-time enrolments. This year 21 new programmes were offered and the range of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) is expanding. College planning

documents refer explicitly to national targets for education and training. These documents are widely disseminated to staff and provide a detailed statement of the market the college serves. The provision reflects the area's potential for tourism, leisure and recreation. Similarly, as traditional employment in agriculture has decreased, provision has been developed in land-based industry, conservation and uplands management.

11 Craven College regards itself as a community college and courses attract mixed groups of students of widely different ages and backgrounds. Courses are offered in all the main vocational areas. There are youth training and training for work programmes run in conjunction with North Yorkshire TEC with which the college has a good working relationship. There is room for the college to improve the achievement of its targets on some of these courses.

12 The college has responsibility for community adult education on behalf of North Yorkshire County Council and is working to increase access to this provision from other areas. It now provides both vocational and non-vocational courses through some 19 sites across the Yorkshire Dales in locations such as Settle, Ingleton, Grassington and Upper Wharfedale. Vocational enrolments through this network have increased by about 200 per cent to a total of 427 in the last year.

13 The strong focus on course developments within divisions means that cross-college curriculum planning and delivery is not as effective as it might be. For example, a recently-established curriculum development group has just begun to address the need for a cross-college foundation programme for GNVQs. Few students combine parts of courses or options such as languages or General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) with GNVQs. Provision of some core skills such as numeracy is not co-ordinated effectively.

14 There is provision for groups that have not normally entered further education. Redundant workers and women seeking to return to work attend courses in administration, secretarial studies and information technology. Mature students can return to study through access to higher education courses in art and design, information technology, outdoor pursuits, nursing and social work. About 70 students study full time and part time on higher education courses franchised from Huddersfield University which help to provide progression in a rural area which is remote from other higher education institutions. A range of courses have been run for women interested in setting up business enterprises and there is a women's car maintenance course. The college makes provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for adult basic education. The college has responded to the small minority ethnic population with courses for English for speakers of other languages, which includes one at a local primary school.

15 The college is energetic and successful in seeking external funding. Last year, over £300,000 was granted from European funds to assist

vocational training for the unemployed, for those with learning difficulties, for women's courses and to support student exchanges. The TEC funds the World Class Initiatives projects for developing basic skills in the workplace and the achievement of NVQs and GNVQs in rural areas. This funding supports two development workers in the Yorkshire Dales and two members of staff who are creating study materials. Another TEC-funded project is extending opportunities for organisations to train and accredit staff with NVQs in the workplace. The college has set up the Craven Business Liaison Unit to co-ordinate aspects of this work and to provide a commercial short course and consultancy service. Earnings from this full-cost work are modest. The unit needs to be more pro-active and its services professionally marketed if targets are to be met.

16 Learning is provided in a variety of locations and through flexible modes of attendance. Outreach work is increasing and learning is increasingly delivered in the workplace. NVQs in business administration, customer service, care and childcare are delivered on employers' premises. For example, numeracy training has been carried out on Yorkshire Water premises. Some courses are delivered at times to suit employee availability; for example, counselling courses for Skipton Building Society staff are taught in the evenings. A pilot project is exploring weekend provision. Timetable changes have been made to allow students to combine study and part-time work. Some courses offer flexible start points during the academic year and allow for different rates of progress. There is scope to increase this flexibility and to bring together provision involving resource centres where students can study independently, and developments in open and distance learning.

17 Links with the local business community are productive and employers serve on college advisory boards in all vocational areas. The links influence provision; for example, a new course for travel couriers in charge of groups of children has been designed in conjunction with Airtours. Employers value their contacts with the college which keep them up to date on NVQ and GNVQ developments. The majority of full-time students participate in well-organised work placements. The college has created two consortia of employers in the area of care to identify and co-ordinate training needs. The Craven Business Liaison Unit maintains a college-wide database of over 1,000 employers. Staff consult it before approaching employers and ask them subsequently to complete a brief questionnaire about their training and other needs so that the database can be updated. In this way, the college sets out to make best use of any visit. In practice, not all staff follow the procedures.

18 The college is well rooted in the community it serves. Staff have links with a wide range of advisory and planning bodies such as the Yorkshire Dales National Park, a community education network, North Yorkshire County Council, district and parish councils and various trusts. The college is seeking funding for some ambitious projects which are planned to create an information technology infrastructure throughout the Dales, to improve

access to further education and to provide training linked to economic regeneration along the Settle to Carlisle railway corridor. Careful planning and clearer target setting will be required to put these ideas into practice effectively. Students are involved in realistic work projects that deliver real outcomes for the community. For example, students on information technology courses have done market research for the Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company, horticulture students provide flower baskets for Skipton shopping centre and other students, at the time of inspection, were building a pagoda and a bandstand for the forthcoming Victory in Europe day commemorations.

19 The college has identified a projects officer who co-ordinates European funding bids and supports the implementation of the college's European policy. Last year about 100 full-time students participated in placements, exchanges or visits abroad. Despite a good range of language courses there is only a limited European dimension to the curriculum. A clearer steer is required, to ensure greater consistency.

20 Prior to incorporation, a local authority agreement prevented the college from developing a comprehensive GCE A level programme. Schools in the area offer this provision. The college strategy remains one of complementing existing provision for the 16-18 age range and this has led to valuable collaborative links with schools. The college is represented on a forum of headteachers and on working groups planning post-16 progression. Collaboration includes franchised GNVQ courses for schools, twilight typing and information technology classes for school pupils, shared information technology advice and support and the teaching of GCE A level courses in psychology, in one case on school premises.

21 The college is involved in a wide range of visits to schools, including attendance at careers and other events. There are open days and arrangements for prospective students to sample courses. This year, using the careers service, all school leavers were sent a prospectus and other information on the further education opportunities available. The college marketing officer co-ordinates these and other marketing activities, oversees the production of attractive and informative publicity materials and is responsible for evaluating these activities. However, there is little market research in support of planning and development.

22 The college has recently redrafted its equal opportunities policy. Two equal opportunities officers, one for academic staff and one for administrative staff, implement and monitor the policy. There is much good practice. For example, the prospectus contains a welcome in Urdu, all promotional materials contain equal opportunity references, and the topic is discussed during the induction process and in tutorials. However, there is no committee to oversee the monitoring of the policy and reports of actions taken in response to incidents which contravene the policy are insufficiently detailed.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

23 The Craven College corporation has 19 members including 12 independent members experienced in areas directly relevant to the college's activities, a representative from the TEC, the principal, two staff governors, a student governor and two co-opted governors. Currently there is one vacancy. The membership has an appropriate gender balance. Recent governor appointments have reflected the college's widening curriculum.

24 The college's deputy principal has acted as principal since March 1995 following the departure of the previous principal to another college. The chairman of the corporation and acting principal meet on a weekly basis and have ensured that governors and college managers understand their respective roles and responsibilities. Governors have a clear understanding of their statutory duties and are aware of the distinction and relationship between governance and management. Governors support the mission statement and have been involved in the preparation of the college's financial plan. The governing body receives minutes of meetings of the academic board and is aware of its activities including major curricular developments.

25 The strategic-planning process is well defined. There is a strategic-planning diary of procedures and dates of meetings involving teaching and non-teaching staff which is published annually. Governors have established a strategic-planning working party and are actively involved in the process of planning and review. The governors are well informed on financial matters. They receive a monthly statement of income and expenditure and of variance in budget in order to assist their monitoring of financial systems and controls, but they receive no information about cash flow. The board receives termly information on student withdrawals by course. The board makes full use of the backgrounds and expertise of individual governors in deciding the membership of its committees. Governors participate in college activities and promote the interests of the college in the community. The governing body has agreed a code of conduct and has a register of members' interests to ensure that all members share equally in the responsibilities and accountabilities of the corporation. Governors have attended training events and received a range of presentations from the chair of governors and college managers. The governors have considered their training needs in a systematic way and are involved in the development of self-assessment criteria to judge their individual effectiveness.

26 The senior management team comprises the acting principal, the finance and administration manager, the personnel manager, two curriculum managers, the management information services manager, the marketing manager and the clerk to the governors who is responsible directly to the chairman of governors. Ten divisional managers have responsibility for the college's academic programme. The roles and

responsibilities of the management team are understood by staff. Line management arrangements are effective. A weekly cross-college meeting time facilitates course management and curriculum planning within divisions. Course and divisional meetings take place at regular intervals and there are agendas and minutes to ensure that decisions are recorded and policies implemented. The senior management team should improve the implementation of cross-college policies. For example, there is no co-ordinated approach to the provision of student services and no policy regarding students' records of achievement. Where formal policies, such as those for equal opportunities and for the accreditation of students' previous learning and experiences, have been established, there are no strategies to monitor, evaluate and report on their implementation to senior managers and members of the governing body.

27 The budgets for equipment and consumables are delegated to academic heads of division. The rationale for individual budget allocations is not clear. There is a reliance primarily on historical funding. The college monitors expenditure and heads of division receive monthly statements. The college has not established a methodology for calculating unit costs by course, nor has it assessed in a formal way its current and future management information needs. There is no management information policy or user group to inform policy formation and implementation. Managers receive few reports on a regular basis that they can use to assist in the implementation, monitoring and review of policies and the performance of management functions.

28 The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is recorded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) as £14.53 per unit. The median for general further education colleges in 1994-95 is £18.17. The college has a projected 12 month budget of £2,890,000, of which 69 per cent is funded by the FEFC. The anticipated budget surplus for the current financial year will not be achieved. Revised budgetary projections predict a budget deficit. At the time of inspection, the college was in the process of preparing a financial recovery plan. A new finance and administration manager has been appointed. Financial systems and procedures have been strengthened but still lack appropriate support from the college management information system. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

29 Figures provided by the college show an 89 per cent retention rate for full-time students for the academic year 1993-94. Data on student destinations are collected and published in collaboration with the North Yorkshire Careers Service. All full-time students complete a destination questionnaire following the completion of their course. Course tutors follow this up by telephone and communicate by letter with those students who do not complete a return. The college, the divisions and the course teams do not analyse the data with sufficient rigour as a means of informing course planning and delivery.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

30 Support services for students reflect the college's commitment to provide an effective and friendly learning environment. Students speak highly of staff, their approachability and their willingness to respond quickly to requests for help.

31 A wide range of leaflets provides prospective students with detailed information about the programmes offered by the college. The prospectus is of particularly high quality. It is an attractive document which provides information in a clear and easily understandable format. Careful thought has been given to the development of innovative approaches to the dissemination of information about college programmes. One notable example is attendance at agricultural shows, where the college has a stand and runs competitions to promote interest in the college's provision. There is also a programme which enables prospective students to sample a range of courses.

32 Students report a prompt response from the central admissions service to their enquiries and applications. All full-time students are invited for an initial interview with the college counsellor who then arranges for them to have a further interview with a member of the appropriate course team. A significant weakness is the lack of specialist careers advice to help students decide on the course which will best meet their needs. The importance of maintaining contact with students in the period between the offer of a place at the college and the start of the programme has been recognised. A number of imaginative approaches, such as the sending of good luck cards prior to examinations, is much appreciated by the students.

33 Arrangements for implementing the accreditation of students' prior learning are not well established across the college. Currently, this facility is only available for NVQs and the college's teacher training programmes.

34 The college's induction programme is comprehensive and thorough. It enables students to familiarise themselves with the college, the staff and the programmes for which they have enrolled. Students' rights and responsibilities are carefully explained to them. The induction programme includes procedures to identify students' learning support needs. Learning support can be provided on a one-to-one basis, within small groups or through the learning-support workshop. These arrangements facilitate a flexible approach to the delivery of learning support and enable it to be tailored to the needs of individual students. Of particular note is the use of vocational staff to provide learning support. This ensures that the support is closely linked to the students' vocational programmes and enables the students to see the relevance of the support to their studies. Training in the teaching of basic skills has been provided for staff to help them in this work. The provision of support in mathematics is less effective. There is a lack of co-ordination and insufficient time is available to meet the needs identified through the initial screening procedures.

35 Course tutors also act as personal tutors to students. Tutorials are used mainly to check on students' progress. The number of students allocated to a tutor varies, as does the time allocated to individual and group tutorials. This can cause difficulties for some large groups, particularly in relation to the completion of application forms for entry to higher education. Responsibility for the content and organisation of tutorials is left to individual tutors. Consequently, the quality of tutorials varies. The need for a more structured approach to tutorials has been recognised and a guidance pack for tutors has recently been produced to support them in their work. Students are not given the opportunity to develop national records of achievement while they are at the college.

36 Students' attendance is carefully monitored by course tutors. Students report that any absence is quickly followed up and the reasons for absence sought. During the week of the specialist inspection, the highest level of attendance was in catering where the average attendance was 90 per cent. The lowest level of attendance was in business studies, where the average attendance was 71 per cent.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

37 Of the 115 sessions inspected, 66 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. The following table shows the grades awarded as a result of the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		2	4	2	0	0	8
GCSE		1	3	1	1	0	6
GNVQ		0	5	4	2	0	11
NVQ		4	12	5	0	0	21
Access to higher education		2	2	0	0	0	4
Basic education		0	7	5	1	0	13
Other vocational		6	17	8	1	1	33
Other		3	8	7	1	0	19
Total		18	58	32	6	1	115

38 In computing and information technology courses, the quality of teaching was good. Lessons were well planned and had clear objectives. A wide range of teaching strategies was employed including lectures, practical and groupwork and student presentations. In one well-organised session in which students were beginning to learn database skills, the use of handouts, clear instructions and exercises enabled the teacher to provide individual assistance while a group of the more able students worked independently. Assignments were well designed to integrate subject

themes with core studies. However, more could have been done to bring out the problems encountered in implementing information technology projects in the real world. Students were encouraged to undertake assessment of their own work and that of their peers. In mathematics, ideas were clearly presented and teachers provided sensitive one-to-one support for students.

39 Hairdressing and beauty therapy classes were well managed. In the majority of classes, learning was carefully planned to ensure the correct sequencing of topics and there was good use of a variety of teaching strategies to sustain interest and to motivate the students. Staff had developed positive working relationships with their students. They had sound subject knowledge and high professional standards. However, in some classes, lecturers made insufficient reference to commercial practices. In practical sessions, the lack of models limited opportunities to extend students' skills. Work experience placements, for example, in hairdressing salons, are well integrated with other aspects of work in the full-time programmes. Students value their work placements and the feedback given by teachers on their progress in the work place and on the course in general.

40 Teaching in health and community care programmes was well planned. Students were involved in a variety of appropriate activities including groupwork. In one session, students worked in small groups to practise the skills and techniques of counselling. They listened, questioned and provided feedback to other students. Their progress was monitored and carefully supported by the teacher throughout the session. Teachers were knowledgeable about their subjects and encouraged students to relate their learning to practical situations. In a minority of classes, the failure of quieter students to ask questions or engage in discussion was overlooked.

41 Agriculture and horticulture sessions were well organised and learning was effective. Discussion was encouraged and good use was made of questioning techniques to check students' progress. In a small number of sessions, insufficient effort was made to involve all the students in discussions. Practical sessions emphasised health and safety regulations and current commercial practices. The technical and practical experience of the staff contributed much to the development of students' knowledge and competence. However, practice varied in the setting and marking of assignments. Generally, there were too few written comments from teachers and inadequate attention to spelling and grammar in students' assignments.

42 Lessons in leisure and tourism were generally well prepared and formed part of a coherent programme of study. In one Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) leisure session, students were engaged in planning an overnight expedition across hazardous country. They displayed good knowledge of the activity, the area to be visited and map reading skills. The assignments set were clear and relevant to the

world of work. The quality of learning in class was least satisfactory where students were required to copy large amounts of writing from a transparency on the overhead projector.

43 Students on catering courses were well motivated and enjoyed their studies. Realistic working environments were well managed to maximise the opportunities for learning and assessment. The bakery was an innovative feature which enabled students to make high-class patisserie products which were later sold in the coffee shop and a retail outlet. In most lessons there was a good balance between students listening to the teacher and opportunities for them to ask questions or engage in other activities.

44 In business studies, students experienced a good range of methods of working including groupwork, written work and giving oral presentations. Teaching was well organised and students were frequently challenged to think for themselves. A group of national diploma students was asked to give examples from the fire service, the police and the Royal Air Force of situations where good discipline might be critical to operational success. Small groups of students compared the three services, and then reported their findings. Teachers regularly assessed students' work and kept them informed of their progress. The teaching of computer keyboard skills in some sessions was poor.

45 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and students on adult basic education courses responded well to their studies. Learning programmes had been carefully designed to benefit each student and there was an appropriately wide range of well-managed activities, including workshops. Effective use was made of videos and computers. In some sessions, too much emphasis was placed on individual work when the use of group teaching strategies would have been more helpful for students' learning. In a few lessons teachers organised the work in ways which failed to take adequate account of students' varying abilities and experiences.

46 In humanities subjects, schemes of work were detailed and teachers had developed positive working relationships with their students. Standards of teaching were particularly high in English. In one GCE A level English literature lesson the reading aloud element was both dramatic and inspiring. The teacher skilfully interspersed questions designed to elicit students' analytical responses with examples from the text to support discussion. Students benefited from an opportunity to construct and then articulate their own views in a supportive learning environment. In psychology and sociology, students were highly motivated and were able to take responsibility for some of their own learning by working on tasks in small groups. Foreign language classes varied in their effectiveness. In the best lessons, students were appropriately challenged and teachers had prepared a good range of suitable activities. In other lessons, learners were not encouraged to use the foreign language and there was a lack of energy in the proceedings. In all humanities subjects, class and homework

assignments were well devised and the marking of students' work was constructive.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

47 Most students were well motivated, enthusiastic about their work and committed to their studies. Written work was of an appropriate standard and the majority of students maintained well-organised coursework files which contained clear notes. The students contributed readily to discussion in class and in many cases displayed good speaking skills. In many foreign language classes students demonstrated sound oral competence. Practical work was carried out enthusiastically and with due regard for safety procedures.

48 Students' notes, oral contributions in class and written responses to assignments and tests showed that the levels of knowledge and understanding that were being achieved were generally appropriate to the courses undertaken. However, a small number of students on some intermediate level courses was not reaching the required standards and some of the more able students in leisure studies were under achieving.

49 Students working in small groups demonstrated good levels of motivation as well as the ability to plan, co-operate and present the findings of their activity. For example, some catering students presented a detailed account of the planning and managing of a Chinese banquet and decisions relating to costing and choice of menu were clearly justified.

50 Students' levels of achievement in information technology varied widely. In some areas such as agriculture, these skills were well developed. Hair and beauty students demonstrated good wordprocessing skills which had been developed whilst taking a module of study in information technology at the start of their course. However, some students in other areas of work, such as full-time students on leisure, health and community care, and catering courses, were given little opportunity to develop these skills.

51 A total of 75 students entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994. The overall pass rate was 62 per cent, which was 6 per cent below the provisional national average for students of all ages in general further education colleges. Of these students, the 25 full-time students who were aged 16-18 scored on average 2.3 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. Only nine students aged 16-18 entered for two or more GCE AS/A level subjects, but they scored on average 7.0 points per candidate. Individual subject pass rates were variable. In some subjects such as history and psychology pass rates were well above the national averages for general further education colleges, but in others such as English they were below.

52 There were 185 subject entries at GCSE in 1994. Fifty-one per cent of these entries achieved a grade in the range A-C which is above the provisional national average for students aged 16-18 in general further education colleges. There were good results in some subjects; the nine entries for modern European languages all achieved a grade A-C, and about 70 per cent of the 39 entries for psychology and sociology and 66 per cent of the 29 entries for English achieved A-C grades. In mathematics, about 30 per cent of the entries over the last three years have resulted in A-C grades. This is close to the provisional national average for students ages 16-18 in general further education colleges.

53 Two hundred and forty-eight students sat for advanced level vocational qualifications in 1994. Of the 67 students aged 16-18, in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education's 1994 performance tables, 82 per cent were successful. This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure.

54 When the results of students of all ages are considered, many courses achieved good examination results. All students achieved their qualification on the national diploma in business and finance, the first diploma in horse management and some nursery nursing and hair and beauty courses last year. In secretarial subjects, pass rates were significantly above national averages, and a high proportion passed with distinction.

55 In the academic year 1993-94, 86 per cent of the full-time students who were in attendance on 1 November 1993 completed their courses. In the year 1994-95, 92 per cent of the students who were attending on 1 November 1994 were still attending their courses at the time of inspection. Retention rates are variable. Only four out of the 22 students who started the two-year national diploma in leisure failed to complete their course and currently only two of the 22 students recruited to the first year have left the course. On the City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) recreation and leisure course, all students who enrolled in the autumn of 1994 are still attending. On a few courses, however, the retention rate is poor. Only 15 of the 59 students recruited to the GCSE mathematics course, five of the 22 students recruited to the GCSE French course and 11 of the 20 students recruited to the two-year national diploma in travel and tourism in 1993 are still attending. Many of the students who leave, do so for personal or financial reasons.

56 The North Yorkshire Careers Guidance Services survey the destinations of the college's students annually. Of the 197 advanced level and 168 intermediate level students in 1994-95, 89 per cent provided data on their destinations. At advanced level, 27 per cent of those whose destinations are known went on to higher education, 50 per cent to full-time employment and a further 10 per cent continued in further education. At intermediate level 33 per cent went on to further education and 47 per cent to full-time employment.

57 The proportion of students who progress from each full-time course to further or higher education or to full-time employment varies considerably. On some courses, such as those in catering, a high proportion gain related employment or places in higher education. For example, most of the students completing the national diploma in hotel catering and institutional management in 1994 were successfully placed. Notable in this subject area is the success with which students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have gained employment in the catering industry. Students on health and caring courses were also successful in achieving full-time employment or further training. A high proportion of students from some courses secure full-time employment; for example, over 70 per cent of students on the intermediate level beauty therapy course, and the diploma in upland resource management, were successful.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58 There is a college-wide commitment to quality assurance and the provision of learning experiences which are of a high quality. The college charter sets out realistic standards on learner support, admissions, teaching and learning, guidance and counselling, equal opportunities and grievance procedures. College staff and students are aware of the college charter, its role and purpose. A charter group has recently been reconvened to review and update the charter.

59 A quality assurance manual forms the basis of the college's quality assurance system. It is reviewed on a regular basis. The manual identifies documents, procedures, timescales and staff responsibilities for the development, management and delivery of the college's learning programmes. Some aspects of support, such as resources and technical support, are not covered by the manual.

60 All full-time and substantive part-time members of teaching staff receive a copy of the quality manual. Other part-time and support staff have access to a copy or receive appropriate extracts. Staff were involved in its initial development and regard it as a useful working document. All staff are encouraged to participate in its review.

61 A member of the senior management team, one of the curriculum managers, has specific responsibility for quality. A quality working party, including teaching and non-teaching representatives meets twice a term to discuss progress on quality assurance issues, to evaluate the results of quality audits and to monitor course teams' action plans. A cross-college quality report and a supporting action plan were produced at the end of 1994.

62 There is no co-ordinated strategy for the setting of standards and targets, nor for the monitoring of their achievement. The collection and use of performance indicators are not systematic. Few performance indicators are produced to enable the senior management team and governors to monitor performance against strategic planning targets.

63 The annual course review process itself is well structured and meets the requirements of awarding bodies associated with college provision. Positive feedback has been received from external moderators and verifiers. The college learner-support unit received the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit quality award in November 1994. A course team review meeting is held at the end of each course and appropriate action plans are forwarded to the quality manager. During the last academic year some reports were not submitted on time and there was a lack of consistency in the way performance was evaluated. In a number of instances, for example in agriculture, business, health care and languages, course reviews were largely descriptive. Any evaluation was undertaken primarily by the quality working party.

64 A college system for the formal evaluation of classroom teaching was piloted last autumn and was complemented by a series of external audits by an independent consultant. Not all staff whose work contributed to the exercise received feedback. Evaluative reports were issued to the senior management team, academic board, quality working party and divisional managers.

65 The views of students are regularly obtained from questionnaires, from feedback given in tutorials and from formal and informal meetings held at course level. Three cross-college surveys are conducted annually by the quality manager: a questionnaire for new students to assess how user friendly they found the college, an interim questionnaire on teaching and resources, and an end of course/programme questionnaire. Summary reports of findings are issued to the quality working party and to the academic board. Additional surveys are also undertaken, as necessary. For example, the learning-resources manager recently undertook a users' survey. Information is generally evaluated and acted upon, although some students receive little or no formal feedback from these exercises. Students do not currently sit on the governing body or quality working group, although they have an entitlement to do so. A local employers' survey is undertaken by the Craven Business Liaison Unit to provide information to assist curriculum planning and development. This information is not fully utilised.

66 The college spends 1 per cent of its staffing budget on staff development. The development needs of staff are identified through annual course reports, although individual needs are also discussed on a one-to-one basis. The staff-development policy provides a limited framework for the implementation and monitoring of staff-development activities. There is no formal staff-development committee and no formal process for reviewing the development needs of all members of staff on a regular basis. The consequence is that there are inconsistencies in approach. For example, while some line managers take an active role in identifying development needs, others leave it to members of staff to approach them directly if they wish to initiate training and development activities. Not all activities are systematically evaluated.

67 The college is introducing an entitlement to a formal staff-development interview with line managers by the end of this academic year. A revised staff-development policy, incorporating a formal system of staff appraisal and development interviews, has been developed as part of the process of working towards achieving Investor in People status.

68 A self-assessment report was written by the college to support the inspection process. It reported against five of the headings outlined in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, but did not assess teaching and the promotion of learning nor students' achievements. The report provided a realistic assessment of the college's main strengths, but some statements were not rigorous enough or lacked sufficient supporting evidence. In all the sections, there was a failure to identify some key weaknesses.

RESOURCES

Staffing

69 The college employs 44 full-time teachers who are appropriately qualified for the work they undertake. Almost all have a teaching qualification. Forty-one per cent have relevant Training and Development Lead Body qualifications and a further 35 per cent are currently working towards them. A high proportion of full-time teachers have had significant experience in an occupation relevant to their teaching area; 51 per cent have had such experience within the last five years.

70 The 213 part-time teachers contribute a valuable range of vocational experience. Many of them are currently employed in a relevant vocational area. They are well qualified: for example, a high proportion hold or are studying for a teaching qualification, and 31 per cent have or are working towards a Training and Development Lead Body qualification. The part-time teachers play a full part in the work of the divisions and attend divisional meetings.

71 The large number of part-time teachers plays a significant role in helping a relatively small college to maintain a broad curriculum. Fifty-five per cent of the teaching hours are taught by part-time teachers. This high proportion, however, brings some disadvantages. Some subjects, such as mathematics and foreign languages are taught entirely by part-time teachers. This results in inadequate co-ordination of activities and hinders curricular development. Some part-time teachers also act as course tutors; but the time they are available to students is limited and it is more difficult for them to fulfil their role effectively.

72 Technical, clerical and administrative staff receive good support and are encouraged to take part in professional development. There is no qualified librarian, but staff in the learning-resource centres are currently studying for relevant professional qualifications. The lack of an audio-visual technician means that teachers have to collect equipment

such as video playback machines from a central store and carry them to classrooms. There is also a shortage of technician support in curriculum areas such as health studies, hair and beauty, and business studies.

73 The college monitors its staff by age, experience, qualifications and gender. There is a good balance of age and experience. Sixty-nine per cent of the full-time teachers are women, a figure which reflects the high proportion of female students in the college.

74 Comprehensive personnel policies and procedures have been established. Staff have received packs which include details of college policies and other relevant information. The personnel manager and acting principal hold meetings with trades union representatives every three weeks. Seventy-five per cent of full-time teachers have signed new contracts. All categories of staff display a high degree of commitment to the college.

Equipment/learning resources

75 The college has good information technology equipment. There is one computer for every 10 full-time equivalent students. Most computers are modern and use up-to-date software. They are located in five information technology suites on the main sites which are used for group teaching as well as by individuals. They are well maintained and regularly updated. Over the last two years, £112,000 has been spent on computers. The computers on the High Street site are networked. The information technology suites are regularly timetabled for group use and there is sometimes a shortage of space for individual students who wish to use the facilities on a drop-in basis. The suites are locked for periods of the day when they are not staffed. Some subject areas, such as mathematics, science and engineering, have no access to computers for demonstration purposes or for individual use.

76 Most teaching areas are satisfactorily furnished and equipped with overhead projectors and whiteboards. The hairdressing and beauty therapy salons are particularly well equipped with modern resources of an industrial standard which include a sauna, a steam bath and a sun-tanning cubicle. The nursery nursing base rooms and the training restaurant are further examples of well-equipped teaching and learning areas. There is a shortage of specialist learning resources in some areas of business studies, leisure and tourism, mathematics, and agriculture. Some of the agricultural equipment, though functional, is dated. Students on agriculture courses do, however, make good use of local facilities, using equipment available off site from local farmers and growers. Most of the equipment is repaired or replaced when necessary but the college does not have a rolling programme of planned repair and maintenance. Access to audio-visual equipment is poor and the college does not have facilities for editing or copying videotapes.

77 There is no overall college policy on the issue of textbooks. Some divisions issue textbooks on loan to students; others require students to

purchase their own. There are insufficient text books in some programme areas.

78 The college has a learning-resource centre on each of the two main sites. Good liaison between resource centre staff and curriculum area staff has resulted in a small but well-chosen bank of learning-resource materials at each centre. The centres have a good range of periodicals, a comprehensive careers and higher education section, and a small number of computers, including those with compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database facilities. It is college policy to centralise books and learning materials in the resource centres rather than disperse them in the teaching bases. However, the ratio of six books to each full-time equivalent student is low and extra funding has been allocated this year to start to remedy this. The system for monitoring the use of the centres is poor. There is a high rate of book loss. The learning-resource centres are cramped and can be noisy, particularly when they are used by timetabled groups. They lack adequate office space for staff.

79 A basic skills learning-resource centre has recently been established, funded by the TEC. This contains a good level of relevant resources including books, videos and information technology and these are well used. Learning support staff provide a friendly, supportive environment for students requiring help with basic skills. Learning resources are generally concentrated on the site where the relevant teaching takes place although in some cases, such as for leisure and tourism where teaching takes place on two sites, they are unevenly distributed. The various learning-resource centres and the information technology suites are separately managed. An overall policy on the use of learning resources and better co-ordination would increase their effectiveness.

Accommodation

80 The college occupies two main sites. The one in the High Street, Skipton, is shared with the public library. The other at Aireville, one mile from the town centre is a modern three-storey building in a semi-rural setting. The adjacent school uses the ground floor of the building. Two other buildings in the town are used for teaching and a growing number of outreach centres are leased in the Yorkshire Dales. The entrances to the main buildings are unwelcoming and the reception areas create a poor image. Signs and information for visitors are inadequate. The listed lodge at the entrance to the Aireville site has been imaginatively adapted to provide excellent accommodation for a 24-place creche. A comprehensive accommodation strategy has been developed which includes plans to extend the Aireville building.

81 Generally, classrooms are of a high standard and there are some specialist facilities of high quality. The hair and beauty salons in the Coach Street annexe are open to the public and create a realistic work environment for students. The Watershed centre at Settle provides good facilities for outdoor pursuits. The Town Hall has some inadequate teaching areas: there is no specialist language room; the mathematics

workshop area is unsuitable; and some rooms are poorly heated and ventilated. College premises are well-maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. Room use is monitored periodically and the analysis shows that some teaching areas are used inefficiently.

82 Overall, the college has a shortage of space resulting in inadequate provision of non-teaching areas. There are no rooms designated for counselling and interviewing and there are insufficient staff workrooms. Staff who teach at the High Street site occupy cramped staff rooms in a separate building from the teaching accommodation, on the other side of a busy main road. Student recreational and dining areas are inadequate and there are insufficient private study spaces.

83 Access for wheelchair users is restricted, particularly on the High Street site, where such students cannot gain access either to the learning-resource centre or the refectory. The beauty salon is also inaccessible to wheelchair users. The college has improved access at the High Street site by installing a chairlift but it only provides access to the first-floor landing of this three-storey building.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

84 The strengths of the college are:

- its extensive range of programmes
- provision which is delivered in a variety of locations and through flexible modes of attendance
- a well-defined strategic planning process
- governors who are involved in the work of the college
- the commitment of staff to the support of students
- a consistently high standard of teaching
- a well-structured course review process
- well-qualified and experienced teaching and support staff
- well-maintained premises.

85 The college should address the following:

- ineffective planning of new provision
- variability in college practices and procedures
- weakness in cross-college management and curricular planning
- inadequate analysis of current and future management information needs
- the lack of procedures for calculating the unit costs of courses
- inadequate specialist guidance on careers
- the failure to make systematic use of performance indicators to inform planning

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- inconsistency in the delivery and quality of tutorial support
 - the shortage of rooms for some specialist teaching and for student support
 - the low bookstock and inadequate access to information technology
 - lack of rigour and consistency in the evaluation of courses.

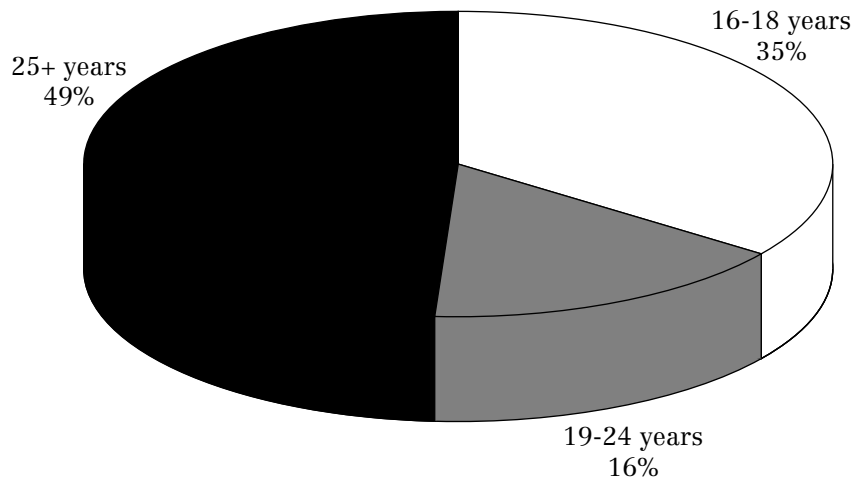
FIGURES

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Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

Figure 1

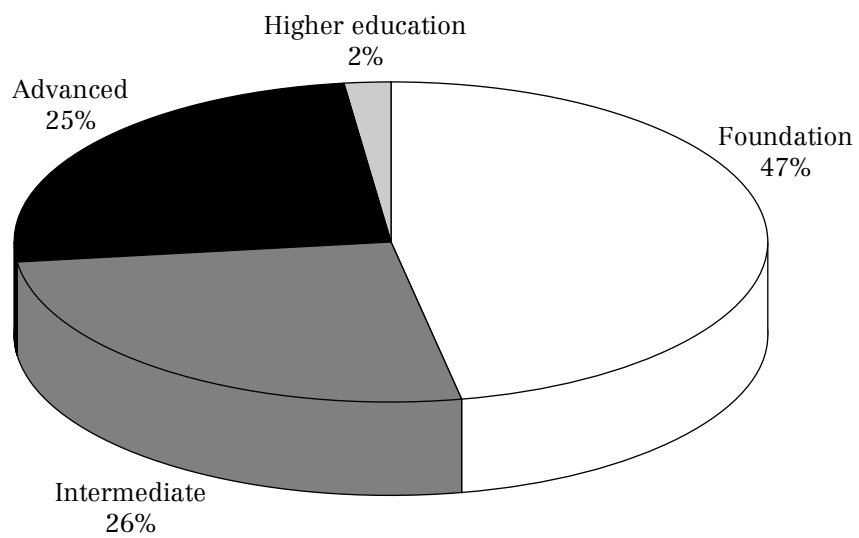
Craven College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)



Enrolments: 4,536

Figure 2

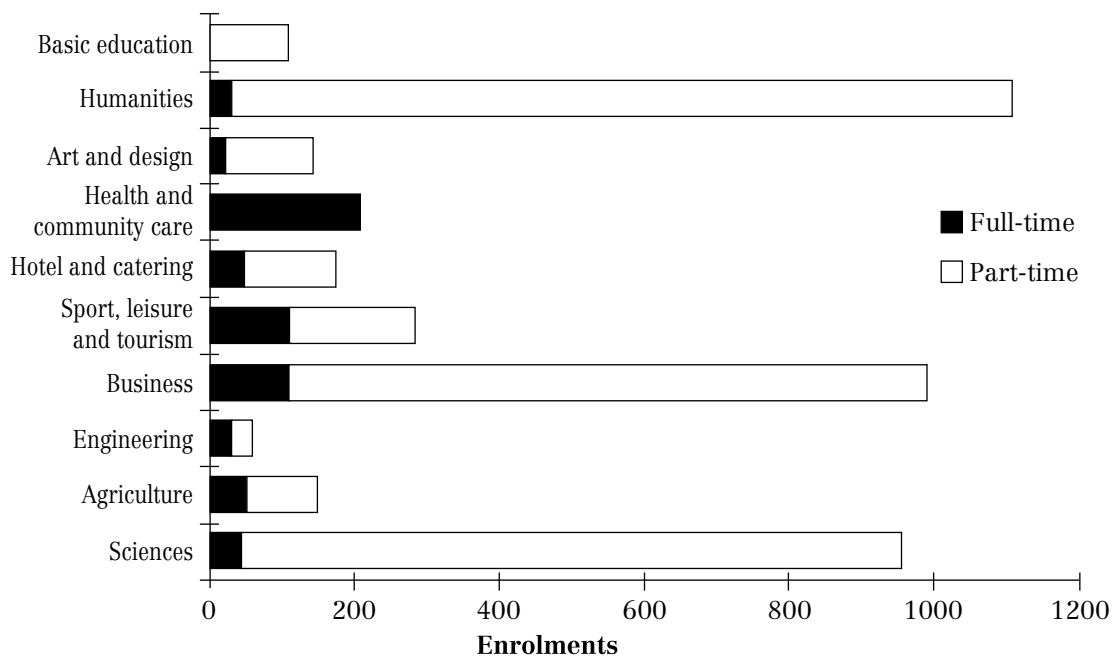
Craven College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 4,536

Figure 3

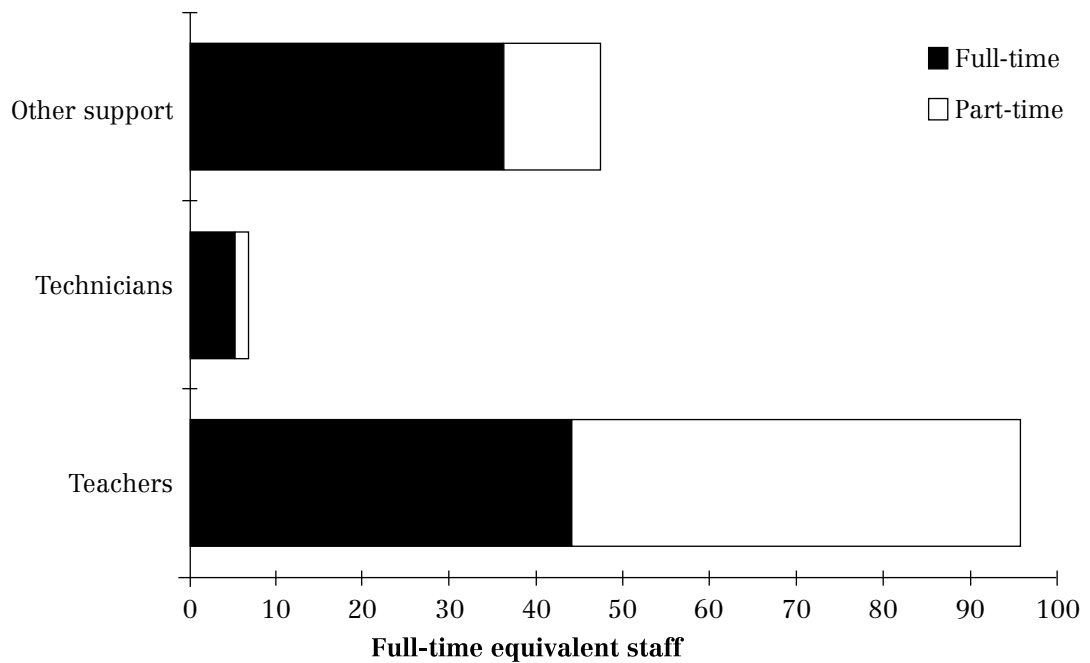
Craven College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)



Enrolments: 4,536

Figure 4

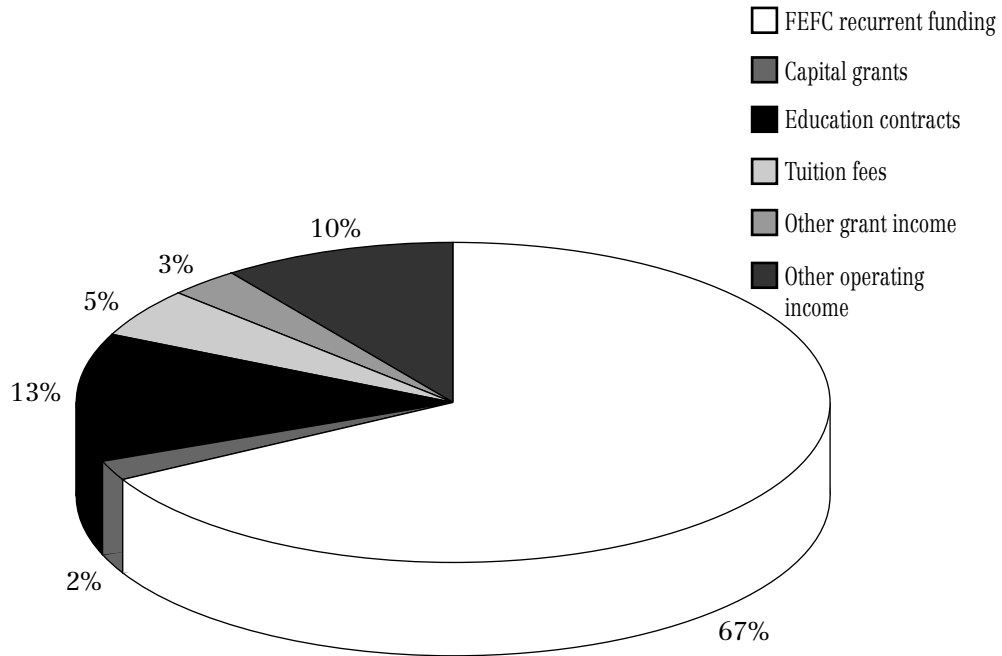
Craven College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 150

Figure 5

Craven College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)

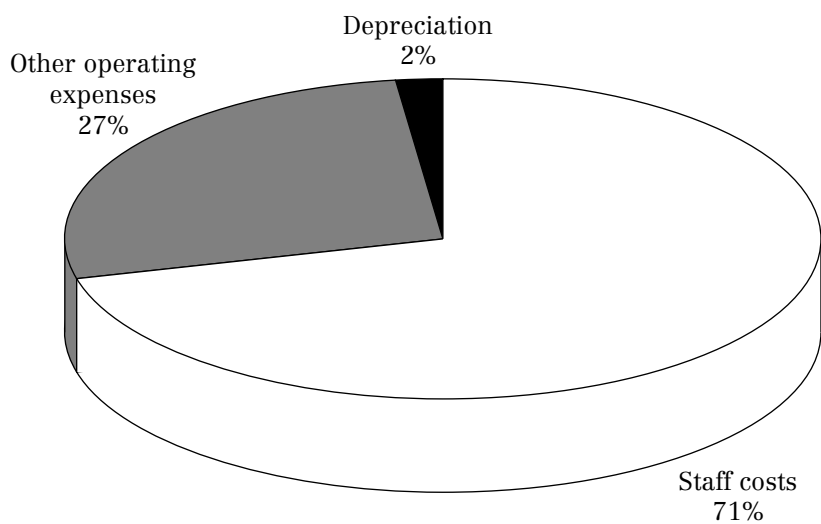


Estimated income: £2,890,000

Note: this chart excludes £10,000 other income-generating activities.

Figure 6

Craven College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated expenditure: £3,170,000

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