The Education and Training Inspectorate

An Evaluation of Cultural Diversity

in

Colleges of Further Education

Phase Two

August 2011

CONTENTS

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   This report reflects the findings of phase two of the cultural diversity evaluation and assesses the progress made by the Colleges in the period between November 2009 and March 2011 in implementing the 2006 cultural diversity circular "Cultural Diversity Dissemination" (FE02/06).

1.2   Relevant legislation, in particular Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Race Relations Order (NI) 1997, requires organisations to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people from different racial groups. The legislation specifies a number of duties for public bodies, including preparation and maintenance of a written race relations policy, and assessment of the impact of their policies on different racial groups. The legislation also requires organisations to ensure that no individual is discriminated against on the grounds of disability, gender or sexual orientation.

1.3   The further education sector plays a significant role in providing education and training for members of all communities. As the data provided by the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) demonstrates (Appendix 1) Northern Ireland has witnessed significant changes in the ethnic mix of its population over the past decade and these changes are reflected clearly in the enrolment patterns in the Colleges of Further Education.

1.4   The promotion of good relations is a statutory legal requirement for Colleges of Further Education, arising from the Northern Ireland Act (1998). Central to this duty, is the requirement for Colleges to assess the impact of their policies on students and staff from different racial and other Section 75 groups, through screening and equality impact assessment and the monitoring of the admission of students and the recruitment and career progression of staff. To assist the Colleges in taking this duty forward the Department established, in 2000, from within the further education sector, a cultural diversity working group, to produce a good practice guide for the Colleges, and help address cultural diversity issues within the sector. To assist Colleges further in their work on the promotion of good relations and inclusion, the Department has since implemented a range of strategies and initiatives, aimed at providing exemplars of good practice to inform provision throughout the sector.

1.5   To this end, the Department issued to all Colleges in July 2003 a draft cultural diversity working document, formulated from the working group's report. The purpose of this working document was to assist the Colleges by providing a practical starting point for the promotion of good relations. In March 2004, the Department made a total of £150,000 available, to fund three cultural diversity pilot projects (£50,000 for each pilot). The projects aimed to explore strategies for the promotion of good relations in the further education sector, by providing opportunities for students and staff from differing identities, backgrounds and traditions to develop and enhance relationships of trust and understanding, and promote mutual respect in every aspect of College life.

1.6   In 2005, the Department asked the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) to evaluate the cultural diversity pilots, and to provide exemplars for the further education sector. To complement this work, the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges also commissioned research to identify factors associated with religion or community background within the Colleges, and to generate practical suggestions on how these could be addressed. Further reports on racism and homophobia in the further education sector were also commissioned by the Department.

1.7   Circular FE 02/06 'Cultural Diversity Dissemination' built on the evaluation of the pilot projects and associated research and set out the Department's intention to address and advance cultural diversity issues within the further education sector in Northern Ireland. The circular identified the context and arrangements for the roll out of best practice in cultural diversity and Colleges were asked to make bids for monies to support the dissemination activity.
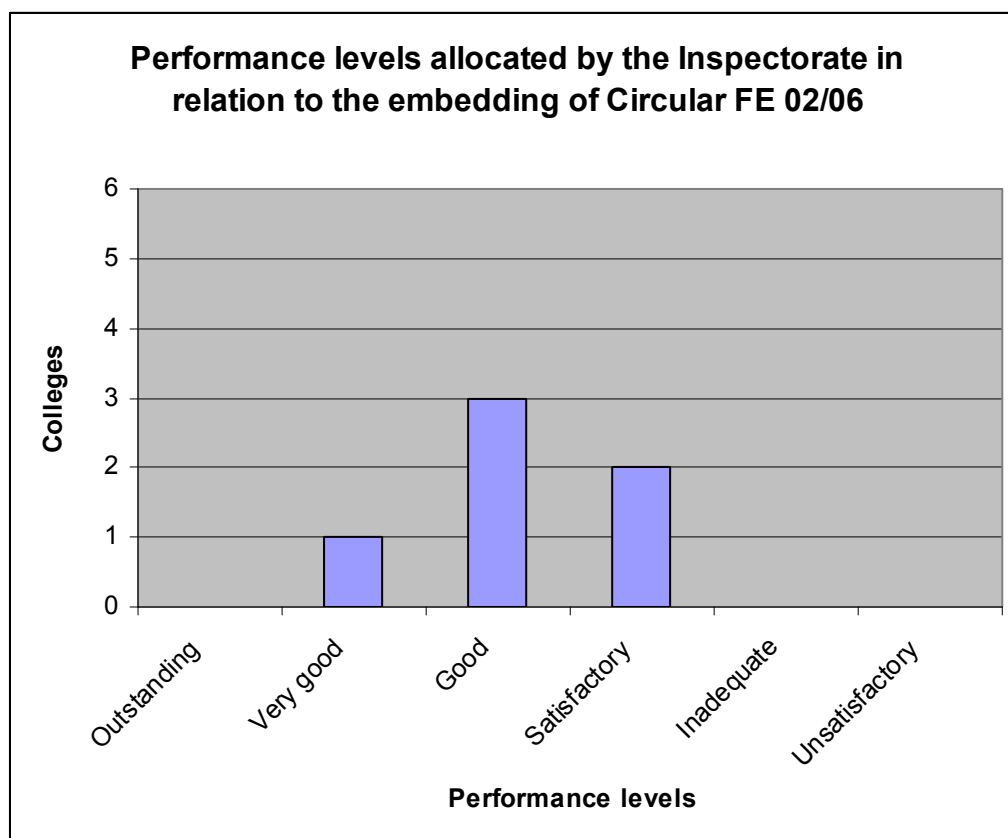
1.8   Since April 2006 the Department has allocated £300,000 across the Colleges for the dissemination of best practice in cultural diversity. All six Colleges submitted project bids totalling £300,000 but due to variations in costings the final spend for the pilot amounted to £259,565.28. Typically, work in the Colleges followed an incremental approach to the development of the good practice dimensions identified in the FE 02/06 circular. Projects included the embedding of cultural diversity issues within induction, engagement with representatives from key external agencies and with the student body, and the implementation of training and development activities for staff. There was also considerable emphasis on the inclusion of a series of multi-cultural activities, aimed at increasing students' awareness of different faiths, cultures and beliefs. The specific areas addressed by the projects were determined in large part by the previous level of engagement of key staff in the College in the pilot projects, and work that had already been undertaken to develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures and structures to support the embedding of cultural diversity within and across College services.

1.9   In October 2009, the Department requested that the Inspectorate complete the first of a two-part evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the six Colleges in implementing the key recommendations of circular FE02/06. The report which issued in March 2010 "An evaluation of the dissemination of best practice in cultural diversity in the Colleges of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland" represented Phase one of this evaluation and focused particularly on assessing the effectiveness of the Colleges in disseminating the outcomes of the 2006 cultural diversity circular (FE02/06), with specific reference to ethnicity. The report also identified further action to be taken by the Colleges and the Department to support the further dissemination of best practice in cultural diversity.

1.10   The evaluation in 2009 identified major strengths in the provision for cultural diversity made by the Colleges, including: the development and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures; the production of codes of conduct for staff and students to support good relations and promote equality of opportunity; the effective embedding of diversity and equal opportunity by most of the Colleges into the students' induction programmes; the good use made by relevant College staff, of established links with a wide range of appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies to inform planning for social inclusion; and, the good links with the Students Union in the majority of the Colleges, used effectively to promote access to student services. The evaluation also identified examples of good practice which were disseminated to relevant personnel from the sector through an event organised by the Department.

1.11   Phase one of the evaluation concluded that: the provision for cultural diversity within Colleges had improved since the evaluation of the pilot projects in 2005; that the provision ranged from very good to satisfactory but was good or better in the majority of Colleges. As reflected in Figure 1 below, the inspection team concluded that almost all of the Colleges had met or exceeded the objectives of their projects, and had demonstrated their willingness to disseminate further the outcomes of Circular FE02/06. Considerable progress had been made by the Colleges in revising provision to focus more strongly on the inclusion of students from ethnic minority groups, and improving staff awareness on cultural diversity issues.

Figure 1 Performance levels allocated by the Inspectorate during Phase one of the evaluation in November 2009

Performance levels allocated by the Inspectorate in relation to the embedding of Circular FE 02/06

A bar chart with the y-axis labelled "Colleges" ranging from 0 to 6, and the x-axis labelled "Performance levels" with categories: Outstanding, Very good, Good, Satisfactory, Inadequate, Unsatisfactory. Bars: Very good = 1, Good = 3, Satisfactory = 2.

1.12   The evaluation also identified a number of areas for development within the Colleges, particularly, in most of the Colleges, the under-developed use of student data and market intelligence to identify trends and inform policy and planning; the need for further whole-college staff training, with particular emphasis on the planning for the embedding of cultural diversity within and across the curriculum; and the further development of quality improvement arrangements to support the evaluation of cultural diversity, focus more sharply on the evaluation of teaching, training and learning and the quality of the student experience, and disseminate best practice within and across the Colleges.

1.13   In March 2011, at the request of the Department, a team of six inspectors from the Inspectorate completed the second phase of the evaluation to further assess the progress of the six Colleges (Appendix 2) towards the implementation of the key recommendations of Circular FE02/06. This evaluation focused, in particular, on the effectiveness of the further education sector in taking forward the best practice identified through phase one and responding to and implementing recommendations from the Chill Factor, Racism and Homophobia reports. Discussions were held with approximately 65 key staff including lecturers, support staff and senior managers from the Colleges involved. In total, 21 teaching sessions were observed. In each of the Colleges, focus groups were held with students from a range of cultural backgrounds, and approximately 345 students were interviewed or observed during the evaluation.

1.14   The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of the further education sector in responding to and implementing recommendations from the Chill Factor, Racism and Homophobia Reports previously commissioned by the Department; and

- identify any additional activities or actions to be undertaken by the further education colleges and the Department.

2.   **SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

2.1   In the areas evaluated, the effectiveness of the six Colleges in implementing the key recommendations of circular FE02/06 now varies from good to very good, but is mostly very good.

2.2   The main strengths are the:

- very high level of commitment to the promotion of diversity and inclusion and the strong support provided by senior management in all of the Colleges;

- culture of respect, tolerance and valuing difference evidenced within each of the Colleges;

- good or better provision made by the Colleges to promote good relations and support inclusion;

- continuing emphasis on the provision of whole-college staff development and training to raise awareness and help staff to develop appropriate policies and practices to promote inclusion;

- examples of very good practice of embedding cultural diversity within the curriculum, both in terms of induction and within specific areas of the curriculum;

- strong links with relevant external agencies, which are mostly used to good effect to shape and inform provision; and

- work undertaken by the majority of the Colleges to access funding from external sources to enhance their provision and support innovative practice.

2.3   The main areas for improvement are the:

- further refinement of the procedures for the collation, analysis and use of student data and market intelligence to inform provision in a significant minority of the Colleges;

- further development of the procedures for the quality improvement of provision for cultural diversity, including the use of curriculum audits and strategies to promote the development of active learning approaches;

- review of the provision for International students to ensure that it promotes fully their integration and inclusion within the Colleges; and

- development and implementation of effective strategies to share good practice within and between the Colleges.

3.   **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

3.1   The Further Education Colleges have been consistent in providing education and training for all members of the community in a society which has been troubled by political and social unrest for more than thirty years. The Chill Factor report, published by ANIC in July 2005 concluded that, in terms of community background, there were well-established and distinctive enrolment patterns within the Colleges. These were perceived to be due to a mix of factors, not least the geographical locations of the Colleges, which mean that their populations tend to reflect increased representation of students from particular religious backgrounds in the communities served by them. Data provided by the Department for this evaluation (Appendix 2) confirms that, whilst all of the Colleges attract students from both of the traditional community backgrounds within Northern Ireland, distinctive and historical enrolment patterns continue to prevail.

3.2   Senior managers in all of the Colleges are aware of the composition of their student populations both within and across their college campuses and, in the interests of promoting inclusion, have developed appropriate policies and procedures, including clear codes of conduct for both staff and students, which aim to support good relations and promote equality of opportunity within the Colleges. These codes of conduct often include policies on wearing specific items of clothing which could be viewed as representative of a specific tradition. Most of the Colleges display information clearly on the action that will be taken if these behaviours are breached. Across most of the Colleges, appropriate policies and procedures have been implemented to ensure that behaviour that does not comply with the code of conduct is dealt with effectively; these include anti-bullying, flags and emblems and harassment policies, and disciplinary procedures which are well-documented and rigorously imposed in most of the Colleges.

One College is particularly notable for the inclusive ethos of each of the college campuses and the valuing of difference. This College sets out clearly its expectations of staff and student behaviour within relevant handbooks and has robust procedures for reporting and dealing with incidents. The College has developed and implemented the following guide for staff and students, which articulates clearly the values of the organisation.

Promoting Equality and Diversity Guide

Be open to learning more from others about their culture.

Adhere to policies which help to create a harmonious learning environment.

Participate where possible in training and cultural events that promote diversity.

Make adjustments for the spiritual or special needs of other students or staff (within the confines of policies) and take account of this when organising events.

Make sure all information provided is as accessible as possible through the use of appropriate formats.

3.3   The senior managers in most of the Colleges have used data on community background effectively to implement strategies which aim to lessen the Chill Factor. These include: celebrating all religious festivals; rotating the campuses on which specific extra-curricular activities take place; or taking a strategic decision to locate specific courses on particular campuses, in the interests of encouraging greater representation from students from a specific community background. In one of the Colleges, an affirmative action project has been implemented, in an attempt to redress some of the imbalances the senior managers perceive in the mix relating to community background of their staff members.

3.4   Whilst all of the Colleges are characterised by an inclusive ethos which attempts to remove barriers to learning there is variation in the extent to which they have implemented procedures and practices to actively counteract homophobia. Most of the Colleges have revised their policies and their procedures to ensure that sexual orientation is covered adequately. In almost all of the Colleges, good use is made by relevant staff, of links with a range of appropriate support groups to inform planning for diversity. In the majority of the Colleges, particularly those in which there are active student unions, there are positive practices to support inclusion, including specific support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual students. These groups have an active presence during Freshers week and provide a useful resource for students who wish to join them. More needs to be done, however, to ensure that provision of this nature exists in all of the Colleges. Currently, two of the Colleges do not have lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual champions in place, and this is a matter which needs to be addressed with a degree of urgency. Most of the Colleges have adapted their enrolment forms to allow Civil Partnership status to be acknowledged but currently no facility exists for this information to be gathered within the data collated by the Department, and this is an issue which also needs to be addressed.

In the best practice, Colleges have developed strong links with a wide range of relevant organisations and support groups, including Cara-friend, Gay Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland, the Rainbow Project and Relate Teen. They use a wide range of formats to publicise the services available throughout all of their campuses, including staff and student notice boards, poster campaigns, and staff and student handbooks.

3.5   Whilst at present data relating to community background and ethnicity is readily available, data relating to sexual orientation is not. This is something that most of the Colleges intend to collate and analyse in the future, with appropriate account being given to issues of confidentiality, personal choice, and due adherence to relevant legislation; a sector-wide and standardised approach to the collation and use of data of this nature is required.

3.6   Phase one of the evaluation identified a particular need for the Colleges to address the learning requirements of an increasing number of students from minority ethnic groups and communities in Northern Ireland, including immigrant and migrant workers and their families. A particular increase had been observed over the past ten years, due in large part to the influx of migrant workers and students from Eastern European countries. While a minority of Colleges report a sharp decline in the number of students from specific ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly Polish students, over the past two years, the situation continues to present Colleges with a number of challenges. Figure 2 below identifies key characteristics of the changing and diverse student population, with the attendant implications for further education Colleges.

Figure 2a: Non-United Kingdom nationals entering Northern Ireland and allocated a National Insurance number: Top ten countries each year of registration.

2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
ROI	942	ROI	859	Poland	5460
Portugal	808	Poland	752	Rep of Lithuania	2131
Philippines	428	India	613	Slovak Republic	1483
India	424	Portugal	555	Rep of Ireland	1059
China	206	Rep of Lithuania	433	India	737
Australia	134	Philippines	276	Rep of Latvia	531
South Africa	115	Slovak Republic	210	Portugal	484
USA	97	China	186	Philippines	422
Germany	85	Ukraine	160	Czech Republic	364
France	83	Rep of Latvia	123	China	283

Source: 100% extract from National Insurance Recording System at 31 December 2006.

Figure 2b: Non-United Kingdom nationals allocated national insurance numbers (NINO) by nationality (April 2006-March 2009)

2006/07		2007/08		2008/09	
Poland	8900	Poland	8380	Poland	4230
Rep of Lithuania	2580	Rep of Lithuania	1600	Rep of Lithuania	1210
Slovakia	1830	Slovakia	1760	Slovakia	960
ROI	930	ROI	880	ROI	920
India	520	India	490	India	460
Portugal	410	Portugal	360	Portugal	520
Latvia	600	Latvia	370	Latvia	430
Philippines	410	Philippines	250	Philippines	280
Czech republic	460	Czech republic	370	Czech republic	250
China	230	China	320	China	360

Source: Department for Social Development (June 2002) Department of Work and Pensions (August 2009).

3.7   The data made available by the Department for this evaluation is based on Section 75 data, which does not include an Eastern European category within its classification system. Figure 3 below identifies the number of students from ethnic minority groups attending the further education colleges in the period 2005-2006, and figure 4 provides the statistics for the period 2009-2010. Data relating to the ethnic background of students attending each further education college in the academic year 2009/20010 is contained in Appendix 3.

Figure 3: Students attending the Further Education Colleges in the period 2005-2006*

Ethnicity	BMC	NRC	SERC	SRC	SWRC	NWRC	TOTAL
White	39,543	21,618	21,449	27,178	17,523	20,013	145,324
Black	278	50	37	26	34	43	468
Indian	113	26	9	22	10	27	207
Pakistani	51	18	2	4	26	8	109
Bangladeshi	21	5	10	21	9	-	66
Chinese	427	74	124	51	34	25	735
Other/ Irish Traveller	885	82	50	57	71	135	1,280
Total	**41,318**	**21,873**	**21, 681**	**25,359**	**17,707**	**20,251**	**148,189**

Figure 4: Students attending the Further Education Colleges in the period 2009-2010*

Ethnicity	BMC	NRC	SERC	SRC	SWRC	NWRC	TOTAL
White	41,084	21,387	25,636	32,392	19,733	20,025	160,257
Black	362	26	93	119	67	43	710
Indian	87	22	19	24	20	35	207
Pakistani	25	22	10	20	39	3	119
Bangladeshi	16	3	24	10	0	4	57
Chinese	444	61	98	65	35	17	720
Other/ Irish Traveller	549	133	164	209	111	114	1,280
Total	**42,567**	**21,654**	**26,044**	**32,839**	**20,005**	**20,241**	**163,350**

* Data provided by the Department for Employment and Learning

3.8   According to the data and in common with the pattern in Figure 2 from phase one of the evaluation the largest number of students from a non-white background is based in Belfast Metropolitan College, which had 4307 students from those groups specified under the Section 75 classification. The next largest is South Eastern Regional College with 1317.

3.9   Senior managers in all of the Colleges are aware of the changes in the make up of the student population. The systems for collating relevant data and market intelligence in terms of community and ethnic background and the ways in which the data is being used to inform strategic planning for social inclusion, are becoming increasingly refined in most of the Colleges. A number of examples of best practice were identified during the evaluation, and these are detailed below.

One College in which the collation, analysis and use of data on section 75 categories is a major strength has used the information very effectively to stimulate debate regarding the changing nature of the student population and to identify the courses which individuals from specific ethnic minority groups are taking; this information is used very effectively to provide bespoke staff development and training for groups of lecturers and staff supporting the students in these courses, and to generate appropriate materials in the native language of the ethnic minority group.

Another College has employed the services of an independent data analyst to produce independent Geographical Information Systems (GIS) reports. The GIS approach uses data with a spatial reference, students' postcodes, which can be analysed, mapped, retrieved and stored. The data is used by the College to analyse student sub-groups and give lecturers a better understanding of the students they manage. This market intelligence allows the college to refine mailing list campaigns and also informs curriculum development through the identification of skill gaps and shortages within particular occupational sectors.

In developing its approach to cultural diversity, the College has used GIS data successfully to profile community background and ethnicity of students; this has allowed the College to plan for additional recruitment from non European Union students.

One of the Colleges has generated a wide range of data over the last few years which includes details of student nationality, courses taken and retention and achievement rates. The College has used excellent data that has been commissioned through reports into Travellers and Migrant workers to inform planning and shape the curriculum. Data and analysis includes specific reference to the College's catchment area and is broken down by campus area. Research for the report includes findings of consultations with ethnic groups, for example, the job that individuals have undertaken in their own country, the job they perform in Northern Ireland, their potential job and any barriers they may have in preventing them from achieving their possible goal.

3.10   All of the Colleges now have appropriate arrangements in place for leadership and management and have given due regard to this area of provision within their College Development Plans. Increasingly, ultimate responsibility for this area rests with a designated senior manager who is tasked with convening regular meetings of relevant staff from across the College, and in the best practice, representatives from key interest groups. In one example of good practice an equality and cultural diversity forum has been established in accordance with the College's Equality Scheme. The forum has a policy development, training and strategic intervention role. Amongst other key functions, the forum acts as a centralised focus group for the exchange of information and materials. The composition of the forum includes both strategic and operational managers, including those responsible for curriculum, student services, pastoral care and quality, and also curriculum representatives and key staff from the Students' Union. This forum provides a very good basis for discussion on, and evaluation of, actions implemented to promote improvement. Curriculum managers have also joined the forum to develop further the focus on the promotion of cultural diversity within the curriculum.

In one College, equality of opportunity is accorded a very high profile; it is clearly articulated within the College Development Plan and is one of the four strategic aims of the human resource policy. A senior member of the management team now holds specific responsibility for this area of work. The College has established a cross-college working group for equality and good relations chaired by a senior manager, which is focused on building upon the work of the former legacy Colleges and enhancing equality of opportunity across all of the campuses. The Equality Group reports to the Senior Management Team as a standing agenda item. The College monitors learner complaints through this group and uses the information to identify and action areas for improvement in relation to equality and diversity.

3.11   Evidence from the evaluation demonstrates clearly that equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted most effectively in those Colleges in which senior management have established robust arrangements for the "student voice" to be heard. In the majority of the Colleges there are good and at times excellent links with the Student Union; these play an important role in the development of an inclusive ethos within the Colleges. A number of the Colleges have received awards for the work undertaken by their Student Union, particularly in relation to the "Unite against Hate" campaign. While this campaign focused initially on anti-racist practice, it has now extended its remit to cover all aspects of diversity and inclusion, and relevant staff in the Colleges report that the campaign has made a significant contribution to the promotion of good relations through dialogue, mediation and appropriate action.

3.12   In a significant minority of the Colleges, designated staff have been appointed to support and complement the resources and activities of the Student Union, and they provide an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities for students to promote inclusion. There is variation in the measure of success the Colleges have experienced in establishing effective mechanisms to reflect the views and perspectives of their students. Whilst the Student Unions are well-developed in the majority of the Colleges, the establishment of a viable Student Union remains a major challenge for a significant minority of them. In these Colleges, there is a need to establish effective mechanisms and structures to consult with students and involve them appropriately in organising activities and programmes to meet their needs. In one of the Colleges, although there is a good system of student representatives, the Student Union is currently not functioning. Discussions are, however, planned with college managers and representatives from the National Union of Students in Ireland (NUSI) to explore how the establishment of a union can best be progressed. In another College, where the Student Union is not well-developed, this is recognised as an important area for development and a new Student Voice and Consultation and Participation Framework has recently been ratified by the Governing Body.

3.13   One of the Colleges which previously experienced difficulties in sustaining a Student Union has, since Phase one of the evaluation, successfully implemented an initiative to ensure that students feel fully involved in college life, and that feedback from them is gathered on a regular basis and used effectively to inform and shape provision. The College uses a dedicated team of student support workers, including a Student Activities Co-ordinator and five student interns to lead on the provision of support, training and information for the student body. The student experience and the student voice is now a top priority within the College. Student councils have been established with democratically elected class representatives and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual officers are in place and participate in the Council. The Student Council is the governing body of the College's Student Union. The main functions of the Council are to be the official policy forming body of the Student Union and to discuss and seek resolution to issues. Each campus council operates three times a year. The meetings are chaired by a senior manager. The College places a strong emphasis on the role of the Student Union in promoting inclusion and requires all student representatives and Student Union officers to undertake training programmes to develop their awareness of equality and diversity. Each campus council meets regularly with senior managers from the College.

3.14   In the first phase of the evaluation the progress made by the Colleges in implementing all aspects of the Department's 2006 cultural diversity circular ranged from very good to satisfactory. Phase two demonstrates that very good progress towards the embedding of the components of the circular has been made in four of the colleges and

good progress has been made in the remainder. In the Colleges in which provision is very good, there are robust systems in place for the management of issues relating to cultural diversity, clear lines of responsibility and accountability, robust data on community background, ethnicity and sexual orientation and effective structures and processes which support, value and celebrate difference.

Figure 5:   Performance levels allocated by the Inspectorate in relation to the embedding of Circular FE 02/06 in Phase two of the evaluation

Performance levels allocated by the Inspectorate in Phase Two of the evaluation in relation to the embedding of Circular FE 02/06
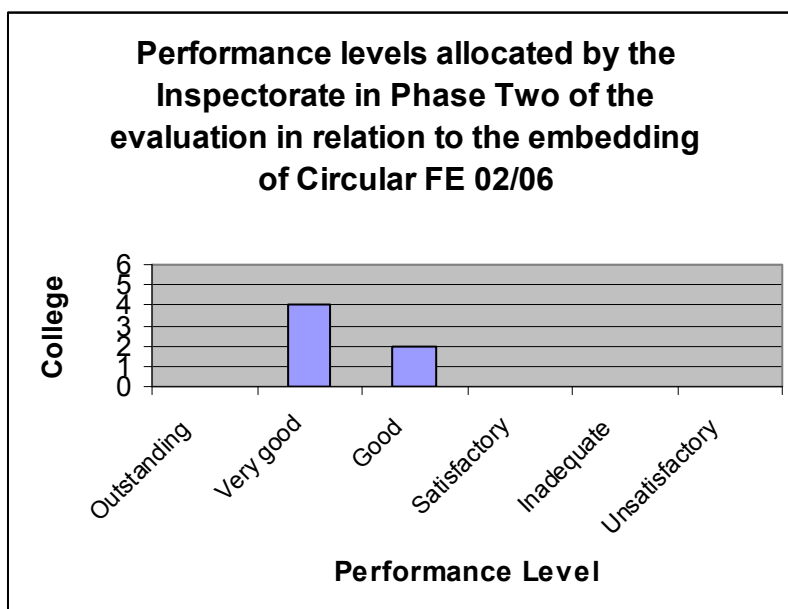
3.15   There is considerable evidence to demonstrate that all of the Colleges now give due priority to equal opportunity and cultural diversity within the College Development Plans (CDPs). All of the Colleges now have a clear management structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Typically, this takes the form of an Equality Steering or Working Group, which has a remit to develop and implement appropriate policies, practices, and procedures, including codes of conduct for both staff and students. In the best practice, these groups are comprised of representatives from the main functional areas of the College, including curriculum, student services, libraries and learning resource centres, staff development, finance and management information.   In the best practice, there is representation from external organisations which reflect the interests of minority groups and the student population.

3.16   An increasing number of Colleges are beginning to recruit International students. Evidence from the evaluation identifies the importance of ensuring that effective procedures are in place to promote their integration and that due account is taken of cultural differences and expectations to help students develop a realistic perception of what they can expect and help them to settle in. Evidence from the evaluation has demonstrated that some students for whom English is not the first language do not have a clear view of what they can expect from the education system in Northern Ireland, nor do they fully understand what will be expected of them. There is a need for Colleges to adopt a more coherent and cohesive approach to the management of students for whom English is not the first language and it is important that clear information on financial and other support available is readily accessible and easily available to them, both through the Department's websites and the College's own marketing and publicity arrangements. There is also a need for the Colleges to ensure that the management arrangements for international students reflect clearly a separation between the functions associated with the monitoring of UK Border Control policies and

procedures and the pastoral care dimensions of the support provided for these students. To assist with this objective, training is required for both tutors and support staff to improve their capacity to give appropriate pre-entry guidance in relation to rules governing residency and entitlement. In a similar vein, there remains a need to ensure that all support staff particularly those involved with students for whom English is not a first language have access to appropriate training to enable them to give effective support and guidance, and signpost students to personnel who have the requisite skills to deal with their queries.

3.17   Since Phase one of the evaluation, all of the Colleges have incorporated sessions on cultural diversity and equality into their whole-college staff development programmes.

In one of the Colleges, Embedding Cultural Diversity events have been delivered by those trained under the Cultural Diversity project.

Activities include "Football Shirts, Symbolism and a Harmonious Environment" – a series of events which ran in October 2010
Staff have also been supported to engage in external events such as
Section 75- Working with the Revised Guide
Equality Scheme Training
Counselling International Students
Equality in the City conference
Community Development and Health Network - Inequalities in Health Conference

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3.18   Almost all of the Colleges have developed good working relationships with a range of other providers and a significant minority have developed excellent working partnerships with key agencies from the statutory and voluntary sectors.   In the best practice, representatives from community background and reconciliation and ethnic and other minority support groups engage effectively with senior members of the College to inform provision and curriculum planning. In a small number of Colleges the links with external agencies are not developed sufficiently to contribute most effectively to the College's planning for social inclusion. A minority of Colleges use the expertise of external agencies, including disability and equality groups, very effectively to contribute to the development and training of both lecturers and support staff.

In a significant minority of the Colleges good use is made of the training opportunities provided by relevant statutory and voluntary organisations, including Disability Action and The Equality Commission, to provide training for both lecturing and support staff.

3.19   While the Colleges have made considerable progress in developing effective procedures for the quality assurance of cultural diversity, more remains to be done, particularly in terms of monitoring the quality of the provision and ensuring that appropriate information and signposting to appropriate services is made available and accessible on each of the College's campuses.

4.   **QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

4.1   In all of the colleges, induction materials have been adapted and amended to incorporate diversity and inclusion. Since phase one of the evaluation, most of the Colleges have broadened the range of languages in which they make information and promotional materials available.   A significant minority of the Colleges have developed dedicated

diversity sections within their libraries and learning resource centres, which include books and dictionaries to support students from ethnic minority groups. Across the Colleges students have access to a wide range of well-developed online materials which support teaching and learning of diversity through the Colleges virtual learning environments (VLEs.)

In one of the Colleges students for whom English is not the first language who experience difficulties can write the assignment in their native language and avail of the support provided by an ILT mentor to have it translated into English through the use of appropriate software.

One of the Colleges which produced excellent case-studies on diversity issues to underpin staff development and training is now using a selection of these worked examples within their student handbooks to raise students' awareness of the issues they may face in a diverse society and allow them to consider appropriate behaviours and solutions to handle potentially challenging situations.

4.2   The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation, ranged from good to excellent and was mostly very good. Of the 21 sessions observed 1 (7%) was outstanding, 14 (66%) were very good and 6 (29%) were good.

In one very good English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) lesson the ten students from eight different countries all had different levels of competence in English. As it was Pancake Tuesday the lecturer used the celebration very effectively to engage the students in a lesson on verbs and tenses. She talked about the celebration and what it was about and then asked them if they had similar festivals involving food. In groups each explained their festival, listed the ingredients and identified the verbs involved in cooking the food. This lesson was very effective in developing the students' spoken English whilst exposing them to a variety of cultures.

4.3   Across the Colleges, a very good range of cultural diversity events and projects are used to enhance the students' experiences and broaden their awareness of different lifestyles and cultures. Most of the Colleges continue to display issues of equality through the celebration of student artwork. Most provide a wide range of activities, cultural events, international work and projects which aim to broaden the students' understanding of the values, beliefs, and interests of people from other community and ethnic backgrounds. In the best practice, the Colleges provide a range of extra-curricular and sporting activities which promote inclusion through offering opportunities for students from different cultural backgrounds to come together through sport or shared hobbies or interests.

One of the Colleges demonstrated a range of imaginative and creative approaches to promoting social inclusion on a whole-College basis. In this" Health Promoting College" a Student Activities Team delivers health and well-being tutorials to each class, organises cross-college health promotion events, and provides course tutors with training and lesson plans to support the integration of health themes into the tutorial programme.

4.4   The majority of the Colleges have implemented student exchanges to other countries and have created opportunities for their staff to increase their awareness of multicultural issues through accessing funding from external sources to promote involvement in transnational projects. In one of the Colleges, for example, 19 lecturers are currently participating in the European Union funded Peer Mentoring project. These staff have a specific remit to review how the partner colleges embed cultural diversity into the curriculum in Ireland, Finland and Holland and disseminate their findings to their peers at future training events. Another College has availed of the opportunity for Comenius teaching assistants from Latvia, Belgium and Romania to travel and work in the college with both ESOL and early years and health care students.

4.5   Most of the Colleges have been successful in accessing additional funding to support a range of interesting and innovative projects on cultural diversity. One of the aims of the Living and Learning Together Project, for example, with funding to the tune of £750,000 over five years, and led by one of the Colleges, in collaboration with a wide range of partners, is to promote community-based learning solutions to health and well-being and increase opportunities and excluded communities particularly targeting migrant workers, older people and the economically disengaged in disadvantaged and excluded communities.

A number of the Colleges have developed innovative approaches to provide support for students from ethnic minority groups. These include: the provision of additional language support for full time students and a student mentoring programme for students at danger of dropping out of their courses or withdrawing from the College.

Examples of events held by one of the Colleges include a cultural diversity day which brought together a variety of organisations working in the diversity field; they had exhibitions and information points reflecting their services. The event was held in one of the College campuses but was attended by students and staff from all of the campuses in attendance. Another example in the same College was the English Spoken as another Language writing competition which encouraged students to share their 'journey'. A presentation of the essays was celebrated on each of the College's campuses.

4.6   All of the Colleges have now incorporated cultural diversity issues into their induction materials. However, while some colleges have undertaken rigorous curriculum audits, comprehensive audits need to be implemented in all of them to determine not only where cultural diversity occurs naturally within course specifications but also to ensure that due attention is given to these issues in curricular areas such as information technology which do not lend themselves easily to such considerations. There is considerable room for curriculum managers to promote the development of active learning approaches which encourage students to share their diverse experiences through themes explored in classroom sessions and tutorials and also to promote the embedding of issues of diversity and inclusion within employability programmes, particularly in relation to employment rights and responsibilities.

4.7   The curriculum projects across the Colleges have made an important contribution to the development of cultural diversity materials. These include support materials such as library guides and software to support students for whom English is not the native language. Increasingly, Colleges have made customised learning support available for ethnic minority

groups, through study skills packs and support facilities on the VLE. The majority of the Colleges also produced DVDs on cultural diversity issues. Most of these were of a good or better quality, and extracts from them have been placed on the majority of the Colleges' websites.

5.   **CONCLUSION**

5.1   The findings from the evaluation indicate clearly that provision for cultural diversity within Colleges has improved significantly since the evaluation of the original pilot projects in 2005 and there is considerable evidence to suggest that Colleges have used the examples of good practice generated through phase one of the evaluation to inform and guide the development their provision in this area. All of the Colleges have made good or better progress in responding to and implementing recommendations from the Chill Factor, Racism and Homophobia reports previously commissioned by the Department.

6.   **KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

6.1   Despite the good progress made by the Colleges in implementing most of the aspects of the cultural diversity circular, more remains to be done across all of the Colleges. The evaluation has identified a number of key priorities for development.

6.2   The Department should:

- amend its procedures for the collation of Section 75 data to allow for the recording of information relating to an increased range of ethnic minority groups and to relevant aspects of sexual orientation, including civil partnerships; and

- review the information available for international students, to ensure that they are provided with sufficient information to make them aware of the specific financial and logistical arrangements that relate to the courses they may choose to follow.

6.3   The further education colleges should:

- continue to refine their procedures for the use of relevant data, including local labour market intelligence, to support planning for diversity and inclusion;

- work to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual champions are established within each of the Colleges;

- integrate cultural diversity more effectively throughout the curriculum, particularly in non-traditional subject areas and continue to develop and implement appropriate strategies to support inclusion;

- strengthen, where appropriate, the planning for the provision for international students and refine further their quality assurance procedures to develop bespoke systems which support the emerging provision and support planning for improvement; and

- ensure the dissemination of best practice throughout all of the campuses of each College.

COLLEGES VISITED DURING THE EVALUATION

Belfast Metropolitan College

Northern Regional College

North West Regional College

South Eastern Regional College

Southern Regional College

South West College

DATA ON COMMUNITY BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS ATTENDING FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN 2007/2008

Belfast Metropolitan College

	Frequency	Percent
Roman Catholic	12344	32.4
Protestant	10803	28.4
Other Christian	847	2.2
Non-Christian	263	.7
No Religion	2464	6.5
Not Stated	2620	6.9
Not Known	8705	22.9
Total	38046	100.0

Northern Regional College

	Frequency	Percent
Roman Catholic	6071	28.8
Protestant	9579	45.4
Other Christian	472	2.2
Non-Christian	203	1.0
No Religion	845	4.0
Not Stated	2786	13.2
Not Known	1133	5.4
Total	21089	100.0

North West Regional College

	Frequency	Percent
Roman Catholic	9144	53.8
Protestant	2942	17.3
Other Christian	68	.4
Non-Christian	26	.2
No Religion	404	2.4
Not Stated	2123	12.5
Not Known	2285	13.4
Total	16992	100.0

South Eastern Regional College

	Frequency	Percent
Roman Catholic	4132	19.0
Protestant	8795	40.4
Other Christian	520	2.4
Non-Christian	62	.3
No Religion	1134	5.2
Not Stated	3322	15.3
Not Known	3795	17.4
Total	21760	100.0

Southern Regional College

	Frequency	Percent
Roman Catholic	10901	40.1
Protestant	6729	24.7
Other Christian	304	1.1
Non-Christian	46	.2
No Religion	593	2.2
Not Stated	6207	22.8
Not Known	2429	8.9
Total	27209	100.0

South West Regional College

		Frequency	Percent
	Roman Catholic	9231	46.1
	Protestant	3594	18.0
	Other Christian	160	.8
	Non-Christian	77	.4
	No Religion	387	1.9
	Not Stated	5012	25.1
	Not Known	1247	6.2
	Total	19708	98.5
Missing	System	297	1.5
Total		20005	100.0

STUDENTS ENROLLED BY ETHNIC BACKGROUND IN EACH OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

Belfast Metropolitan College

	Frequency	Percent
Unknown	7713	18.1
White	33371	78.4
Black Caribbean	46	.1
Black African	301	.7
Black Other	15	.0
Indian	87	.2
Pakistani	25	.1
Bangladeshi	16	.0
Chinese	444	1.0
Not Stated	169	.4
Irish Traveller	11	.0
Mixed Other	198	.5
Any Other	171	.4
Total	42567	100.0

Northern Regional College

	Frequency	Percent
Unknown	253	1.2
White	21134	97.6
Black Caribbean	3	.0
Black African	20	.1
Black Other	3	.0
Indian	22	.1
Pakistani	22	.1
Bangladeshi	3	.0
Chinese	61	.3
Not Stated	52	.2
Irish Traveller	17	.1
Mixed Other	19	.1
Any Other	45	.2
Total	21654	100.0

North West Regional College

	Frequency	Percent
Unknown	2026	10.0
White	17999	88.9
Black Caribbean	12	.1
Black African	31	.2
Indian	35	.2
Pakistani	3	.0
Bangladeshi	4	.0
Chinese	17	.1
Not Stated	47	.2
Irish Traveller	16	.1
Mixed Other	43	.2
Any Other	8	.0
Total	20241	100.0

South Eastern Regional College

		Frequency	Percent
	Unknown	1458	5.6
	White	23855	91.6
	Black Caribbean	33	.1
	Black African	32	.1
	Black Other	28	.1
	Indian	19	.1
	Pakistani	10	.0
	Bangladeshi	24	.1
	Chinese	98	.4
	Not Stated	81	.3
	Irish Traveller	1	.0
	Mixed Other	47	.2
	Any Other	35	.1
	Total	25721	98.8
Missing	System	323	1.2
Total		26044	100.0

Southern Regional College

		Frequency	Percent
	Unknown	1833	5.6
	White	29710	90.5
	Black Caribbean	14	.0
	Black African	69	.2
	Black Other	36	.1
	Indian	24	.1
	Pakistani	20	.1
	Bangladeshi	10	.0
	Chinese	65	.2
	Not Stated	85	.3
	Irish Traveller	13	.0
	Any Other	111	.3
	Total	31990	97.4
Missing	System	849	2.6
Total		32839	100.0

South West Regional College

		Frequency	Percent
	Unknown	2881	14.4
	White	16643	83.2
	Black Caribbean	11	.1
	Black African	45	.2
	Black Other	11	.1
	Indian	20	.1
	Pakistani	39	.2
	Chinese	35	.2
	Not Stated	58	.3
	Irish Traveller	6	.0
	Mixed Other	47	.2
	Total	19796	99.0
Missing	System	209	1.0
Total		20005	100.0