



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on the Further Education provision at the

**University of Wales Newport
Lodge Road
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Date of inspection: May 2011

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the provider's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with section 77 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Context

The University of Wales Newport provides higher education programmes for a wide range of learners residing in the greater Gwent area, throughout Wales and the UK and also for international learners. As part of its commitment to the local community, the university has provided over many years a further education provision to support members of the community with learning opportunities that can lead to entry on to undergraduate programmes. The university currently offers two programmes: a foundation level Art and Design Programme and an Access to Higher Education programme. The programmes in the Newport School of Education and the Newport School of Art, Media and Design provide progression routes to higher education programmes at the university or further afield.

The City of Newport and the eastern valleys include areas with high levels of social and economic deprivation and poor educational achievement. Improving access to higher education is central to the university's strategic aims, as is playing a leading role in the local, regional and national economy. The university's Welsh Government funded programmes contribute to both of these areas of activity.

The further education provision represents a very small part of the university's operation, with just over 200 learners on the programmes compared to 4,291 full-time learners enrolled at the university (excluding further education enrolments. At the time of the inspection the University had a total of 10,030 live enrolments including further education programmes.

Summary

The provider's current performance	Unsatisfactory
The provider's prospects for improvement	Unsatisfactory

Current performance

The current performance of the further education programmes of the university is unsatisfactory because:

- the overall rates at which learners on further education programmes complete and attain their qualifications are well below the average rates for other providers in Wales;
- the overall rate at which learners complete their programme has declined over the last three years;
- there is no effective initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills;
- there is no effective diagnostic testing of learners' specific needs to inform an individual learning plan;
- learners' assessment and overall standards of learners' work are not tracked well enough as they progress through their programme;
- tutorial support is not effective enough and does not provide learners with the help and guidance needed to prevent them leaving their programmes early;
- teachers do not do enough to encourage and promote learners' knowledge and understanding of Wales and the Welsh language;
- the quality processes are ineffective in bringing about improvements in quality and standards; and
- leaders have not developed a clear vision of what the provider needs to do to improve programme delivery.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement for further education programmes at the university are unsatisfactory because:

- the issues identified in the recommendations from the last inspection have re-emerged;
- too many of the performance trends have decreased over the last year;
- arrangements for improving quality and standards are ineffective; and
- the current leadership is not focussed enough on what needs to be done to bring about change and strive for excellence.

Recommendations

Leaders and managers need to:

- R1 improve the completion and attainment rates for learners on all further education programmes;
- R2 introduce effective learner initial assessment for literacy and numeracy skills and make sure that learners receive appropriate support where needed;
- R4 introduce effective diagnostic testing of learners' specific needs to inform individual learning plans;
- R5 improve tracking processes and tutorial support to reduce significantly the risk of learners leaving their programme early without their targeted qualification;
- R6 do more to encourage and promote learners' knowledge and understanding of Wales and the Welsh language;
- R7 improve the quality processes to improve quality and standards;
- R8 ensure that leaders and managers have a clear vision and direction for change and develop a culture for continued and sustainable improvement; and
- R9 ensure that all recommendations from Estyn inspection reports are addressed, implemented and sustained.

What happens next?

The university's further education provision will address the recommendations from the inspection into their Quality Development Plan. As a result of the unsatisfactory judgements for the current performance and prospects for improvement, there will be a re-inspection of the provision in about a year from the publication of this report.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Unsatisfactory

Standards: Unsatisfactory

Overall, the rates at which learners on further education programmes at the university complete and attain their qualification are below the average rates for other providers in Wales. The rates at which learners complete their programmes have declined over the last three years.

The rates at which learners attain their qualifications on Foundation Art and Design programmes are very good and have been maintained over the last three years. However, the rates at which learners complete their programmes have declined over the same period. This has resulted in the success rate for these learners being below the average rates achieved by other providers in Wales.

The rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications on Access programmes have declined over the last three years. This has resulted in success rates for these learners being below the average rates achieved by other providers in Wales.

The completion and attainment rates for the small number of learners on the Electrical Installation programmes are well above the average rates achieved by other colleges in Wales.

Learners on further education programmes at the university do not benefit from a formal key skills programme. A few learners on the Access programme undertake appropriate GCSE qualifications in preparation for undergraduate programmes such as teacher training. All programmes include useful modules of study to support the information and communication technology requirements of their programme.

The learners who remain on their programmes make adequate and sometimes good progress in developing their skills and knowledge in practical and academic courses. Generally, learners who remain on their programme improve well their oral, written and practical skills. These are developed effectively through individual activities, group work and whole-class sessions. Learners who remain on their programme make effective use of their information and communication technology skills and use them well in research and to present their work.

Wellbeing: Adequate

The university has a range of support services and multi-agency partnerships to support its overall strategy for health and wellbeing. Learners are clear about where they can seek help and support and whom to contact if they need to raise issues of health and safety.

University staff who teach and give support on the further education programmes engage well with learners and are always prepared to pay good attention to their

physical and emotional wellbeing. All further education learners are able to use the university's full-time counselling service, if required.

Almost all learners enjoy their programmes, particularly the practical and written project elements of their work. Learners behave well in class and talk enthusiastically in most cases about their learning experience. Most learners observed have a positive, professional attitude to their work.

All learners observed work well together in teams and when concentrating on individual work. They treat each other with respect and are well aware of their responsibilities towards the other learners in their group.

Most learners observed say that they have had some sense of involvement in the decision-making processes of the further education provision, particularly as they relate to their own programme. A few learners are concerned about the rising cost of travel and some of the material costs associated with their programme. Most learners would recommend their programme to friends or family members.

When learners are late for classes, they are appropriately challenged by teaching staff. Overall, learners' attendance varies too much throughout the year. During the early part of programmes, attendance is good. However, as the year progresses attendance rates fall. Some of this is due to learners working off-campus to complete some of their project work. Overall, learners' attendance rates are around 75%.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Unsatisfactory

The university's further education curriculum includes a Foundation programme in Art, and Design and an Access to Higher Education programme. Both offer a good range of study pathways that allow learners to pursue modules in which they are interested and support their future aspirations.

The programmes give learners who do not have formal educational qualifications, or the specialist skills required, the opportunity to improve and to prepare for level 4 study. Learners have good opportunities to progress to the next level of study within the university.

Learners complete a written exercise so that teachers can assess the standard of their written work before they start their programme. However, teachers do not structure the initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skill needs well enough. They do not systematically assess the level of learners' essential skills when they start their programmes. Learners do not have a diagnostic assessment to determine in detail their specific needs where this is appropriate. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan coherently to improve individual learners' essential and wider key skills. As a result, teachers are prevented from differentiating their teaching appropriately to ensure that learning needs of all learners are met or that they stay on programme and complete their programmes successfully.

Learners on the Access to Higher Education programme participate in a level 2 and level 3 study skills module, which includes elements of communication and literacy, and a level 3 communications portfolio. English GCSE equivalence is also provided in the English programme. Learners without a GCSE qualification in mathematics and information technology study these modules at level 2 as part of their course. However, learners do not have enough structured opportunity to improve their essential and wider key skills or to work towards skills qualifications at levels appropriate to their ability and their programme. Teachers do not incorporate or embed essential skills in the curriculum well enough.

Where topics linked to the characteristics of Wales are integral to specialist subjects, learners have good opportunities to develop their knowledge of Wales. However, learners do not have consistently good opportunities to learn about the language and culture of Wales. The university offers Welsh courses for learners to improve their Welsh language skills, but no learners take advantage of this. Overall, teachers do not do enough to encourage and promote learners' knowledge and understanding of Wales and the Welsh language.

The university has a comprehensive environmental strategy and has implemented several initiatives to support this. Many learners have good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of sustainability and global citizenship where areas of the curriculum support this. However, this is not consistent across all courses. Overall, teachers do not promote sustainability and citizenship well enough.

Teaching: Adequate

Overall, the quality of the teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory.

Most teachers plan their sessions well to make sure that learners participate fully and get the most out of their time in class. Most teachers share clear aims and objectives with learners at the start of sessions and provide relevant conclusions at the end of learning activities.

Most teachers use a reasonable variety of teaching methods. They provide learners with an effective balance between theoretical and practical work and give learners the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge effectively. They generally use individual tasks, small group and whole group work effectively. Teachers generally have high expectations of their learners and challenge their responses appropriately.

All teachers provide learners with good support and advice in their lessons. The majority of teachers use questioning techniques well in their classes to test learners' progress and understanding. They use individual and open questioning well with their learners. In many classes observed, teachers use extended questioning well to develop learners' responses and to help them to think about their answers. Teachers in some sessions encourage learners to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. They consistently remind learners of their responsibilities to undertake self-directed study in addition to their formal sessions.

In a few instances, teachers allow the pace of lessons to slow too much. In a minority of sessions observed, teachers do not do enough to differentiate work to

cater for the wide range of abilities in the class. In the majority of sessions learners' development of literacy and skills lacks consistency.

All teachers show good knowledge of their subjects and are familiar with recent developments in their areas. Many use examples from their own experiences of working in industry, commerce or the arts well to illustrate important concepts.

The majority of teachers assess learners' work thoroughly and give them useful oral and written feedback to help them improve the quality of their work. However, in a few cases, teachers' feedback does not provide learners with clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work and to progress. Most teachers track the performance of their learners well. However, a minority of teachers do not always pass this information on to the learners in time to support the next assessed piece of work.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

Overall, the university has appropriate arrangements for promoting health and wellbeing. The Student Services department organises several activities to help learners improve their understanding of wellbeing. All learners are clear about whom they can approach if they have concerns, or where they can get academic or personal support if they need it.

The university has a very comprehensive range of learner support services. All of these services are available to further education learners. These include personal and welfare support, careers advice, counselling, a chaplaincy service, a Study Advice Service and student mentors that support Access learners.

Generally, teachers give prospective learners appropriate advice and guidance before they start their course. All potential learners have an interview with members of the programme teams to assess their suitability for their chosen programme. However, too many learners, particularly on the Access to Higher Education programme, fail to complete their programme of study.

All learners have a week-long induction that introduces them to the university's central student services and to the details of their programme.

All learners have a personal tutor who supports them in their academic work. The personal tutor signposts learners to appropriate specialist support to help them overcome study or personal difficulties that adversely affect their learning. However, very few learners choose to take up the specialist support that the university offers in the Study Advice Service or through the study advice service.

All learners have a curriculum entitlement to one-to-one tutorial support with their personal tutors. Many learners make good use of this service to support them while they are on programme. However, learners do not benefit from a well-structured tutorial programme. Learners' experience of tutorial sessions varies too much. Learners are required to be responsible for contacting their personal tutor if they feel that they need advice or guidance. A few learners fail to attend personal one-to-one tutorials during their time on programme. This is not challenged enough by staff.

The university has an appropriate policy and procedures in place for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Learners disclose any learning, physical or sensory disability when they apply for or start their programme of study. This allows the university to put appropriate support in place as soon as possible. Very few learners take up offers of support. Generally, teachers and personal tutors give learners who complete their programmes good support. They are flexible and readily available to learners and have an 'open door' policy that allows learners to contact them whenever they need help.

Learning environment: Good

The university has a very inclusive ethos and a very positive approach to social and educational inclusion. Further education learners feel very much part of the university and the provider offers a supportive, caring and welcoming learning environment for its learners. Staff and learners are respectful towards their peers and colleagues and are treated with respect by others.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place that promotes equality and diversity, and learners are introduced to these concepts early on in their programme. These are well understood by leaders, staff and learners. Teachers encourage learners to be tolerant of others. Learners come from a range of ethnic groups, ages and disabilities.

Learners are made aware of the university's appropriate complaints procedure.

There is a good environment and provision for learning, including central resources such as the library, IT facilities and the Study Advice Service. Access to the library is available for learners 24 hours a day. Social areas and campus grounds used by learners are good and they have access to a wide range of leisure and recreational facilities. Teaching rooms, learning resources and equipment are good, well maintained and fit for purpose. Learners praise the quality of the environment available to them for their learning.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Unsatisfactory
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Leadership: Unsatisfactory

Overall, leadership and management of the university's further education provision is unsatisfactory. Leadership in the Foundation Art and Design programme is adequate and in the Access to Higher Education programme it is unsatisfactory.

Managers at all levels have not provided a strong enough focus or clear direction on improving key aspects of provision such as the need to improve the retention of learners and the rates at which they achieve their qualifications. Although the provider addressed the recommendations after the last Estyn inspection, leaders and managers have allowed these issues to re-appear. Leaders and managers have not developed a clear vision of what the provider needs to do to achieve excellence in the delivery of its further education programmes. The university has very recently

appointed a new programme leader to lead the Access to Higher Education programme. However, it is too early to judge any measurable impact of this appointment.

Two programme leaders are responsible for the delivery of further education programmes. These leaders report directly to two different heads of department under the university structure. This can, and does, restrict the joint development of leadership strategies, operational processes and the sharing of good practice within the further education programmes.

Managers and staff do not effectively monitor the performance of the further education provision. Performance information is collected, but data is not monitored or benchmarked against similar provision. Although information is collected and actions planned, the setting of targets for improvement and monitoring of quality improvement is not effective, nor is it benchmarked against other providers.

Overall, the provider has not developed robust systems and procedures to make sure that national priorities for post-16 learning are delivered and monitored effectively, for example the development of learners' skills. Although a wide range of meetings and reporting procedures are in place, they are not effective in monitoring and improving learner standards.

Governors are not fully aware of the underperformance of the further education provision. The governors are supportive of the Vice Chancellor and senior managers. However, they have not always provided sufficient or robust challenge to senior managers on the quality of the further education provision. Governors are beginning to show a greater awareness and understanding of the issues relating to the further education provision of the university.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

Overall, the university's processes for improving the quality of its further education provision are unsatisfactory

The further education provision of the university currently operates with many of the issues raised during the last inspection. Although the recommendations from the last inspection report were initially action planned and addressed, the same issues have re-emerged as shortcomings. This has contributed significantly to the decline in learners' completion and attainment rates compared to the further education sector.

The university does not have good enough systems in place to gather the views of further education learners. Learner satisfaction surveys are not used enough. Feedback to learners on actions is not always informative or detailed enough. It is unclear how these processes impact effectively for learners and how they inform overall quality processes for improvement.

The university collects a useful range of data and information relating to the performance of learners. However, this information is not effectively used to inform comprehensive quality improvement action planning. For example, leaders do not compare the university's further education data against benchmarks for the further education sector in Wales.

The existing quality processes have not brought about improvements in learner success in attaining their qualifications. Monitoring and tracking processes for learners' work are not robust enough and too many learners leave their programme early without gaining their qualifications. Not enough first-hand evidence is gathered to systematically monitor and review current levels of performance. Managers do not set challenging targets for improvement against national benchmarks. This includes processes for assessing standards of teaching and learning and linking individual performance to appraisal and staff development needs.

The Self Assessment Report (SAR) is not evaluative enough and is mainly descriptive. It does not evaluate how well the institution meets the needs of all learners and how it is developing actions to address national priorities. Actions identified for improvements are not always focused on specific issues, measurable or resourced specified. Actions do not clearly identify the staff responsible for their delivery or the required completion dates.

Partnership working: Adequate

Overall, the further education provision of the university has developed a useful range of partnerships in and around Newport. These include partnerships with employers, other higher and further education institutions, and a good range of community and voluntary groups.

The university has developed good partnership working with the Newport City local authority. This partnership has been effective and resulted in the building of a purpose built high quality facility in Newport city centre. At present, this facility is not used by further education learners. However, the university has well-developed plans for this to happen from October 2011.

The university undertakes strategic planning for widening participation through its centre for Community and Lifelong Learning. This group acts as the point of contact for information and the promotion of the Welsh Government's education agenda, and in particular the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). This undertaking forms part of the university's mission relating to being a community university.

The provider has developed a wide range of partnerships and undertaken projects with a useful range of partners, for example the WEA, Communities First and voluntary and community groups. These partnerships have been useful in informing potential learners of the education opportunities available to them at the university.

The university is involved with the 14-19 Local Area Network and has recently appointed a Learning Network Co-ordinator to contribute to, and make sure that the university is actively involved in, all local developments.

The university has a long-established relationship with the local further education college and offers a range of provision in partnership with it. The university is working well with the local further education college for joint planning of some further education provision and other projects. For example, the local college Principal is working as part of a 'task and finish group' to look at the future direction of the university. This particular development is at an early stage and it is too early to measure its impact on university learners and further education learners in particular.

The Access strategic planning document highlights the need for academic staff to work more directly with local schools and further education institutions. However, progress is generally underdeveloped and is not having a positive impact on recruiting learners to the university's further education provision.

Resource management: Unsatisfactory

Overall, teaching and support staff are deployed effectively. However, in the Foundation Art and Design programme, there is an over-reliance on PGCE students to deliver programmes. Teaching and support staff who deliver the further education programmes are appropriately qualified and experienced.

The university provides a useful range of continuous professional development activities with its teaching and support staff. However, the university does not have a clear and comprehensive staff development plan for the teaching and support staff delivering further education programmes. Staff development activities do not focus enough on developing a wide range of effective teaching and learning strategies.

The university's accommodation is generally good and is adequate for further education learners. The new City Campus is of a very high standard. The university places an important emphasis on sustainability and this is reflected in the design of all new estates. The new City Campus has recently received a national award for incorporating a wide range of sustainable technologies within its design.

The university manages its finances well. Leaders use an effective structured approach to the financial allocation of capital and consumable budgets. This means that resources are available when required and generally meet the needs of further education learners and teaching and support staff. Resources are generally available in sufficient numbers and of a satisfactory standard.

Overall, the way that the university's further education provision manages its resources is unsatisfactory because the standards achieved by further education learners are unsatisfactory. The university provides unsatisfactory value for money for its further education learners.

Appendix 1

Learner Satisfaction

Generally, learners who stay on their courses are positive about their learning experience. A minority of learners who responded to the questionnaire have issues around the quality of and the support given with work placements and with access to equipment to help them do their work.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

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