

External Examiner Online Report A

CENTRE DETAILS & CERTIFICATION

REPORT DETAILS	
Report Type	First Sampling
Centre Name	MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE
Centre Number	40517
Standards Verifier (EE) Name	MR A RODRIGO
AA Number	901715
Has Been Submitted	Yes

VISIT DETAILS	
Date Of Sampling	07/05/2015
Feedback Presented To	Raja Toqueer Nic Burton. Liz Beardmore
Designation	Programme Leader, Tutor. Curriculum Manager.

PROGRAMME EVALUATION SUMMARY			
Programme No.	Programme Title	No. of Reg.	Status
ARW50	ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING (QCF)	6	Released
ARW53	GENERAL ENGINEERING (QCF)	9	Released
ARW55	MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING (QCF)	0	Released

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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action Points From Last Report

Management of Academic Standards

1. Minutes of the team meetings to be made available during the next visit.

Update: minutes of various team meetings available.

Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments.

1. To introduce a scenarios for future assignment design.

Update: Action completed.

2. Higher grades to be Contextualised along with indicative characteristics and to be made clear to the students.

Update: Much improved and is ongoing.

3. The decision sampling process to be completed closer to the completion of assessments.

Update: Action completed

4. Design of the assignments must include higher grades.

Update: Action completed

Recommendations:

1. When higher grades are awarded care must be taken to fully satisfy the evidence base.

Update: Evidence presented in sampling.

Maintenance and Audit of Records

1. To organize a course file for the programmes.

Update: Action completed

Student Support and Review

Action:

1. Produce a student induction booklet.

Update: Action completed

Recommendations:

1. Annotate scripts where necessary.

Update: Much improved and is ongoing

Summary of Essential Actions

It is expected that centres will respond in a timely manner to the External Examination report and specifically detail how they will address the essential actions.

Management of Academic Standards

1. To see the exam board minutes during next visit

By Date 09/09/2015

It is expected that centres will respond in a timely manner to the External Examination report and specifically detail how they will address the essential actions.

Registration and Certification Claims

1. The programme leader to check the student registration and certification details before they are released in liaison with the exams office.

By Date 25/05/2015

Summary of Recommendations**Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments**

1. Individual (a/c) must be confirmed by the I.V. during the process.

2. Link the indicative characteristic to contextualised evidence where necessary.

By Date 29/05/2015

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General Comments

Mention any points you may wish to make, including:

comments on administration; communication with the centre; access to material needed to carry out the external examination; and comments about how the centre is meeting the expectations of the QAA Code of Practice and addressing the Academic Infrastructure.

Macclesfield college is a general further education college located in the outskirts of Macclesfield. The college currently offer full and part-time higher education programmes in a range of vocational areas. The college has strong links with the local and national industries and offer progression routes to higher education through several universities in the region. The centre provided all material required during and prior to the visit. The visit was well planned and a quiet room allocated to conduct the E.E. process. All requested material prior to and during visit was organised and provided. The centre had a full Q.A.A. inspection on the 28th & 29th April 2015 and is fully aware of the Q.A.A. UK quality code and this was confirmed by the Curriculum Manager during the discussion.

Areas of Good Practice

Identify any areas of particularly good practice mentioned in other sections of this report.

Good tutorial and pastoral support coupled with increasing industrial links.

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DETAILED COMMENTS

Management of Academic Standards

Comment on the presence of effective management procedures that are supported by appropriate systems and policies. Make specific reference to the management of any programmes run on a collaborative basis in other institutions.

Comment also on the operation of assessment meetings, including:

- the fairness and consistency of decisions
- the decision making process
- administrative support for the meetings
- the scope of the minutes of previous meetings
- the organisation and conduct of the meetings.

The College has gone through a curriculum restructure and a new Programme Leader has the operational responsibility for all the H.N. engineering programmes, line managed by the Curriculum Manager. The programme leader is new to the role but is well experienced in Btec work. The college has a range of quality standards and procedures which underpins the work carried out in the department.

There is a clear structure in the Engineering department with specific roles and responsibilities given in a flow diagram. Clear lines of communication including the management of assessments, internal verification and decision sampling is coordinated by the programme leader. The samples conducted on the day suggest the assessment is fair and consistent with a clear decision making process. A clear policy for plagiarism and late work is within the centre policy documents. Handbooks for both staff and students were made available. Both were comprehensive and covered all aspects needed by both staff and the students to complete the Course.

Quality of delivery is ensured by lesson observations conducted in a periodic cycle and it is linked to the H.E. framework which forms a part of performance management, which underpins the work being carried out. Peer observation is encouraged by the college. The centre is completing the second year of the H.N. programmes and it is expected the final results will be approved by an exam board chaired by the Head of Quality who is responsible for all internal quality processes at the college.

It is expected Industry partners will be invited to attend the exam board meeting and there is evidence, for all level 4 meetings, the process follows that prior information is given to all parties well before the start of the meeting. All extenuating circumstances are discussed in detail, with comments being received and debated by the exam board in order to reach a final decision. There is evidence previous exam boards in other departments within the college has handled all situations fairly and equitably. It is expected the examination board minutes will be available during the next visit. There is evidence of regular formal team meetings and the minutes were available.

Essential Action

1. To see the exam board minutes during next visit

By Date 09/09/2015

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Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments

State, for each programme, whether the design and nature of the assessments permit the aims and learning objectives of the programme to be met and are of a standard appropriate to the qualification level.

The centre use varied assessment methods ranging from practicals, assignments & research activities. The E.E. also had the opportunity to see the following assignment briefs prior to the visit. Unit 2. Engineering Science, Unit 10. Manufacturing Process and Unit 66 Electrical, Electronics & Digital Principles. Written feedback was given to the centre with action plans and the centre has started the implementation of the action points. An independent selection of modules were taken by the E.E. and these were available to be sampled during the visit. Special emphasis was made to complete full modules where necessary. The work sampled were acceptable and aimed at specific learning outcomes appropriate to the qualification level. Overall the assessment tasks were clearly identified against learning outcomes and the grading criteria given. The I.V. process is applied well. In some instances overall grades have been confirmed by the I.V. Please note this can only be applied for the whole module and not parts of the assignments. (ie. edexcel grading policy). It will be helpful to identify individual grades where necessary.

The project module is industry based which allow the students to utilise their theoretical knowledge in practical situations. The centre use I.T. in their class room delivery methods and the students has access to these at all times via the college moodle system. There is clear evidence all assignments are internally verified prior to circulation and the decisions sampled. All I.V. paperwork was available for scrutiny during the visit.

Recommendation

1. Individual (a/c) must be confirmed by the I.V. during the process.
2. Link the indicative characteristic to contextualised evidence where necessary.

By Date 29/05/2015

Maintenance and Audit of Records

State whether the procedure for maintaining and auditing assessment records is secure and effective.

The centre has a computerised system to monitor student progress and record grades. The assessors keep the initial grades in the first instance. They are constantly reminded by the programme leader to update the college computer system. The centre has systems in place to store assessment records securely and safely and they are retrievable for at least 3 years following certification. All students work was available for the SV (EE) to consider during the visit.

Registration and Certification Claims

Summarise the process for ensuring that student registration and certification is accurate and monitored effectively.

The Exams department registers students on their chosen programmes after the enrolment forms are processed by MIS. However during the visit the E.E. found there were discrepancies between the centre student registrations and the EOL registrations for the programmes ARW50 & ARW53. The centre has since address this issue and updated the E.O.L. system. In future the exams office and the programme leader should liaise to ensure registrations are checked in a timely manner. Student report forms (SRFs) are completed by the subject tutors following confirmation of student grades by the examination board. The completed SRFs are forwarded to the exams office for submission to Pearson. Certificates are checked against assessments records once they arrive at the centre by the central administration.

Essential Action

1. The programme leader to check the student registration and certification details before they are released in liaison with the exams office.

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Student Support and Review**Key areas to discuss include:**

- The assessment process, assessment feedback to students
- The quality of teaching, the expertise and experience of staff
- Physical resources and learning support for the programme
- Tutorial and pastoral support
- Opportunities for students to give feedback on their programme
- For HN programmes, summarise the views expressed by students, including favourable comments and any concerns raised
- Summary of discussions with staff

The centre assessment process is understood by the students and the staff. This was confirmed by the staff and the students during the visit. There is a well qualified and a dedicated group of staff delivering the programmes who brings in a variety of industrial experiences to the programmes. Industry update for the staff is encouraged by the college and the funds are available and this was confirmed by the curriculum manager during the discussion session. The SV(EE) had the opportunity to see the staff CV's, schemes of work and the lesson plans (for some subjects) as well as the students' work during the visit. Overall, the samples conducted were in line with the guidelines, with much improved student feedback given in comparison to previous visit.

An interesting discussion with a group of students from the above programmes took place. All students were happy with their programmes and complemented the teaching and learning taking place and the constant help and support they receive from their tutors. They report that the staff are helpful in giving support and guidance beyond normal class time with students able to communicate with staff via e-mails. However, they raised concerns about the lack of practical activities involved in delivery. It would be helpful to have some practical demonstrations in the workshops where necessary. They also suggested a voluntary extra evening slot to help them with assignments and for those who are behind work.

There is an opportunity for the students to give feedback on their programmes in the form of a questionnaire. They are conducted once per term. The centre has adequate facilities to deliver the programmes, examples of resources include:

- All class rooms are fitted with interactive white boards and overhead projector facilities.
- The L.R.C. has a selection of core books and a section for the magazine and journals.
- Well equipped electronics workshop with several P.C's and design packages including various measurements equipment.
- One mechanical engineering workshop with 5 lathe machines.
- 5 millers and several drillers and grinders.
- The hanger has one aircraft for aeronautical engineering work.

The centre has a good induction process and documentary evidence available during the visit. There is clear evidence tutorial support is linked to the time table and this was confirmed during the meeting. The E.E. took the opportunity to donate several engineering journals/magazines to the centre for the benefit of the students.

Action:

1. To conduct demonstrations where necessary.

Recommendations:

- 1 If possible to have an extra voluntary study slot.