

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Enrichment of the Curriculum**

**National Survey Report**

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**March 1996**

**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

*The Further Education Funding Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are satisfactory arrangements to assess the quality of provision in the further education sector in England. It discharges the duty in part through its inspectorate, which inspects and reports on each college in the sector every four years. The Council's inspectorate also assesses and reports on a national basis on specific curriculum areas and advises the Council's quality assessment committee.*

*College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.*

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## SUMMARY

Enrichment describes activities which colleges provide in order to extend students' education beyond their main course of study. The commitment to providing opportunities for broadening students' educational experience is widespread throughout the further education sector.

Successful enrichment programmes enhance students' life at college and increase motivation, achievements and retention. Such programmes are one way in which colleges respond to the demands of employers' organisations and higher education providers for people who are flexible, responsive and resourceful. They also provide valuable links with the local community, promote the college to potential students and their parents and foster a sense of community and cohesion within the college.

Sixth form colleges which cater mainly for full-time students in the 16 to 19 age range provide a variety of enrichment activities. In colleges with residential provision, students appreciate the residential experience itself as an enrichment of their college programme. In most other colleges, activities are optional and are taken up, typically, by 25 to 30 per cent of the students. In some cases, activities are aimed at raising the aspirations of disadvantaged groups. Few colleges consider the specific needs of adult or part-time students when devising enrichment programmes.

In the colleges inspected, 63 per cent of enrichment sessions had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses. The best sessions included opportunities for personal research, group projects, practical work, creative expression, discussion and problem-solving. Other positive features included residential visits and links with industry. Inspectors found examples of impressive achievements in the creative and performing arts, sport, community service, and in group projects. Increasingly, colleges are recognising students' achievements in enrichment activities by the award of certificates accredited by external bodies. This development is generally welcomed by students and there is some evidence that it increases their motivation.

Attendance at enrichment sessions is often poor. The large numbers of students who are reluctant to participate represent a considerable challenge to colleges. Many students and their teachers do not attach the same value to enrichment activities as to their main course of study.

Despite the importance which colleges attach to their enrichment programmes, many have failed to define clearly the aims and objectives of enrichment and the values that underpin the curriculum they offer. Consequently, many of the enrichment sessions lack a clear purpose. Other weaknesses included a failure to build on students' prior knowledge and experience. Personal tutors play a key role in encouraging students to take up appropriate enrichment activities. Their skill in doing so varies widely. Students' achievements on enrichment

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programmes rarely form part of the overall review of their progress or their records of achievement.

A large number of colleges are currently reviewing their enrichment programmes. As a result, many have reduced the range of opportunities, the time and the staff which are allocated. Few colleges have carried out a detailed analysis of the cost of enrichment and its benefits to students. Quality assurance for enrichment activities is weak.

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# CONTENTS

	<b>Paragraph</b>
Introduction	1
Enrichment Activities	
Scope of enrichment	2
Reasons for offering enrichment	7
Progression	8
Internal relationships	12
Links with the community	13
Religious dimension	14
Chaplaincy	15
Meeting the needs of particular student groups	16
Entitlement and choice	19
Accreditation	22
Enrichment and the tutorial programme	26
Health education	27
Careers guidance	29
Residential experience	30
Students' Experience of Enrichment	
Initial guidance	31
Role of the tutor	32
Attendance	34
Observation of enrichment sessions	35
Student autonomy	38
Innovative teaching approaches	39
Residential visits	40
Service to the community	41
Entrepreneurial activity	42
Learning from industry	44
New experiences and continuity	45
Information technology	46
Equality of opportunity	47
Issues of access and integration	48
Feedback to students	51

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---

Students' Achievements	
Creative and performing arts	52
Sport	53
Group projects	54
Organisational skills	55
Students' motivation	56
Management Issues	
Strategic plans and policy documents	57
Review of enrichment activities	59
Management of the programme	61
Students' organisations	64
Timetabling	65
Quality assurance	67
Cost	73
Funding	74
Staffing	78
Equipment	79
Accommodation	80
Conclusions and Issues	81

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## INTRODUCTION

1 This report is concerned with the enrichment of the curriculum in further education sector colleges. Enrichment is defined as those activities which colleges provide in order to extend students' education beyond their main course of study. Evidence came from the responses of 207 colleges, comprising 45 per cent of all colleges in the sector, to a standard questionnaire. Inspectors subsequently visited 22 of these colleges. The survey and the inspections were carried out between October 1994 and April 1995. Inspectors observed 102 enrichment activities, held meetings with staff and students, and examined documentary evidence. Table 1 shows a profile of the participating colleges by type of institution.

**Table 1. Number of colleges inspected by type of institution**

<i>Type of college</i>	<i>Survey sample</i>	<i>Number inspected</i>
Art and design/performing arts	4	0
Agriculture and horticulture	14	4
General further education	95	5
Tertiary	29	5
Sixth form	65	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>207*</b>	<b>22</b>

*\*26 of these 207 colleges had residential provision*



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## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

### Scope of Enrichment

2 There is a strong consensus across the further education sector that enrichment of the curriculum is a desirable educational aim. Of the 207 colleges sampled, 97 per cent offer some sort of curriculum enrichment. Only six colleges stated that they did not do so as a matter of policy. Of these, four gave insufficient funding as the reason, one aimed to offer an adult alternative to the school or sixth form college experience and one expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of enrichment.

3 Colleges provide a wide range of enrichment activities. These include sport, music, drama, cultural and practical activities, work experience and work shadowing, residential visits and study tours, foreign exchanges, health education, personal and social education, religious education, languages, information technology, group projects, outdoor pursuits, clubs and societies, and leisure interests.

4 Some colleges provide a compulsory enrichment programme, which can include as many as 120 options, and students are expected to follow the programme alongside their main course of study. This is a common pattern in sixth form colleges. In the survey, 72 per cent of sixth form colleges stated that all full-time students are required to take part in the programme, at least during their first year. Similar practice occurs in 10 per cent of the general further education colleges and 20 per cent of the tertiary colleges. The class contact time on compulsory programmes varies from one hour to five hours a week, but is most commonly between two and three hours.

5 Those colleges which do not have a compulsory programme offer a range of voluntary activities, most commonly comprising sporting and social events. Such activities are open to all students although it is mainly the full-time 16 to 19 year-old students who participate. Part-time students are little involved. The proportion of students participating in optional enrichment programmes ranged from 10 per cent to 70 per cent but, in most cases, was in the order of 25 to 30 per cent. Many of the colleges which have a compulsory enrichment programme also provide students with opportunities for additional voluntary activities.

6 In some cases, curriculum enrichment is integrated with the student's main programme of study, although participation in the additional activity is not a necessary condition of gaining the relevant qualification. For example, students may be offered the opportunity to take part in a study visit or residential activity which is related to the main programme, or to follow an additional course in information technology or a modern foreign language.

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## Reasons for Offering Enrichment

7 The governing body is responsible for determining the educational character of further education colleges. This is most commonly encapsulated in a mission statement. For some colleges, enrichment lies at the heart of the purpose of the college: 14 per cent of the colleges in the survey said it was a key part of the college ethos and tradition. In others, enrichment is included in wider statements about the aims of the curriculum. Some colleges emphasise the importance of enrichment in students' personal development, whereas others take a more instrumental view of its place in helping students to progress to further education or employment. Examples of the different emphases are given in the following excerpts from mission statements.

*The spiritual and moral development of students, no less than their learning needs, is central to the purpose of the college.*

(A Catholic sixth form college)

*To develop the collegiate life of a residential institution to provide the maximum learning benefit to the students.*

(An adult residential college)

*The college mission will be to continue to offer every student information technology training and work experience towards entry into the world of work or further or higher education.*

(A tertiary college)

## Progression

8 In providing enrichment activities, colleges are responding to the aim expressed in the national targets for education and training<sup>1</sup>, to ensure that 'all education and training develops self-reliance, flexibility and breadth'. Broadening students' educational experience was given as the main reason for offering enrichment in 26 per cent of the responses to the questionnaire. This was often associated with the need to overcome the narrow specialism of some programmes and to encourage students' personal and social development.

9 Employers' organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry have identified the national need amongst the workforce for such skills as initiative, teamwork, problem-solving and competence in the use of information technology. In creating opportunities for enrichment, colleges argue that they are increasing students' opportunities to gain such skills and are thus responding to the demand for people who are flexible, responsive and resourceful.

10 When awarding places, higher education institutions attach importance to the additional activities that students undertake,

<sup>1</sup>*Review of the National Targets for Education and Training*, National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets

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particularly students who are using advanced General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) as a qualification for entry. In some cases, agreements have been secured between colleges and local higher education providers to give favourable consideration to applicants who have demonstrated successful achievement in enrichment activities. The Leicester Progression Accord is an example of such an agreement.

*The Leicester Progression Accord was piloted in 1994-95 by the three universities and a number of schools and colleges in the county. It seeks to widen access to opportunities in higher education for learners achieving identified goals both within and outside formal post-16 qualifications. It allows students to gain credits through curriculum enrichment activities which will grant them exemption from two or more GNVQ additional units, or a reduction in the standard General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) requirement, when applying for places at the three universities.*

11 Enrichment activities play an important part in college marketing, particularly where there is strong competition for school leavers. They are a factor which influences students and their parents in their choice of institution. In the survey, 10 per cent of colleges believe that without a wide enrichment programme they would lose students to competing local schools with sixth forms. The opposite view is also expressed by some colleges who believe that many prospective students reject the notion of compulsory enrichment activities.

#### **Internal Relationships**

12 Colleges value the sense of community and cohesion which enrichment fosters. Sport, music and drama in particular help to promote a sense of the college's identity. The following response to the questionnaire illustrates the social effect of a college theatrical production.

*The dance and drama production was seen as particularly valuable because it brought together large numbers of students from all curriculum areas and from diverse family and ethnic backgrounds. They were able to work productively together for several months. The contribution to a strong social cohesiveness was remarked upon by staff and students alike. (A general further education college)*

Many colleges attached importance to leisure and recreational activities because such activities increase students' enjoyment of college life and result in higher levels of motivation, achievement and retention. The following two examples illustrate the increasing attention which colleges are paying to levels of retention, and the kind of activity which has been successful in increasing students' motivation.

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*One college which is seeking to improve its retention rate has identified its failure to develop an appropriate and enjoyable ambience as a significant factor. It has appointed a students' activities co-ordinator, much of whose work will be directed towards improving the working environment. (A general further education college)*

*A group of motor vehicle National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) day and block release trainees attended a week's outward bound course in Devon. The course had a beneficial impact on group dynamics and students' motivation on their return to college. (A general further education college)*

### **Links with the Community**

13 Enrichment activities provide valuable links with the local community. Students take part in a wide range of community projects as part of their enrichment programme. College musical and drama productions which are open to the public, and participation in local sporting events not only enhance the life of the community, but also help to promote the college. Agricultural colleges frequently occupy a unique place in the rural community that they serve. They are the focus for many aspects of rural life such as meetings of special interest groups associated with the countryside and farming, and annual shows and events. In some instances, past students continue to be active members of college clubs and societies, and this also helps to strengthen links with the local community.

### **Religious Dimension**

14 All sixth form colleges are required by sections 44 and 45 of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* to provide students with opportunities for a weekly act of worship and for religious education. Amongst the 110 sixth form colleges in the sector there are 31 which, because of their former voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled status, seek to maintain a distinctive Christian ethos. These colleges emphasise the prime importance of developing the whole person and provide a spiritual dimension to their curriculum. The 17 Roman Catholic colleges, for example, are committed to the fundamental aim of providing a distinctive Roman Catholic education in accordance with their trust deeds. Typically, a religious education course, timetabled for one or two hours a week, aims to develop a critical understanding of religious traditions, to encourage sensitivity to and respect for the beliefs and practices of other faiths, and to explore the relation of Christian values to contemporary and moral issues. Many other colleges without a church foundation also include opportunities to discuss religious and moral issues. In all types of college, there were examples of opportunities for religious expression, such as a Christian Union, a Sikh society and a Muslim prayer room. Such activities are valuable when they promote mutual understanding and avoid creating or reinforcing prejudice.

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## Chaplaincy

15 Currently, there are 240 chaplains working in further education colleges. They represent all the major Christian denominations and also support the religious needs of students of other faiths. Local representatives of non-Christian faiths may also contribute to spiritual life in a college. Chaplains are often attached to student services teams and provide counselling for students. They also make a distinctive contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum. Male and female chaplains have been involved in conducting seminars on bereavement, teaching introductory courses in counselling skills, running discussion groups on current moral issues, encouraging community involvement and arranging discussions with outside speakers.

## Meeting the Needs of Particular Student Groups

16 Generally, colleges have not considered how enrichment provision relates to the needs of adult students. Only two colleges in the survey referred to the specific needs of adults. One college wrote: 'We would also mention that adult students, in particular, need enrichment activities in the form of personal and careers development, especially when they are labour market returners'. The other referred to the 'powerful and morale-boosting effects' of enrichment activities for disadvantaged groups such as the long-term unemployed. One of the colleges has successfully established a separate enrichment programme for adults which includes guest lectures, opportunities for community and voluntary work and the provision of an adult club room.

17 In some colleges, enrichment activities are explicitly aimed at raising the aspirations of those from disadvantaged groups and groups not previously represented in further education. The following example illustrates how one college has used its enrichment programme to broaden the range of opportunities for such students.

*In an inner-city college, all 1,100 full-time students are expected to participate in the enrichment programme in their first year. Many come from low income backgrounds and minority ethnic groups. There is a rich and diverse range of options including sports, community service, amateur radio, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, foreign languages, work experience, tutoring in schools, health awareness, and exchange visits to Germany. The college's curriculum objectives include adding to students' whole experience and broadening the often narrow range of experience students bring with them. (A general further education college)*

18 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also participate in enrichment programmes. Where activities are carefully designed to meet appropriate objectives, they are successful in broadening such students' experience and building self-esteem. Activities include residential visits, both abroad and in this country, as the following example indicates.

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*A course for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities included a five-night residential field trip to Dartmoor. The visit involved communal living and self-catering in a barn. Students took part in challenging outdoor pursuits and gained a great sense of achievement. They were well supported by the staff. They recorded their experiences using record books, photographs and video. (A general further education college)*

### **Entitlement and Choice**

19 Some colleges use a concept of 'entitlement' in providing the rationale for their enrichment. They draw up a list of the skills and areas of knowledge to which they believe all students are entitled, identify those which the students are expected to acquire in their main course of study, and ensure that other skills and areas of knowledge are provided through enrichment activities.

*The college's entitlement curriculum aims to 'enable students to develop their abilities to the full and to acquire the qualities and knowledge which enable them to make a positive contribution to their community'. Each course identifies the extent to which it develops the following skills: communication and numeracy skills, information technology, problem-solving, personal skills, social, political and economic awareness, modern foreign languages, aesthetic and creative skills. Students set targets with the help of their tutors in order to ensure that any gaps are filled through participation in other activities and courses. (A tertiary college)*

Successful examples of the approach are comparatively rare. They occur when students and staff are equally committed to the purpose of the programme, and where the programme is well defined and consistent with the ethos of the college. Other colleges have moved away from the model because, in the words of one, 'it was considered, however laudable in intent, to be given low esteem by students'. Students did not regard the enrichment activities as relevant and participation levels were low.

20 Where students are offered a free choice of activities, which is the more common practice, they tend to choose those which are closely related to their main course of study. Attendance and motivation are generally higher when the activities complement, rather than contrast with, the main course of study. One college which had removed the previously compulsory requirement for attendance on its enrichment programme reported an increase in both the attendance and commitment of students.

21 Enrichment activities are often described as adding value to the students' college experience. Where students are provided with activities which they enjoy, their enthusiasm can be harnessed to develop skills and attitudes which are relevant to their main courses of study. They

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learn to communicate effectively, to work together as members of a group, to develop creative, aesthetic and practical talents and to become more self-confident. Enrichment activities also enable them to explore unfamiliar territory and to develop new skills.

### **Accreditation**

22 Traditionally, extra-curricular activities were not assessed or accredited. Now students' additional achievements are increasingly being recognised through the awarding of certificates accredited by external bodies and the distinction between extra-curricular and curricular activities is becoming increasingly blurred. A total of 17 per cent of the colleges in the survey were at various stages of obtaining Open College Network accreditation for their courses. Twenty-five other routes for accreditation were mentioned including the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and GCE A level and advanced supplementary (AS) qualifications in general studies, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) certificates, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, St John Ambulance Brigade and Red Cross first-aid certificates, Foreign Languages at Work certificates, RSA Examinations Board (RSA) Computer Literacy and Information Technology certificates, the Young Enterprise Scheme awards, community sports leadership awards, sports coaching awards and the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network. Some colleges were seeking accreditation for enrichment activities in the mistaken belief that this would ensure their funding by the Further Education Funding Council.

23 Gaining accreditation for enrichment activities generally increases students' motivation. Accreditation also helps to develop more rigorous standards of work. The process of course validation involves colleges in serious consideration of the objectives of their programme, the needs of the students, the criteria for success, the resourcing implications and the quality assurance processes that will be used. It brings greater clarity to teachers', tutors' and students' understanding of the purpose of activities. The following provides an example of the specific skills being developed and accredited within enrichment programmes.

*Students working towards the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network award were undertaking a series of challenges, or mini-projects, designed to develop and accredit a range of skills. These comprised personal skills, communication, problem-solving, application of number, information technology and a modern foreign language. Achievements were recorded in the award scheme booklet and contributed to students' records of achievement.*  
(A sixth form college)

24 Some colleges are cautious about seeking accreditation for enrichment activities because they fear it may distort these activities, put undue pressures on students, detract from students' enjoyment or prove

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too costly in terms of the fees and the time spent on administration. Other colleges object in principle to the accreditation of enrichment activities because they believe it undermines the intrinsic value of pursuing such activities for their own sake.

25 The great majority of colleges (83 per cent of those in the survey) encourage students to identify and gain credit for their achievements through the national record of achievement or the college's internal record of achievement. However, despite their expressed intentions, few of the colleges using records of achievement have a comprehensive system which covers all aspects of the student's programme.

### **Enrichment and the Tutorial Programme**

26 There is considerable overlap between the skills and knowledge promoted through tutorial activities and through enrichment programmes. Topics such as health education, personal and social development, study skills and careers education feature frequently in tutorial programmes and may also form part of the enrichment programme. In the best practice, enrichment and tutorial activities are co-ordinated to form a coherent programme. In one college, for example, the enrichment programme is defined as having three elements: the first is predominantly recreational, the second consists of activities which supplement and enhance an agreed course of study and the third element comprises tutorial support.

### **Health Education**

27 Health education is delivered in a variety of ways. In some colleges, particularly those with a high proportion of 16 to 19 year-old full-time students, it forms part of the structured tutorial programme, involving a large number of teachers in their capacity as personal tutors. There are a number of difficulties in this approach which makes success hard to achieve. Many teachers do not feel sufficiently knowledgeable or confident in handling sensitive issues, particularly those relating to sexuality or the misuse of drugs. The content of such sessions frequently does not take into account students' prior knowledge and experience or reflect the maturity of the students. Colleges overcome these difficulties by using appropriate materials, training staff and deploying specialist staff. Others have rejected the classroom approach in favour of regular displays, visits by health professionals and special events such as AIDS awareness days. Such events rarely succeed in attracting all the students for whom they are intended, mainly because of poor internal publicity and inadequate staff communications rather than any fault with the events themselves. However, there are many examples of colleges suspending the timetable for a day and mounting a programme of challenging activities designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions relating to their health.

28 Some colleges have recognised that peer pressure is a major factor affecting young people's attitudes to sex- and drug-related issues, and



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that even the most enlightened adults may not provide the most effective teaching. Students themselves, with appropriate training, can become the educators of their peers. A well-established sex education project, based on this approach, is described in the following example. Pioneered at one college, it is now being adopted by others and extended to drugs education.

*A team of 20 full-time 16 to 19 year-old students provides workshops and education sessions on HIV and sexual health for other students at the college, and for young people in local schools and community groups. The team is carefully chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the local area. The project is unusual in the degree to which students take responsibility for its day-to-day running and strategic planning, and for the training of new team members. Only one member of staff is needed to co-ordinate the process. No adults are allowed in the workshops, which consist of two or three facilitators to no more than 12 participants. This allows a safe, relaxed atmosphere to be established in which sensitive issues can be explored. Each workshop is carefully evaluated and participants report a high level of satisfaction. The project encourages community links, including informal work with participants' families and friends. The team members undergo an annual six-day training programme which includes work on communication skills, attitudes and prejudice, sex and sexuality, assertion and negotiation skills. Participation in the project has a major impact on the personal and social development of the team members themselves, many of whom have continued similar work after leaving college. One student wrote: 'Being a member of the team changed my life more positively than any other single event before and since'. (A sixth form college)*

### **Careers Guidance**

29 For some students, especially those following vocational programmes, work experience is an integral element of their main course. However, many enrichment programmes include opportunities for other students to gain experience of work which will help them in their choice of careers. For example, some programmes offer work-shadowing schemes for GCE A level students. By shadowing managers and professionals in a wide range of careers for short periods of up to a week, these students gain valuable insights into the world of work which help them to clarify their own ideas. If such schemes are to be fully effective, they require efficient organisation by the college, including sufficient time for students to prepare for and follow up the work, as in this example of good practice.

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*In 1994, 331 out of the 430 second-year GCE A level students took part in the work-shadowing scheme for periods of up to a week. A placement co-ordinator was seconded from industry to organise the scheme. The students were well prepared by the college and care was taken to ensure that the placements were suitable. All students were visited or telephoned by tutors while on placement. After the placement, students wrote a report, and those who had been shadowed were invited into college for a follow-up event. Among the placements were the Hallé orchestra, the House of Lords and the Crown Prosecution Service. Sponsorship was obtained for some students to carry out work shadowing in Germany and Spain. (A sixth form college)*

Students who are considering a teaching career benefit from programmes arranged to give them experience of working in schools, commonly for one afternoon a week for a year. The majority of such students work in primary schools, but a few are placed in secondary and special schools. In the most effective schemes, students are subsequently given opportunities to share with a tutor their reflections on the experience.

### **Residential Experience**

30 Twenty-six of the 207 colleges in the survey had some residential provision (table 1). In the sector as a whole, the number of colleges with residential provision includes 30 of the 32 agriculture and horticulture colleges and six adult residential colleges. Adults who have been disadvantaged educationally benefit from the facilities provided by residential colleges in preparing them for entry to higher education, vocational training or employment. Students consider the experience of living in a community to be an important factor in their personal development and claim it as one of the major benefits of their time at college. In colleges with significant residential provision, enrichment focuses on providing recreational and social activities. There are many clubs and societies, and an extensive sporting programme. Residential wardens often play a significant role in co-ordinating enrichment activities, which they see as part of the guidance and support they provide for students. The importance of the enrichment programme in a residential college is evident from the following example.

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*Of the 850 full-time students in an agricultural college, 300 are resident on the campus, 200 live in rented accommodation locally, and only 350 live at home. The college is in a small village which is some distance from any major towns. There is a significant amount of home-grown entertainment and social activity, as well as a thriving sports programme. The students' association, of which all students are members on payment of a £5 fee, organises entertainment in the student social and recreational centre twice a week. Extra social events are mounted early in the year to help students settle in; for example, all new students take part in ice-skating free of charge. Twenty-nine social events were organised during the autumn term. Co-ordination is undertaken by the senior residential warden who also co-ordinates the work of the residential and counselling staff. (An agriculture and horticulture college)*

## **STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF ENRICHMENT**

### **Initial Guidance**

31 Most colleges provide students with helpful information and guidance on their choice of enrichment activity as part of a structured induction programme. In some colleges, the opportunities are discussed with applicants at open evenings, and preliminary choices of enrolment options are made at initial interview. Some hold events, such as freshers' fairs, which enable students to discuss their choices with staff. In the best practice, the college provides initial information on any costs which are involved for transport or materials. The college also advises students about how they can obtain financial assistance from college welfare funds, and about the criteria applied in making such awards. On occasions, students are unable to gain access to their first choice of enrichment activity as certain popular options become over-subscribed.

### **Role of the Tutor**

32 Personal tutors play a key role in encouraging students to enrol on suitable courses. Tutors are more likely to be successful in this if there is a structured process which enables them to help students to identify their learning needs and to set targets for meeting them. They also need to be familiar with the elements of the enrichment programme and well informed about the college curriculum as a whole. Students' experience of the quality of tutorial guidance is varied, even within the same college.

33 Personal tutors also have a central role in motivating students to attend enrichment courses. The more skilful tutors are able to help students see the value of the activity and to identify and review their achievements. They can identify aspects of the college's provision in relation to the student's aspirations and wider experience, such as hobbies, club membership and work experience. The attitudes of tutors

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to enrichment, their skill in encouraging and assisting students to participate, and their understanding of the individual students vary widely. Many students do not receive the appropriate encouragement or have their achievements on enrichment programmes properly recognised when they review their overall progress with their tutors.

### **Attendance**

34 Attendance at timetabled enrichment sessions is an issue for many colleges which attempt to apply an element of compulsion in the interests of securing a broad education for their students. Levels of attendance are often lower than for main course classes, particularly when the choice of activities is limited. One sixth form college with a large and well-regarded enrichment programme set an attendance requirement of 70 per cent or above as a condition of certification in an enrichment unit. Most students satisfied this requirement although the average level of attendance was below the requirement of 80 per cent set for examined courses. In another sixth form college, average attendance for GCE A level sessions was over 85 per cent compared with 60 per cent for enrichment sessions. Poor attendance has led to the suspension of some components of enrichment programmes which, in turn, has reduced the choice available to students. In most colleges where attendance at enrichment sessions is obligatory, personal tutors follow up absences. However, this sometime leads to tensions between tutors and students who refuse to attach the same value to enrichment activities as to their main course studies.

### **Observation of Enrichment Sessions**

35 Inspectors observed a variety of enrichment activities during their visits. Of the 102 sessions observed, 64 per cent had strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. Table 2 summarises the inspection grades awarded.

**Table 2. Inspection grades awarded for enrichment activities**

	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Enrichment activities		36	29	35	2	0	102

36 It is difficult to identify why enrichment activities in one college hold the interest of students, whereas in another college with an apparently similar student population the same activities attract little support. Much depends on the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers involved. The positive encouragement of tutors and a wide range of choice appear to be two of the most important factors, particularly for the 16 to 19 age range. One sixth form college had 64 enthusiastic participants in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme whilst in another sixth form college, numbers had dropped to 12 and were falling. In the first case, activities were well planned, varied and interesting, staff had high expectations of

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students and there was a strong personal commitment from the principal; in the second case, these features were missing or much less evident. Successful activities at other colleges build on the interests and concerns of the student group. A health promotion activity, aimed at stress reduction, was more successful than other health-related activities because students found it relevant. A Volkswagen Beetle club which included, but was not limited to, motor vehicle students involved weekend visits to motor racing circuits. The participants showed a high degree of commitment and teamwork and were successfully developing a range of skills.

37 Weaker enrichment sessions often lacked purpose. Teachers failed to define, and students to understand, precisely what the expected learning outcomes of the activity were to be. For example, in many colleges it is unclear to what extent the activities are designed to develop skills and understanding and to what extent they are intended to have a social and recreational purpose. As a consequence, valuable opportunities for the development of skills are sometimes lost. This applies particularly, though not exclusively, to sports activities. Some sports sessions, although supervised by teaching staff, and forming part of a compulsory enrichment programme, did not place sufficient emphasis on skills training. In many cases, expert coaching was on hand but was not used. Students, therefore, received little help in improving their performance. In one college, three-quarters of the students involved in recreational sports reported that they would value having at least the option of expert tuition.

#### **Student Autonomy**

38 Many teachers are adept at encouraging students to participate in enrichment activities whilst allowing them ample scope for autonomy. They are confident enough to allow students a significant say in their own learning but are also prepared to negotiate with them about their enrichment programmes. Some students spoke with regret about their lack of opportunity to influence their programme of study. Others supported enrichment activities as a way of taking personal control of their own learning. Well-organised enrichment courses often allow students opportunities for project work involving personal research. In many cases, students negotiate project titles with their tutors; as a consequence, they develop a sense of ownership for the work and the tutor has reasonable confidence in the ability of the college to support it through to a successful conclusion. Inspectors saw some excellent small group project work which had resulted from such negotiations. For example, 12 students were working in three groups to design a toy for a blind child, modernise a beer cellar and produce a marketing video; they worked enthusiastically, using various media, in ways which involved problem-solving skills, decision-making and research.

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### **Innovative Teaching Approaches**

39 Teachers' freedom to adopt more experimental methods of teaching and learning, away from the constraints of an examination syllabus, is frequently cited as an advantage of enrichment activities. Some innovative approaches were seen by inspectors. These included tutoring carried out by the students themselves. One such session was planned and conducted by two students following a community sports leadership award course. Their performance was subsequently assessed by the course tutor. In a GCE A level general studies class, students were grouped in threes so that those with expertise in languages, arts and sciences could tutor, and learn from, each other. Drama, role-play and mime were used to good effect. Many sessions included elements of group work, discussion and problem-solving.

### **Residential Visits**

40 Residential visits, both in Britain and abroad, frequently help students with their work on their main programme. These activities also contribute to students' personal development by increasing confidence and improving organisational skills. In some cases, students' involvement extends to organising fundraising activities in order to reduce the costs of the visit. In some cases, residential visits are directly related to the main course.

*Study tours form an integral part of most courses offered by the college. They include visits abroad to gain experience of farming methods in other countries. Approximately 75 per cent of full-time students take part. The college organises 16 study tours, seven of which are to overseas countries. The cost to students varies from £60 to £300. Students of GNVQ leisure and tourism spent two weeks in Italy undertaking work experience. The college offered classes in Italian to prepare them for the visit. (An agricultural college)*

*A group of leisure and tourism students helped to renovate old properties in Tenerife. They developed team skills, practical skills, and a modicum of Spanish. They also acquired a good understanding of the impact of development upon a small community. They were clear about what they had gained both in relation to their studies and on a personal level. (A general further education college)*

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In others, work experience is the focus.

*Students from an inner-city college benefited from a three-week stay in Germany. They had work experience in a training centre and the visit included a weekend stay with a German family. Teachers planned the visit carefully, taking into account the students' relative lack of experience of the country and its language. They gradually built up the students' confidence by extending the demands made on them. (A general further education college)*

In others, the emphasis is on physical challenge.

*The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme currently attracts 64 students, led by a team of five staff. Discussion with students revealed how much they had gained in confidence as well as acquiring new skills and interests. The students had completed their practice expeditions, which were well organised, and they developed skills in campcraft, navigation, first aid and route planning. One student who claimed never to have previously enjoyed walking was now so committed and enthusiastic that she has taken up a whole range of outdoor pursuits. (A sixth form college)*

### **Service to the Community**

41 Service to others is a key objective for enrichment programmes in many colleges. Community service helps students to increase their awareness of the needs of others, to gain a wider perspective of their local community and to relate their own experience to a wider social context. Chaplains make a strong contribution to this programme in some colleges. At one college, students participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme work in a local special school with pupils who have severe physical disabilities. Students in an agricultural college participate in a riding for the disabled scheme. In other colleges, students visit elderly or housebound people, undertake voluntary work in their local hospice, give individual support for autistic children, carry out environmental projects such as creating nature trails, act as classroom assistants in schools, provide coaching in computer skills and sports activities, or run clubs for the elderly on college premises. In most cases, community service programmes are carefully planned and carried out with commitment.

### **Entrepreneurial Activity**

42 Some enrichment activities have a commercial aspect which enables students to develop their entrepreneurial skills. A large number of colleges have adopted the Young Enterprise Scheme, in which groups of students set up and run a company for a limited period of time working

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with a business adviser. Students spoke positively of the scheme, saying it had been challenging and rewarding and had extended their understanding of business.

43 Colleges of agriculture and horticulture frequently have substantial commercial operations linked to their college estates. Students' involvement in these allows them the opportunity to experience the realism, discipline and opportunities of a commercial environment, as the following example illustrates.

*Students are expected to perform duties on the college's estate and on neighbouring farms. Some of these are an integral part of the course but many are not. They include maintaining and cleaning the stables and yards, looking after livestock, milking and tractor work. Students are developing the self-discipline needed for employment in land-based industries. (An agricultural college)*

### **Learning from Industry**

44 Links with industry are commonly cited as objectives for enrichment. They provide opportunities for students to work alongside practitioners from business and industry. Successful work-experience and work-shadowing schemes build upon strong links with local industry. Understanding industry courses seek to introduce young people to a range of commercial and industrial concerns, as in the following example.

*In the complementary studies module, 'Getting to Know Industry', employers introduce students to the nature of industry. A number of students undertake specific work experience in a small number of local companies. A distinctive feature is the European work simulation project sponsored by a locally-based company. College students set up and run a simulated company which trades with other shadow companies in Europe and the United Kingdom. (A sixth form college)*

Other courses which use industrial links are more focused in their approach. As in this example, they frequently involve project work and problem-solving in teams.

*The college takes part in an engineering education scheme, devised by a national engineering body. It is organised within the college by a humanities teacher. Two small groups of students, five male and two female, undertook problem-solving activities with some assistance from practising engineers. One project was concerned with street lighting and the other with the design and construction of a test rig. The students benefited from the opportunity to use university workshop facilities for research and development. (A sixth form college)*



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### **New Experiences and Continuity**

45 Enrichment activities provide opportunities for students to try new experiences. In one London college, painting a mural on a wall in the college gave students who were not studying art the opportunity to learn new skills and meet other students from a broad range of courses. Enrichment activities also give students the opportunity to continue with subjects they have studied at school but which no longer form part of their main course. Continuity of study is particularly important in developing numeracy, communication and information technology skills, and in learning foreign languages. However, staff teaching on enrichment programmes are insufficiently aware of their students' prior levels of achievement. Students spend time repeating things they have done at school. Enrichment activities are seldom differentiated by level to allow students who have achieved at one level to progress to the next.

### **Information Technology**

46 Opportunities for developing competence in information technology are frequently included in enrichment programmes. Colleges usually seek to encourage a minimum level of skill in wordprocessing and in the use of spreadsheets and databases. In many colleges, taught sessions in information technology are over-subscribed and a rota system has to be used. Self-teaching materials, provided on a drop-in basis, are increasingly used to help staff and students to develop their skills. Some excellent practice was observed in the use of these materials; they allowed students to work at different levels and reduced their dependence on the teacher. At one college, the number of students attending a timetabled basic information technology course had declined markedly despite the excellent facilities available. In this case, little account was taken of students' prior knowledge and experience and students spent too long waiting for individual attention from the teacher.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

47 Some colleges used enrichment activities as a forum for raising issues of equality of opportunity. These sessions were particularly successful when they were closely related to the students' own experience although they required sensitivity and careful planning. The following examples indicate creative ways of tackling such issues.

*A session on disability was led by a student in a wheelchair who outlined the personal issues relating to physical disability in the college. The students then discussed, in small groups, their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages for students with disabilities at the college. The students were highly motivated and identified a number of issues which the final plenary session put into wider context. (A sixth form college)*

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*An activity entitled 'Theatre of the Oppressed' allowed a student who was new to Britain to express her feelings at being in a new country by directing her fellow students in a mime. This was not only a moving session, but it also provided an excellent example of students supporting each other and working successfully as a group. (A sixth form college)*

### **Issues of Access and Integration**

48 Many colleges are seeking to make their enrichment activities available to a wider range of students. This is partly to increase efficiency but also to give students wider opportunities for social interaction. Many students recognise the social benefits as a positive outcome of enrichment activities. One college in an urban area reported that the use of the youth club by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had increased as a result of the introduction of a scheme whereby other students, supported by youth workers, acted as leaders. In a physical education session, one student with a physical disability used a specially-adapted rowing machine and was well supported by his peers as a result of the atmosphere which the tutor had created. In other cases, attempts at integration were less successful. Teachers did not always plan sessions in a way which ensured that all students gained from the experience.

49 When adults and younger students engage in enrichment activities together, they are able to draw on each others' different experiences. Managing this effectively represents a considerable challenge for teachers. For example, a leisure course in reading for pleasure was well taught and challenging texts were used as the basis for discussion. However, much of the discussion was dominated by mature students and the full-time 16 to 19 year-old students felt inhibited and unable to contribute.

50 Some enrichment activities, which claim to be open to all, have features which effectively discourage some students from participating. This can occur by accident rather than design. For example, in one college, the level of musicianship in the string orchestra was so high that only talented musicians felt able to join. Perceived lack of ability is also a disincentive in sport. Some students commented that it was necessary to be good at the sport to derive benefit from it. One tertiary college ran a course entitled 'Oxbridge Critical Thinking' for one term for two hours a week. This was intended to be open to all students but in practice was regarded by both students and teachers as special preparation for applicants to Oxford and Cambridge. The use of general enrichment sessions for specialist purposes can effectively exclude those who are seeking a more limited experience. Colleges should think hard about the purpose of their enrichment programme to ensure that the range of activities meets the needs of all their students.

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### Feedback to Students

51 Generally, students receive far less feedback on their progress and achievement in enrichment activities than they do for other elements of their college work. Formal reporting on their progress is also rare and, where it does occur, the reports usually contain a record of activities undertaken rather than progress made.

## STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

### Creative and Performing Arts

52 Students achieve high standards on enrichment activities in music and drama. Drama and music courses within enrichment programmes usually involve far more students than those studying these subjects as part of their main programme. The experience of performing in college productions helps to develop students' confidence, fosters individual creativity and encourages teamwork. Frequently, colleges are able to build on the good foundations which have been laid in the 11 to 16 phase. The variety and scale of activity are wide ranging and students' skills are developed further through participation in national and regional competitions and festivals. Other artistic pursuits such as art and design, textiles and ceramics are often available to students as a contrasting activity to their main programme. The quality of the paintings, pottery, sculpture, photographs and prints which students produce is generally of a high order. The following examples illustrate the scale of musical and dramatic activities in some colleges.

*Over 100 students took part in the college Christmas production. Only a minority were studying drama as part of their main course. Participants spoke of their enjoyment. The production brought together students with talents in music, acting, staging, lighting, costume design and scenery-making. (A sixth form college)*

*The college has an orchestra and choir each comprising 90 members. One hundred and forty students take part, a figure which represents 11 per cent of the full-time students. In addition, there is a women's choir and a madrigal group each of 35 students. One hundred and fifteen students receive instrumental tuition, provided by the local authority's peripatetic service and paid for by the college. The standard of music is of a very high order, and students regularly give public performances, including radio broadcasts. (A sixth form college)*

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## Sport

53 Competitive sport in colleges enhances the sporting life of the locality. College teams participate in local leagues and knock-out competitions. Students often progress from college teams into county and national league teams. Where team or group activities have a clearly-defined purpose, they help to develop the skills of leadership and teamwork. The community sports leadership award is one such example. The following illustration is of a well-organised and well-resourced sports programme which enables students to develop techniques as well as achieve success in college teams.

*The sport and leisure programme is wide ranging, including over 20 different activities. Facilities to support the programme are good and include a modern sports hall, extensive on-site playing fields, a valuable link with the army youth team and off-site facilities for sailing, rowing, swimming and horse riding. Students respond in a disciplined and positive manner to enthusiastic and well-qualified coaches, who combine attention to the development of technique with a desire to ensure that students enjoy the activities. The college is represented in a wide range of competitive team sports. College teams have been national champions in orienteering and national finalists at hockey on a number of occasions. (A sixth form college)*

## Group Projects

54 The skills of working with others are developed not only through group activities in sport, drama and music but also through projects in which a group works together to perform a particular task. The University of Liverpool Curriculum Enrichment Programme, which encourages links with local industry and commerce, is used by some colleges to provide a framework for group projects. In one college, GCE A level biology students were working with GNVQ health and social care students on a health-related topic as part of this scheme. Other group projects are designed to enhance the mandatory elements of a vocational programme, as in the following example.

*Students following a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma course in agriculture produced a business plan for a local farmer. A bank manager briefed the group beforehand and evaluated both group and individual performance. The students presented the plan to the farmer. As a team, they developed their skills in time management, problem-solving, group decision-making and communication. (An agricultural college)*

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### **Organisational Skills**

55 Some students gain experience in planning, organisation, leadership and interpersonal skills through their roles as officers of the students union or of college associations. In one general further education college, for example, the students union organises a freshers' fair and issues a regular news bulletin to publicise events and activities in the college. Clubs, societies and charity fundraising events, often supported and co-ordinated by student associations, provide further opportunities for students to exercise their initiative. In agricultural colleges, students play a major part in planning and running events which are open to the public. The following is an example of a college-wide event organised largely by the students themselves.

*To celebrate St Patrick's Day, students from a variety of courses hosted an event, open to the public, entitled 'A Celebration of Ireland'. The students played a major part in the organisation of the event, which was well attended. It included contributions from students studying music, literature, leisure studies and hairdressing.*  
(A tertiary college)

### **Students' Motivation**

56 The motivation and achievements of some of the students who participate in enrichment activities are high. However, many students fail to attend sessions or participate reluctantly and consequently fail to benefit from the wide range of opportunities open to them. They regard the activities as peripheral to their main objective in attending college and can see little purpose in them. Even some students who express their enjoyment of sessions, such as recreational sport, attend sporadically and show varying levels of commitment. This situation represents a considerable challenge to colleges.

## **MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

### **Strategic Plans and Policy Documents**

57 Colleges endeavour to fulfil their mission through the implementation of strategic plans which include objectives covering a three-year or five-year period. The survey examined the extent to which colleges' strategic plans or curriculum policy documents included reference to enrichment. Despite their consensus on the importance of enrichment, only 31 per cent of colleges included a reference to enrichment in their strategic documents: 46 per cent of sixth form colleges; 36 per cent of tertiary colleges; 21 per cent of general further education colleges; and 12 per cent of the specialist colleges such as agricultural or art and design colleges.

58 These percentages suggest that many colleges have not defined clearly the aims and objectives of the enrichment they offer, or the

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relationship of the enrichment programme to the curriculum as a whole. Indeed, few colleges had statements which related to any corporate view of the curriculum and the values which underpin it. In general, the sixth form colleges, especially those with a clearly defined ethos such as the Roman Catholic colleges, have made greater progress in articulating a curriculum policy. Few specialist colleges provide any clear rationale for the curriculum they offer. The lack of a formal whole-college statement on enrichment and its place in the curriculum allows staff to adopt different assumptions and this leads to divergent practices which have an adverse effect on students' experience. A clear policy is particularly important for colleges experiencing rapid growth, diversification, or resource constraints.

### **Review of Enrichment Activities**

59 In the survey, 52 per cent of the colleges had recently undertaken a review of their enrichment activities as an exercise apart from the routine annual reviews for quality assurance purposes. The reasons given for these reviews are summarised in table 3. Some colleges expressed more than one reason, so the numbers in the table total more than 100 per cent.

**Table 3. Reasons given by colleges for reviewing enrichment activities**

<b>Factor cited as a stimulus for review</b>	<b>Percentage of colleges identifying this factor</b>
Other curriculum developments	31
Funding and efficiency	31
Accreditation	23
Motivation of students	21
Management issues	10
Change in student body	6
Quality assurance	5

60 In many cases, the review was part of a wider examination of the curriculum prompted by: the need for greater efficiency in the use of staff; a change in the profile of students attending the college; the introduction of GNVQs as a major new qualification route; or a policy decision to increase the flexibility of the curriculum offered. In 31 per cent of the colleges surveyed, the reasons for carrying out a review stemmed from changes in the curriculum which included the increased use of workshops, greater attention to helping students gain study skills, growth in the use of records of achievement, improved opportunities for progression to employment and higher education, and enhanced educational and careers guidance. Most of the 21 per cent of colleges

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who expressed concern about student motivation were worried about low participation rates. However, about 6 per cent of colleges were carrying out a review to identify future areas of expansion because of the success of the enrichment activities provided. The two following contrasting examples illustrate the varying experiences of colleges and the action resulting from monitoring and review.

*Until 1993, the college had a coherent complementary studies programme for all full-time students with a variety of activities available on one day in the week. Increasingly high drop-out rates on all programmes led to staff disillusionment and concern over wasted resources. There were several changes in the programme between 1991 and 1993 in response to this difficulty. Enormous efforts were made by staff. However, after a major review, the programme was dropped during the college year 1993-94 and replaced by more flexible study arrangements and a menu of activities more closely related to students' interests. The introduction of GNVQs has also afforded opportunities for a different approach to the provision of core skills.*

(A general further education college)

*The college has extended its enrichment and enhancement programmes over recent years. The new courses are proving popular with students. Considerable interest was shown at recent open evenings and careers conventions where prospective students asked for information on the range of options. The current programme was monitored to check whether it should be expanded further. With a few minor alterations and improvements, it appears to be meeting the needs and expectations of students.* (A sixth form college)

### **Management of the Programme**

61 Of the colleges in the survey, 48 per cent indicated that a single member of staff was charged with college-wide responsibility for enrichment activities and 82 per cent of sixth form colleges had a designated co-ordinator compared with 27 per cent of general further education colleges and 67 per cent of tertiary colleges. These figures broadly reflect the extent of provision in the different types of institution.

62 Where management responsibilities are divided between a number of different specialists, it is more difficult to achieve consistent practice in the co-ordination and effective marketing of enrichment activities. For example, in many general further education colleges, a student services team has responsibility for organising the enrichment programme together with responsibilities for other activities such as counselling and guidance. Wardens who look after residential students also have a role in supervising the extra-curricular activities of students. Where there is a

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single co-ordinator it is sometimes a senior member of staff such as a vice-principal or assistant principal; a model which is most frequent in small sixth form colleges. Some colleges are experimenting by deploying staff who are not teachers to co-ordinate and manage enrichment activities. A trained youth worker, for example, may fill this role. Whatever the management structure, however, the more successful programmes are invariably those which have the full support of senior staff, especially the principal.

63 Of the colleges who were reviewing their enrichment provision, 10 per cent cited management issues as the reason for the review. In some cases, this was the result of a new appointment, made following the expansion of provision. In others, it was the consequence of a recognised need to improve co-ordination and to disseminate information more effectively to students. In some colleges, students are unaware of the full range of enrichment activities. Well-managed programmes usually have publicity materials of a high standard and arrangements for disseminating information through a college-wide system, such as tutorials.

### **Students' Organisations**

64 Student associations frequently contribute to the provision and organisation of enrichment activities. For example, officers of the students union organise sports teams, clubs and other college events. Facilities made available to officers range from a walk-in cupboard to a well-equipped permanent office. However, in some colleges, the students union has a sizeable budget to deploy on additional activities. The critical factors in determining the quality of student-led activities are the degree of support accorded by senior managers and the assistance given to union officers by designated link staff. Effective training programmes for students union officers include workshops on running meetings, setting budgets, and assertiveness training.

### **Timetabling**

65 Whether students have ready access to enrichment activities depends crucially on how these activities are timetabled. Many colleges concentrate the enrichment programme on Wednesday afternoons. This has the advantage of enabling inter-college competitions to take place and giving students access to a range of alternative courses. However, the provision of such a single block of time limits the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources can be deployed. For example, specialist sports facilities are in excessive demand whilst other facilities are under used. The sole use of Wednesday afternoons for enrichment activities causes problems for part-time students who attend college at other times in the week. It also increases absenteeism among full-time students. To overcome these difficulties, some colleges disperse the provision through a number of timetabled blocks. However, only large colleges with extensive provision are able to provide sufficient timetable



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opportunities for students to have unconstrained choice. Activities may occur at lunchtimes or in a twilight period, usually around 16.00. Those colleges which have residential provision usually find that enrichment activities are dominated by residential students and the timing of some of these activities may preclude non-residents from attending.

66 On occasions, colleges suspend all other activities for a limited period in order to focus on a particular topic. Health days or European events are some examples of the topics colleges have addressed in this way. The management effort that goes into the efficient organisation of such events is considerable and is sometimes poorly repaid by students' lack of appreciation, often because they do not wish to be distracted from their examined courses. Nevertheless, many successful events are organised on this basis. Positive evaluation from students has included comments about their increased understanding of current issues resulting from the intensive study-day approach.

### **Quality Assurance**

67 Quality assurance for enrichment programmes is generally underdeveloped. Where colleges are still developing their overall approach to quality assurance, enrichment activities have frequently been omitted. In a few cases, there are explicit criteria for judgements on the quality of provision. Where colleges have a well-developed quality assurance system, it generally includes enrichment activities. In a few colleges, simple but relevant performance indicators are being introduced. For example, one college has set performance standards for levels of participation and student satisfaction and there is a termly review involving those who teach in the programme.

68 Only 5 per cent of colleges in the sample indicated that they had undertaken a review of provision because of quality assurance considerations. Colleges who are seeking to include their enrichment activities in a systematic approach to quality assurance are increasingly turning to external accreditation of such activities. However, external accreditation is not of itself an adequate means of quality assurance. One agricultural college which had enhanced its principal programmes with a number of short vocational courses such as sheep-shearing, fork-lift truck driving and hedge-laying regarded the achievement of certification as sufficient assurance of quality: it had no systematic methods for analysing strengths and weaknesses or for promoting quality improvement.

69 The degree to which students are involved in the evaluation of enrichment programmes varies considerably. Many colleges include questions about such activities in questionnaires designed to gather information about students' perceptions of the college. One sixth form college carried out a survey to gauge students' satisfaction with its enrichment programme. Another inner-city college carried out regular

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surveys of students' opinions of college clubs. However, questionnaires are rarely sufficiently well designed to provide the precise information required to improve quality. In many colleges, the lack of systematic evaluation limits the opportunity that students have to influence enrichment programmes.

70 Attendance at enrichment activities is tightly monitored in some colleges but this information is rarely analysed effectively. Even where attendance levels are low, colleges often fail to ask why. For example, one college puts considerable effort into publicising and encouraging students to use the high-quality recreational and leisure facilities on the campus, but it has not carried out any systematic investigation to find out why the majority of students do not participate in timetabled sessions or use the amenities in their own time.

71 A few colleges have used external agencies to assist in quality assurance. One sixth form college reported that the Liverpool University audit unit had carried out an evaluation of their enrichment programme, part of which involved structured interviews with students. The monitoring criteria were explicit and clearly aimed at the effectiveness of the provision. As a result of the evaluation, the college made a number of improvements, including establishing a programme of staff training. Another college used the information provided by the head teachers of local schools to improve its highly-regarded tutoring programme.

72 Colleges include statements on enrichment opportunities in their charters. It is too soon, as yet, to comment on the impact of such commitments.

### **Cost**

73 Although financial concerns were the motivation for the reviews being conducted by 31 per cent of those colleges undertaking a review, few colleges have carried out detailed work on the costs of their enrichment programmes. Value for money is a new concept for most colleges, and their ability to analyse the costs and benefits of provision is underdeveloped. This means that much of the argument about funding enrichment provision rests only on assertion. One college's financial review has resulted in more efficient use of resources as well as wider public access to the activities.

*A review was undertaken to ensure that the Wednesday afternoon activities programme would continue but at a more manageable cost. As a result, group sizes have increased and the programme is open to part-time students. This 'open programme' helps to make better use of the available accommodation on Wednesday afternoons.  
(A sixth form college)*

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## **Funding**

74 Some of the colleges' concerns about the funding of enrichment activities relate to the loss of the special funds associated with the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative. This project provided the basis for much of the colleges' work on enrichment and it is now coming to an end in most parts of the country.

75 Colleges with residential provision are also concerned about the loss of local authority discretionary awards. The costs of providing and managing the residential experience, with its associated staffing costs, are such that even when students receive a discretionary award, they or their parents often have to supplement it in order to meet the residential fees, including the residential enrichment elements.

76 The Council's tariff advisory committee has recognised the concern of many colleges over the funding of full-time GCE A level courses. The committee has established a subgroup to look at the way in which they are funded. There is considerable confusion about the funding of accredited enrichment courses and this needs resolving. Colleges in the survey expressed polarised views about a national funding methodology. Some feel that their distinctive mission and ethos are under threat. Some colleges, which have benefited from generous funding in the past, are facing up to considerable efficiency gains as the Council's policy of funding convergence begins to take effect. Others benefit from the policy, having been poorly funded in the past, and speak of the new possibilities for expanding the range of opportunities available to their students.

77 All colleges face increasing accountability for public funds and are looking for ways of increasing the efficiency of programmes, including enrichment programmes, usually by cutting activities which recruit small groups of students. Some colleges have reduced their enrichment provision by 20 per cent or more. In other cases, colleges are seeking alternative sources of funding such as contributions from the students, project funds from the local training and enterprise council, European funds or industrial sponsorship such as the British Petroleum peer tutoring scheme.

## **Staffing**

78 Those teaching on enrichment programmes are generally enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Colleges frequently employ specialist instructors, for example for physical activities such as aerobics or for supporting music-making. Those colleges where enrichment activities focus on personal development often make good use of staff such as residential wardens, student services workers, chaplains and youth workers, who have a particular empathy with young people. In some cases, however, highly-skilled teachers are occupied only as supervisors. Colleges are finding it increasingly difficult to balance the need for

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specialist teachers to be available to teach both examination courses and appropriate elements of the enrichment programme. In some cases, the consequence has been the withdrawal of some enrichment activities. Despite the need for efficiency gains, much of the timetabled enrichment provision continues to be taught in small groups which in fact are even smaller than the class registers indicate, owing to poor levels of attendance and retention. The average number of students in the sessions observed was 13. Sessions frequently contained fewer than 10 students.

### **Equipment**

79 Students benefit from appropriate and, in some cases, excellent equipment. The following example indicates how equipment, which is used primarily in students' main vocational courses, is also available for enrichment activity.

*Students in a large college have the opportunity to run an in-house radio. This transmits music to student recreation areas in break periods and responds to requests. Students organise the pre-recording of tapes and have access to media studies facilities for transmissions. (A general further education college)*

The extent of resources available for enrichment activities depends largely on the range of the college's provision. For example, a college which does not provide programmes in music is most unlikely to invest in expensive music technology equipment for enrichment activities.

### **Accommodation**

80 Many colleges have excellent sport and leisure facilities, whereas others are forced to use off-site facilities extensively. The lack of sufficiently large performance areas in some colleges reduces the scope for performances of drama, dance and music. Pressure on accommodation arising from increased student numbers is generally having an adverse effect on enrichment provision. In particular, the traditional use of Wednesday afternoons for college-wide sporting activity, during which many classrooms lay empty, is rapidly decreasing. One agricultural college has recently sold some land to fund a new recreation centre which reflects the importance that the corporation attaches to providing facilities for leisure and recreation.

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## CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

81 The strengths of enrichment activities in colleges are:

- the widespread commitment of colleges to the broadening of students' programmes through enrichment activities
- the response to the need, identified by employers and higher education providers, for training to increase students' self-reliance, flexibility and breadth
- the wide range of enrichment activities offered throughout the sector
- innovative teaching and learning methods
- the high standards achieved by many students
- the benefits to students' personal and social development
- the contribution made to the communal life of the college.

82 The issues to be addressed are:

- the failure to define clearly the aims and objectives of enrichment and the values that underpin the curriculum offered
- the failure to establish the cost of enrichment and evaluate its benefits
- underdeveloped quality assurance systems
- the lack of access to enrichment activities for adult and part-time students
- low participation rates and poor levels of attendance
- the limited recording of students' progress and achievements.

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